



JOURNAL OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

August 2012

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2

Striving for Authenticity in Leadership Program Development and Implementation: Transforming a Community of Professional Practice

Anthony H. Normore, California Lutheran University
Antonia Issa Lahera, California State University Dominguez Hills

Abstract

We contend that 21st century school leaders must be authentic leaders whose values and passions help them find the inner compass to guide their actions, behaviors, and practices and lay a firm foundation for true leadership that will inspire new levels of success. Our purpose is to share the design of collective efforts intended to create an authentic leadership development model. This model describes several key elements of program effectiveness, including: an ongoing changing curriculum; supervision and instructional delivery; the positive impact of a cohort model; and the influence of adult learning field-based experiences on the community of professional practice. Known as *Urban School Leaders (USL)* the program is housed at California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) and made possible through a federally funded grant, partnership between CSUDH Educational Administration Program and the Associated Administrators of Los Angeles (AALA), and Local Districts 5, 6, 7, and 8 within Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). An end-of-course survey was administered to the two cohorts of graduate students who completed the USL Program. The purpose of the survey was to solicit feedback about the program for purposes of program improvement.

Complete Text

Many analysts have commented on the propensity of graduate programs in educational leadership to prepare managers, rather than leaders who are grounded in the “educational” aspects of schooling, and who have a deep understanding of, and appreciation for, the purposes of schooling and the values that inform purpose-defining activity coupled with self-knowledge, capacity, and sensitivity (Begley, 2006; Begley & Stefkovich, 2007). Research (e.g., Browne-Ferrigno, 2007; Fullan, 2003; McCarthy, 1999; Murphy, 2006; Normore, 2007; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003) emphasizes that new performance expectations for school-site leaders in the United States, delineated in administrator standards established by the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 1996) and individual states, “have modified the long-standing perception of a principal as a school

JOURNAL OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

Co-editors:

Ronald Wideman and Heather Rintoul
Nipissing University, Canada

Editorial Board:

Carly Ackley
Johns Hopkins University, USA

Helene Arlestig
Umea University, Sweden

Charles Burford
Australian Catholic University, Australia

Carolyn Crippen
University of Victoria, Canada

Catherine Hands
Brock University, Canada

Edward Hickcox
Victoria, Canada

Olof Johansson
Umea University, Sweden

Pauline Leonard
Louisiana Tech University, USA

Anthony Normore
California State University, USA

Joseph Polizzi
Marywood University, USA

Sharon Rich
Nipissing University, Canada

Robert J. Starratt
Boston College, USA

Nancy Tuana
Penn State University, USA

Allan Walker
Hong Kong Institute of Education, SAR, China

Lindy Zaretsky
Geneva Centre for Autism, Canada

manager to a perspective of learner-centered leaders who focus on high levels of learning for all students” (Browne-Ferrigno, 2007, p. 1). Subsequently, many university-based preparation programs have redesigned their delivery formats, aligned their curricula to new professional standards (e.g., ISLLC, ELCC), place more emphasis on real-time and meaningful content (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009; May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio, 2003), and updated their performance assessments for graduate students (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Orr & Orphanos, 2011).

The purpose of this article is to share the development and implementation process of an educational leadership program at a local university in a large urban setting in the southwestern United States. The program design and delivery are intended to enhance personnel efforts for authenticity in a culture of continuous improvement. These efforts include an ongoing changing curriculum, supervision and instructional delivery, impact of a cohort model, and influence of adult learning field-based experiences on the community of professional practice. Known as *Urban School Leaders (USL)* the program is housed at California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) and made possible through a US Department of Education federally-funded grant, a partnership between CSUDH’s Educational Administration Program, the Associated Administrators of Los Angeles Unified School District, and four local districts within the district.

Prefaced by a review of relevant literature on leadership development and preparation programs in American schools, this article is organized into the following sections: (1) research design, (2) program context, (3) discussion of preliminary themes and patterns from qualitative survey data, and (4) conclusions and reflections.

Review of Literature

Thoughtful critique of leadership preparation programs into the late 1990’s revealed that the lack of rigorous program standards in the United States was a serious problem that touched every aspect of educational administration (Levine, 2005; McCarthy, 1999). The critique was fueled by “devastating attacks on the state of preparation programs, critical analyses of practicing school administrators, and references to alternative visions of what programs should become” (Murphy, 2006, p. 11). In response to criticisms, the National Commission on the Advancement of Educational Leadership Preparation in 2001 engaged in a series of preparation program reform efforts (see Grogan &

Andrews, 2002; Young & Peterson, 2002). This comprehensive reform project intended to develop a complex understanding of contemporary contextual factors impacting educational leadership and leadership preparation while attempting to determine what must occur within and outside the university to ensure effective educational leadership preparation and professional development (Murphy, 2006). More recently, according to the University Council of Educational Administration’s (council comprised of American universities) National Center for the Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice (2011), “few of the 500 or more graduate leadership preparation programs have developed the capacity to ascertain program effectiveness and impact on the 16,000 masters’ degree graduates they produce annually” (para. 1).

Positive analyses of activities on specific pieces of the reform agenda in the United States and Canada have begun to receive much attention. For example, among the reform initiatives that have garnered positive attention are the use of cohort structures in preparation programs (Jean-Marie, et al., 2009; Barnett & Muth, 2003; Browne-Ferrigno, 2007; Clayton, Normore, Myran, Issa Lahera, & Sanzo, 2011; Donaldson & Scribner, 2003), problem-based instructional strategies (Barnett & Muth, 2003; Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2003), the use of contemporary technology in educational leadership (Preis, et al., 2007), the authenticity of programs (Begley, 2004, 2001; Starratt, 2007). On the other hand, online graduate degrees are garnering more interest in recent years as well. Students seeking licensure or advanced degrees by way of a leadership preparation program often search for degrees of convenience – those that are not selective, delivered over a relatively short period of time, and have few academic requirements (Levine, 2005). Hybrid models of preparation are often visible on the alternative model landscape as competition for Institutes of Higher Learning and their departments of school administration (Orr, 2011; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Preis et al., 2007).

In addition to developing leaders who can effectively communicate the role of educational technology, well-prepared school leaders in many regions throughout North America must also understand the distinctive impact of increasing poverty and significant demographic change. Urban communities in the United States are facing serious and unique challenges to their well-being owing to new barriers to economic viability and human development (Orr, 2011; Orr & Orphanos, 2011). These data reveal a society populated increasingly by groups of citizens that historically have not fared

well in the United States, especially marginalized populations including ethnic minorities, English language learners, special needs learners, and children who struggle with sexual orientation (Banks & McGee, 2004; Brooks, Havard, Tatum, & Patrick, 2010). Furthermore, the percentage of children affected by the ills of the world in which they live has increased – for example, unemployment, homelessness, illiteracy, crime, drug addiction, malnutrition, poor physical health, and lack of health care (Banks & McGee, 2004; Normore, 2007). A projection made by Banks and McGee (2004) indicates that “white” students will constitute approximately 50% of the student population of the nation’s schools by 2020 and that this demographic shift will occur at the same time that the teaching force becomes even more homogenous. Regardless of where students live, they will need to understand and work with people whose backgrounds are different from their own in order to make purposeful meaning from circumstances.

Based on research by McCarthy and Kuhl (1997), the increased emphasis on “enhancing the quality of instruction in most colleges and universities” (p. 245) suggests the need to facilitate program improvement. A renewed interest in teaching and leadership influence is embedded in the leadership preparation reform narrative (Browne-Ferrigno, 2007; Issa Lahera & Normore, 2012; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Murphy, 2006). Included in the reform narrative is the work conducted by Orr (2011). Orr’s study focused on the leadership preparation experiences of graduates during the program, and beyond leadership preparation. Results included the following: (a) programs had many recommended innovative features, and; (b) programs varied somewhat on instruction, content focus, challenge, coherence, use of active student-centered instructional practices, and internship length and quality. These results confirm that “how” aspiring school leaders are prepared influences “what” they learn.

A further study by Orr and Orphanos (2011) on outcomes of exemplary and conventional leadership preparation programs for principals indicate that faculty investments in preparation program and internship quality positively contributes to the leadership knowledge of graduates and their leadership practices and school improvement progress. Work by Cheney, Davis, Garrett and Holleran (2010) highlight examples of such innovative principal-preparation programs in the United States. Representing the Rainwater Leadership Alliance (RLA), Cheney and colleagues

clearly concluded that it is a “combination of highly effective teaching with highly capable school leadership that will change outcomes for children in our schools – not one or the other but both” (p. 8). The RLA represents a portfolio of promising principal-preparation programs that are on the forefront of innovation, exploring a new path forward with more emphasis placed on what Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) suggested in earlier research - ethics, character, and authentic transformational leadership behavior. Among the programs are: *Gwinnett County Public Schools’ Quality-Plus Leadership Academy (Georgia)*; *Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) School Leadership Program (California)*; *Long Beach Unified School District (California)*; *New Leaders for New Schools (New York)*; *NYC Leadership Academy’s Aspiring Principals Program (New York)*; *RICE University’s Education Entrepreneurship Program (REEP) (Texas)*; *School Leaders Network (SLN) (Massachusetts)*; *University of Illinois at Chicago’s College of Education Urban Education Leadership Program (UIC) (Illinois)*, and; *University of Virginia’s Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education (PLE)*. What sets apart these programs is that they are organized for the express purpose of preparing authentic leaders to transform their leadership behaviors and practices, which, in turn, can dramatically improve student learning and close the achievement gap. Most are focused on urban schools and improving the achievement of underserved students (Cheney et al., 2010).

There is greater stress on applied approaches, relevant and authentic materials in general, and on the additional use of problem-and case-based materials specifically (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2003; Issa Lahera & Normore, 2012; Preis et al., 2007). Coursework on ethics and values dimensions are more commonly featured in newly designed educational leadership programs with focus on critical analysis and reflective inquiry (Normore, 2007; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). Closely connected with the values dimension is an expanded concern for issues of social justice including cultural influences, diversity, race, gender, access, and an equity agenda that shapes schooling (Jean-Marie, et al., 2009; Murphy, 2006). According to Brooks, Havard, Tatum and Patrick (2010), many colleges of education are demanding that authentic, meaningful connections to practice are established and nurtured with real-time partnerships. Stronger field-based elements in preparation programs and more robust linkages/partnerships among university faculty and district- and school-based administrators have garnered more attention than ever (Brooks et al., 2010; Issa Lahera & Normore,

2012; Whitaker & Barnett, 1999) including the legitimization of practice-based advisory groups to help inform preparation program design and content.

As programs undergo development and implementation, governance structures and review teams will continuously monitor and assess their progress and modify them to incorporate changes that will strengthen programs and enhance their capacity to address the professional practices of leaders of learning. As noted by Murphy (2006), although there is concern about the quantity of empirical research projects in the field it is worth noting that these numbers are increasing. Still, researchers assert that apart from some empirical research on the cohort model, very little empirical work has been done on delivery (Barnett & Muth, 2003; Donaldson & Scribner, 2003; Preis et al., 2007). There is some scholarly literature about content and delivery issues, but clearly, this is a seriously under-investigated sphere of leadership preparation (Murphy, 2006; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Riehl, Larson, Short and Reitzug (2000) concluded in the report of American Educational Research Association's Division A Task Force on Research and Inquiry in Educational Administration that "in contrast with the growing body of teacher research, there is little evidence of similar growth within educational administration" (p. 399). Firestone and Riehl (2006) later added that research on educational leadership may have had such limited impact because so little of it has actually been done. However, according to UCEA's National Center for the Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice (2011), "high quality leadership preparation is essential to educational reform and improved student achievement" and, as a result "significant attention has been directed to research-based innovation and best practice in university-based, leadership preparation programs" (para.1).

Given the need for redesigned programs in educational leadership in US schools, we contend that leadership development programs must be authentic and focus on inspiring personal leadership development and success in others. To this end, a profoundly personal exploration of a leadership approach to program development ought to be fully aligned with, and driven by, deeply held values - where curriculum, instructional delivery, and a real-life, case-study approach to learning prompts aspiring leaders to explore the qualities of authentic leaders as well as the deeply personal core of their own leadership. In addition to examining life experiences and identifying the essence of authentic

leadership in guided exercises and case studies, programs must provide opportunities to create personal leadership development plans for those in educational leadership development programs.

For purposes of this study, we borrowed definitions from several researchers to define authentic leadership operationally. It is leadership that is indicative of "professionally effective, ethically sound, and consciously reflective practices in educational administration" (Duigan & Bhindi, 1997, p. 197) that is "knowledge-based, values informed, and skillfully executed" (Taylor, 1991, p. 39). Leadership by definition refers to practices that extend beyond the usual procedural context of organizational management (Starratt, 2004). Authentic leadership implies a genuine kind of leadership -- a hopeful, open-ended, visionary and creative response to social circumstances, as opposed to the more traditional dualistic portrayal of management and leadership practices (Begley 2003, 2001).

Research Design

The researchers on this article are comprised of two faculty members who regularly examine USL course modules in search of ways to improve content and delivery for meaningful leadership in urban contexts. An end-of-course survey was administered to the two cohorts (30 students in each cohort for total of 60 participants) who completed the USL Program at CSUDH (i.e., there were just two cohort groups in the USL program). The purpose of the survey was to solicit feedback about the program for purposes of program improvement. All cohort members participated in the end-of-course survey (approximately 65% Hispanic, 20% Black, 10% White, and 5% Asian-Pacific Islander). Numbers were assigned to ensure confidentiality of all participants and to secure the trustworthiness of data in terms of potential conflicts associated with grading and willingness to participate.

The survey was developed internally by program personnel based on: feedback from previous graduates, instructors, district leadership personnel, and community partners; and leadership preparation program research (see Preis et al., 2007; Waters et al., 2003). It contained a series of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Questions pertained to: ISLLC standard content and its meaningfulness to urban school context; effectiveness of hybrid delivery; mastery of concepts; how well-prepared students felt at the end of each course; suitability of assignments; effectiveness of cohort structure; perceived changes in behaviors,

attitudes, and dispositions around leadership, teaching, and learning; field-based project success, and; understanding of adult-learning principles.

The end-of-course survey was administered at the completion of each content course in the program. In total, there were six content courses – each with a focus on the six ISLLC standards (For non-US readers, these are National Policy Standards approved by “Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium”, 2008, and adopted in nearly all 50 US states.). The same survey was administered each time but focused on a different ISLLC standard content (e.g. ISLLC 1: Visionary leadership; ISLLC 2 – Instructional leadership; ISLLC 3 – Organizational management and human resources; ISLLC 4 – Collaborative leadership and diversity; ISLLC 5 – Ethics in educational leadership; and ISLLC 6 – Legal, political, social, and cultural leadership). The purpose of administering the same survey at the end of each course was to capture perceptions and experiences around different content material, different instructors, and different sets of outcomes.

Subsequent to data collection, we proceeded to conduct a content analysis by following the descriptions suggested by various researchers (e.g., Krippendorff, 2004; Palmquist, Carley & Dale, 1997; Riffe, Lacy, & Drager, 1996; Roberts, 1997; Thomas, 1994; Weber, 1990). These researchers contend that content analysis has most often been thought of in terms of analysis whereby concepts are chosen for examination. Due to previous research on effective leadership preparation and the expected outcomes of ISLLC standards, we focused on the occurrence of predominant items within the survey texts where these items were prevalent (e.g. leadership, meaningful content, instructional delivery and hybrid format, field-based projects, cohort effectiveness, adult learning principles, values). Once these concepts were identified in the survey data, we followed steps for conducting a content analysis as suggested in the literature (Carley, 1992; Krippendorff, 2004; Thomas, 1994) including: (a) a decision on the level of analysis; (b) the number of concepts to code for; (c) whether to code for existence or frequency of a concept; (d) how to distinguish among concepts; (e) what to do with irrelevant information; (f) code the texts; and (g) analyze the results. Keeping with the literature, findings from the survey data revealed two overarching themes that impact leadership preparation effectiveness in an environment where leadership demands and expectations are constantly changing. The balance of this article is devoted to a discussion of these two key themes: (a) *authentic curriculum content and instructional delivery within a*

virtual environment; and, (b) *field-based experiences: Cohort model and adult learning*. In the next section, we provide a brief overview of the program context, followed by a discussion of each theme.

California State University Dominguez Hills and four local districts within the greater Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) collaborated in the design and implementation of the *Urban School Leaders* program in 2008. The program is intended to develop, prepare, and retain authentic and effective aspiring and practicing urban school leaders to transform underperforming schools and improve student achievement.

CSUDH is a four-year, urban-public institution located in the South Bay region of this large urban setting. The campus is one of the most ethnically diverse in the southern region of the state, reflecting the demographics of the surrounding communities. The vision of CSUDH’s School of Education (SOE) is to maintain a model of collaborative urban educational excellence that is recognized for preparing teachers, administrators, counselors, and other specialists who work effectively with a variety of learners from diverse backgrounds. The core beliefs of the SOE stem from a strong knowledge base that includes theories and research that promote and foster access, responsive pedagogy, reflection, purposeful growth, and meaningful collaboration within and among all stakeholders and communities as integral to learning and to transforming schools.

The USL program serves LAUSD Local Districts (LD) 5, 6, 7 and 8 - all of which are contiguous and nearest in proximity to CSUDH. These LDs encompass some of the city’s poorest neighborhoods, including the East, South, South Central, and Harbour areas. There are 300,921 students in 282 Title 1 schools. The student ethnic majority in all districts is Hispanic, ranging from 62% in LD “8” to 98% in LD “6”. The second largest student ethnic group is African-American, which averages approximately 20% in LD “7” and “8.” English Learners comprise approximately 22% (LD “8”) to 48% (LD “5-6”) of the students. The Association of Administrators LAUSD is the union representing administrators in LAUSD. This association brings rich knowledge of the leadership challenges and political realities in this large urban district. A profile of these districts is seen in Table 1.

Discussion of Findings

Authentic Curriculum Content and Instructional Delivery within a Virtual Environment

Authentic leadership is proposed as the outcome of self-knowledge, sensitivity to the

orientations of others, and a technical sophistication that leads to a synergy of leadership action (Begley, 2003, 2001). Taught in a learner-centered environment, the goal of USL is for the emerging leaders to assimilate these values and incorporate them into curriculum and instruction in order to promote a transformational and constructivist leadership style.

Survey data indicated that there were too many reflective essays in the program (one per course for total of 6 reflections in content courses throughout the course of one year) and that a grading rubric served no real benefit. Given the research on the significance of reflection (May, et al., 2003; Starratt, 2007) and reflective inquiry (Normore & Jean-Marie, 2008) the data gave us opportunity to pause and reflect on our own program leadership and look for ways to promote authentic curriculum and instruction instead of continued assignments that inhibited true reflections. Refrains from survey data include the following: *“It would be more beneficial for the reflective essay to be at the end of the program rather than at the end of each course”*; *“Three reflective essays in 15 weeks are far too excessive. One reflection in the fall semester is enough”*; *I would think that the fact that our reflections are graded inhibits any honest reflection on the relevancy of the course, material, or teaching ability of our instructors”*; and *“Why use a rubric for a reflection and why restrict it to a specific length?”*

As a result of such feedback, and in our efforts to promote authentic learning experiences, we have limited the “reflective essay” requirement to one at the end of fall semester and one at the end of spring semester. Ongoing personal reflection and assessment is an integral part of such a learning experience as administrative candidates encounter new ideas and increasingly rapid societal change (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Starratt, 2004). This type of knowledge base is a foundational part of the curriculum for the personal and professional growth and development by each administrative candidate.

Although we concur with the research on the significance of reflection, we felt that our students were given too many writing reflections in too short a time (every five weeks at the end of a

Table 1. Profile of Local Districts 5, 6, 7 and 8 [LAUSD]					
	District 5	District 6	District 7	District 8	Total
Student Population					
2007 No. students	89,702	60,775	71,667	78,777	300,921
% Free/Reduced Lunch	83%	81%	81%	68%	78%
Major Ethnicity	94% Hispanic	99% Hispanic	78% Hispanic 21% Black	62% Hispanic 23% Black	83% Hispanic 12%
Schools					
No. of Schools	89	48	63	82	282
% Title I Schools	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Program Impr. Schools	59 (66%)	28 (58%)	44 (70%)	32 (39%)	163 (58%)
Certificated Staff					
No. of Teachers	4,587	3,001	3,655	3,943	15,186
% Highly Qual. Teachers	89%	87%	83%	98%	89%
No. School Administrators	204	121	161	174	660

course). As a result, reflections were repetitive in nature due the lack of time between course offerings.

Participants in the USL program encounter the topics of law, finance, instruction, ethics, organizational leadership, and facilities to name a few. Rather than teaching these topics in isolation however, as a series of traditional managerial courses, they are taught in a problem-based curriculum built upon genuine experiences of the challenges of teaching and learning encountered in actual schools working toward improved achievement for all students (Bridges & Hallinger, 1995; Orr, King, & Lapointe, 2011). Graduates of the program indicated that the use of “problems of professional practice” via case-study analyses in all six content courses was very useful in their preparation program. Common refrains noted in the surveys include: *“I enjoyed all case studies and found them to be very practical for analysis”*; *“Analyzing case studies was most beneficial”*; *“Case studies blended well with course material”*; *“Case studies were meaningful and serve a real purpose for what we do in urban schools.”*

Although the case study approach to teaching and learning was rated highly, there was a concern that more time was needed to collaborate on case study analyses as well as more time to discuss these cases after they were graded. At the core of authentic leadership preparation is a thorough understanding of teaching and learning processes not only for K-12 students, but also for the faculty and staff working with those students (Fry, O’Neill, & Bottoms, 2006; Shapiro & Hassinger, 2007; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011; Starratt, 2004).

As a result of evidence-based practice (Browne-Ferrigno, 2007; Cheney et al., 2010) and student feedback on surveys, the current USL content courses follow a common and coherent template of assignments including: case studies; assigned professional reading to small learning communities within the cohort; creative/critical literature review of current research articles on related topics to the specific ISLLC standard, and; a final in-basket scenario based on the course topic. Graduates indicated that while most instructional formats from the previous assignment template were beneficial, others were not as effective as instructional practices. For example, *“Lectures should be short, followed by activities, followed by group discussion of the activity;”* *“Lessen the use of videos;”* *“Instructor did things [his/her] way instead of sticking to the already established norms in the program;”* *“Less PowerPoint’s and more activity;”* *“Ensure blackboard assignments are aligned to instructor understanding of what’s expected.”* Because the program reflects a “culture of continuous improvement,” feedback from students in the cohorts is used to improve the program and reflect its authentic objectives. Some recent and instructional innovations include assignments and projects requiring more cooperative learning and more collaborative research such as the case study method where active learning and practical insights are discussed and shared. The use of case method teaches aspiring leaders how to assess, analyze, and act upon complex educational issues. Rooted in real-life experiences, the case method develops analytical skills, sound judgment, and the leadership potential within students. Through active engagement with cases based on real school events, students learn how to arrive at, and defend, important decisions in the face of complex or even ambiguous dilemmas (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). By conducting rigorous analyses, interacting with equally talented peers, and exercising authentic leadership skills in the classroom, students develop an increased capacity for strategic thinking and decisive action that they will bring back to their school sites (Normore & Jean-Marie, 2008; Begley & Stefkovich, 2007).

There is some experimentation with team teaching approaches to instruction. This practice models for students what is considered increasingly important in K-12 work settings, the ability to cooperate and be collegial and respectful of sensitivity. Such approaches provide for the effective modeling of relationships and ethical decision making, and gives meaning to the aphorism “how you teach is what you teach.” Coursework delivered in a coherent, spiral design integrates all new topics

studied with material presented previously, combining six content courses with pre-post leadership assessment and leadership skill development in areas such as vision building and articulation, teaching and learning/instructional leadership, change, organizational leadership, collaborative and responsive leadership, conflict resolution, social justice, communication, ethical leadership, and diversity teamwork. Analytical and process skills such as problem finding and problem solving are taught to hone decision-making skills. USL candidates learn to utilize multiple data sources, including state and national testing results and local action research in gathering and analyzing field-based information to drive school improvement efforts.

A series of practicum workshops around supervision and instruction is also provided. Following earlier research, this practicum focuses on an implementation project where the participants use data to identify instructional needs, implement what they have learned, and use outcome data to determine the project’s effectiveness (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). These workshops are designed for teams of aspiring leaders and current leaders from the same school. The team design has three purposes: to improve aspiring leaders’ skills; to connect aspiring leaders with current administrators for networking purposes; and to involve participants in a site-based practicum of workshop skills and knowledge. Further, coursework in the USL program assists emerging leaders to understand, respond to, and influence the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context of schooling not only with expertise, but also with integrity, moral character, justice, caring, and an eye toward fostering learning communities (Starratt, 2004).

A significant instructional practice in the USL program is the use of contemporary instructional technologies for delivery. In response to research that suggests the integration of instructional technologies in content delivery (Hughes, McLeod, Brahier, Dikkers, & Whiteside, 2005) the USL program is delivered in a blended hybrid format via Blackboard technology, face-to-face interaction, and field experiences. As asserted by Hughes and colleagues (2005, cited in Brooks et al., 2010, p. 422) instructional technologies “...help leaders develop an appreciation of what it means to lead in a rapidly changing world of technological advance.” Instructional technologies include on-line postings, blogs, webinars, web page development, record keeping, data presentation, Internet-based research, discussion boards, and methods to keep cohorts or other learning communities linked.

Field Based Projects: Cohort Model and Adult Learning

The USL program promotes a constructivist orientation towards teaching in which students are expected to be more responsible for their own learning and to actually construct their own knowledge through meaningful, authentic, and relevant assignments and projects. The use of inductive, problem-based learning (Bridges & Hallinger, 1995; Issa Lahera & Normore, 2012; Jackson & Kelley, 2002) grounded in adult learning theory (Murphy & Hallinger, 1987) and the reality of schools is greatly valued. Greater emphasis is also placed on the internship and learning in the workplace.

Beyond the coursework, students conduct a Field-Based Project based on a theory of action and designed to provide leadership experience at their school sites (i.e. internship component). The Field-Based Project involves the candidate's leadership ability to work with other adults on the site (i.e., teachers, counselors, coaches, etc) who in turn assesses student learning needs. It requires participants to collect continuous improvement and outcome data over a period of 9 months to more clearly demonstrate how their efforts contributed to improvement of student achievement. According to Jackson and Kelley (2002), field experiences are intended to be meaningful, values-based, and substantive and integrated into other educational experiences in order for authentic learning and growth. The USL Field-Based Project is designed to help students practice course concepts and skills that teachers will need as administrators to meet the goal of improving student outcomes (e.g., behavior, climate, attendance as well as achievement) and holding themselves accountable and responsible for the improvement every step of the way over the course of one year (Browne-Ferrigno, 2007; Issa Lahera & Normore, 2012; Orr, 2011). At the beginning of the field-based project each USL candidate is assigned to a school site mentor in a leadership role and who holds an administrative credential. Additionally, the candidate is assigned job-shadowing opportunities with practicing school or district leaders at other schools and at different levels (e.g. elementary, middle, secondary).

The cohort model is currently utilized in the USL program with the expectation that students, faculty, and school district personnel become a learning community. The cohort coordinator (university level) also serves in a mentor role and remains in close contact with the site mentor and the student as the field-based project unfolds. A cohort is defined as "a group of students who begin and complete a program of studies together, engaging in

a common set of courses, activities, and/or learning experiences" (Barnett & Muse, 1993, p. 401). Capped at 60 students for two cohorts (30 students per cohort) we concur that the cohort model is "more than a structure for delivery of a program" but, rather, think of it in terms of "a learning model for adult students" (Preis et al., 2007, p. 7).

The USL model focuses not merely on traditional discrete knowledge and content, but on a combination of knowledge, skills, and dispositions, delivered in a learner-centered setting utilizing the principles of adult learning theory, all built around standards such as those enumerated in the NCATE/ISLLC standards. Of particular interest to the USL planning personnel were survey comments such as: "*Move away from pedagogy to andragogy activities. The program is about working with adults to better serve children,*" and "*We are adults and don't need to be read to. Don't read the slides. 4 hours of lectures and being read to become a bedtime story.*" Keeping with the research, we referred back to these comments when revising program content and instructional delivery. We concur with the research that the success of the cohort model is impacted by the degree to which the faculty embrace the program at CSUDH and are effective in working with adult learners (Barbett & Muse, 1993; Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2003; Whitaker & Barnett, 1999). Since "adult learners are self-directed and have strong internal motivation, it is argued that cohort models engage them in a meaningful way" (Preis, et al., 2007, p. 5). As a result, we have included more time for "adult learning" and reiterated its values and significance when introducing and supervising all field-based project related activities.

Conclusions and Reflections

The five year USL program is a partnership program with LAUSD and intended to prepare leaders for high need schools, place aspiring leaders in high need schools, retain leaders in schools for two or more years, and provide staff development to leaders with the ultimate outcome resulting in authentic learning experiences that positively impact student achievement. USL expands the emphasis on participants' reflection on their core values and dispositions while fostering and promoting diversity, equity, ethical behavior, and excellence in order to improve interpersonal and professional practice. Principles that guide the USL program focus on the need to recruit qualified school-leader candidates especially those who are culturally, economically, and/or linguistically diverse, as well as assistant principals and principals with less than five years experience, to meet the leadership needs of

underperforming schools in LAUSD.

As we revisited the literature and examined the survey data we began to re-conceive the USL leadership preparation and development program. Our collective endeavor (i.e., local district partners, current and former students, faculty) is intended ultimately to improve education and continue to learn lessons. Based on regular feedback from students on course surveys and the program exit survey, the USL course curriculum content was modified incorporating critical tasks for academic rigor and field-based tasks for authenticity to urban schools. We held a leadership retreat in August, 2011, with all educational leadership faculty and our local district partners, where we engaged in professional discourse and dialogue around the needs of the districts and the predominant theories that drive our program – transformational and distributed leadership. Further, program personnel recognized that successful completion of an educational leadership program and passage of licensure examinations makes one eligible to serve as an assistant principal and subsequently a principal. However, becoming a successful school leader requires important dispositions, morals, ethics, values, and skills including “the integration of new knowledge into authentic practice, reflection about school leadership issues, and confidence to take calculated risks” (Browne-Ferrigno, 2007, p. 21).

We struggle to change and adapt the USL program to prepare leaders who are accountable for student performance in our urban schools. In response to the survey data and keeping with Orr (2011) and Orr and Orphanos (2011) research recommendations, we will continue to regularly track and monitor the graduates’ performance to help determine how the USL program has changed leadership practices and behaviors that have positively influenced student achievement. What we have realized is that the making of an effective educational leader is an ongoing learning process and often stimulated through active-learning experiences in schools and guided reflections about these experiences. In turn, the leadership and learning continuously improves the community of professional practice (Matthews & Crow, 2003). We need continually to revisit and revise the USL program based on the economic climate and needs of LAUSD local districts. As with other programs in educational leadership (e.g., Brooks et al., 2010; Browne-Ferrigno, 2007; Orr, 2011; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Preis, et al., 2007) we have found that keeping up with the rapidly changing expectations and demands placed on school sites and the needs of our

students has given us an opportunity to reflect on our program leadership as we move forward for authenticity in its development.

Those who have a vested interest in the development and preparation of school leaders are now at an opportune time to create and/or redesign programs that focus on developing leaders’ skills in dealing with the myriad problems facing urban, rural, and suburban schools (Issa Lahera & Normore, 2012; Jean-Marie & Normore, 2010; Orr, 2011). In the quest to improve leadership preparation, authentic models of effective programs in educational leadership have become a focal point for discussion and program improvement. In a long struggle to strike a balance between the *practice* of education and *research* in education, the field of educational leadership is seen clearly in various designs of leadership development programs attempting to meet the needs of a diverse student population (Jean-Marie & Normore, 2010). If we are to be successful as a program and demonstrate effectiveness around leadership development and preparation in the current plethora of reforms, then it is incumbent upon us as program developers and deliverers to monitor, recognize, embrace, and address program challenges and conflicts and respond accordingly. The USL program is an evolving quest to change, improve, and adjust while still maintaining rigor and authenticity within the curriculum. The challenge for us is staying abreast of ongoing, changing demands while, at the same time, meeting and exceeding NCATE, national, and state leadership standards and addressing LAUSD local districts 5-8 educational leadership needs in an economic recession period with major budgetary shortfalls. As a collective endeavor of theoretical and clinical expertise, we continue to revisit and dialogue about program content and delivery in relation to its authenticity, standards, research/evidence-based practices, relevant field experiences, and expectations of school leaders who are engaged in transforming a community of professional practice. This process informs the USL program design and/or redesign while simultaneously making us aware that there will be times when we must pause to evaluate our progress.

We examined various considerations as suggested in the literature coupled with USL survey data regarding program leadership commitment to, and capability of, preparing school leaders to think and act with credibility, courage, sensitivity, and authenticity. Yet, while we ultimately advocate for an authentic program development (meaningful integration of issues, imperatives, and concepts) approach to leadership preparation, it is important

to note that the central context for this work is the United States. We understand that while we likely identify some issues and trends that may be relevant to scholars and educators in other national contexts, we do not pretend that this work is universally applicable. Instead, we offer a context-bound analysis from the perspective of a US-based educational leadership development program and issue an invitation to a multi-national dialogue rather than propose a definitive statement about program leadership development in a greater or more prominent magnitude. The ultimate goal is to deliver a program that educates authentic leaders with credibility, strength of character, self-awareness, sensitivity, and ethics in order to positively influence the lives of children so they make a difference in the larger world. With this as our primary goal, we believe we have committed to shaping educational leaders with the integrity and capacity to build and nurture world-class schools. It is commonly known throughout the research that strong leadership rises to the top again and again as the key advantage that separates world-class schools from the rest. Great leaders are able not only to craft winning leadership and outcome strategies, but also to drive critical innovation, implement change, and create agile schools that can succeed in complex times. Similar to other leadership preparation programs, the USL program must deal with “the realities of accountability placed upon schools that will be led by younger, more inexperienced teachers and provide the necessary programmatic changes to ensure that novice leaders have the skills and support system necessary to succeed” (Bruner, Greenlee, & Hill, 2007, p. 20).

References

- Banks, J., & McGee, C. (2004). *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Barnett, B., Muth, R. (2003). Assessment of cohort-based educational leadership preparation programs. *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development*, 15, 97-112.
- Barnett, B., & Muse, I. (1993). Cohort groups in educational administration: Promises and challenges. *Journal of School Leadership*, 3, 400-415.
- Bass, B., & Steidlmeier, P. (1999). Ethics, character, and authentic transformational leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 10(1), 181.
- Begley, P., Stefkovich, J. (2007). Integrating values and ethics into post secondary teaching for leadership development: Principles, concepts, and strategies. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 45(4), 398-412.
- Begley, P. (2006). Self-knowledge, capacity, and sensitivity: Prerequisites to authentic leadership by school principals. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 44(6), 570-589.
- Begley, P. (2001). In pursuit of authentic school leadership practices. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 4, 353-366.
- Begley, P. (2003). In pursuit of authentic school leadership practices. In Begley, P.T. and Johansson, O. (eds) *The ethical dimensions of school leadership* (pp 1-12). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press.
- Bridges, E., & Hallinger, P. (1995). *Problem based learning for administrators*. University of Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
- Brooks, J., Havard, T., Tatum, K., & Patrick, L. (2010). It takes more than a village: Inviting partners and complexity in educational leadership preparation reform. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 5(12). Available [online]: http://www.ucea.org/storage/JRLE/pdf/Fall_2010_Special_Issue/12_4_Brooks_et_al.pdf
- Browne-Ferrigno, T. (2007). Developing school leaders: Practitioner growth during an advanced leadership development program for principals and administrator-trained teachers. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 2(3). Available [online]: http://www.ucea.org/storage/JRLE/pdf/vol2_issue3_2007/BrowneFerrignoArticle.pdf
- Browne-Ferrigno, T., & Muth, R. (2003). Effects of cohorts on learners. *Journal of School Leadership*, 13, 621-643.
- Bruner, D., Greenlee, B., & Hill, M. (2007). The reality of leadership preparation in a rapidly changing context: Best practice vs. reality. *The Journal of Research on Leadership Education* 2(2). [Available] online: <http://www.ucea.org/JRLE/issue.php>
- Carley, K. (1992). *Coding choices for textual analysis: A comparison of content analysis and map analysis*. Unpublished Paper.
- Cheney, G., Davis, J., Garrett, K., & Holleran, J. (2010). *A new approach to principal preparation: Innovative programs share their practices and lessons learned*. Fort Worth, TX: Rainwater Leadership Alliance.
- Clayton, J., Normore, A., Myran, S., Issa Lahera, A., Holzman, S., & Sanzo, K. (2011). *Preparing educational leaders: A conversation with aspiring leaders in SLP Grant Programs*. Symposium accepted for presentation at the annual conference of University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA), Pittsburgh, PA, Nov. 16-20, 2011.
- Council of Chief State School Officers. (1996). *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium: Standards for school leaders*. Washington, DC: Author.

- Donaldson, J., Scribner, J. (2003). Instructional cohorts and learning: Ironic uses of a social system. *Journal of School Leadership, 13*, 644-665.
- Duignan, P., & Bhindi, N. (1997). Authentic leadership: An emerging perspective. *Journal of Educational Administration, 35*, 195-209.
- Firestone, W., Riehl, C. (2006). *A 'new' agenda for research in educational leadership*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fry, B., O'Neill, K., & Bottoms, G. (2006). *Schools can't wait: Accelerating the redesign of university principal preparation programs*. Atlanta: SREB.
- Fullan, M. (2003). *The moral imperative of school leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Grogan, M. & Andrews, R. (2002). Defining preparation and professional development for the future. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 38*(2), 233-256.
- Hughes, J., McLeod, S., Brahier, B., Dikkers, A., & Whiteside, A. (2005). School technology leadership: Theory to practice. *Academic Exchange, 9*(20), 51-55.
- Issa Lahera, A., & Normore, A. (2012). *Promoting excellence and equity through inquiry and reflective practice: Transforming urban school leadership in Southern California*. Paper presented at the annual conference of American Educational Research Association (AERA), Vancouver, BC, April 13-17, 2012.
- Jackson, B., & Kelley, C. (2002). Exceptional and innovative programs in educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 38*(2), 192-212.
- Jean-Marie, G., & Normore, A. (2010). *Educational leadership preparation: Innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to the Ed.D and graduate education*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Jean-Marie, G., Normore, A., & Brooks, J. (2009). Leadership for social justice: Preparing 21st century school leaders for a new social order. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 4*(1): Available [online]: <http://www.ucea.org/current-issues/>
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Leithwood, K., Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning: Review of Research*. Commissioned by The Wallace Foundation and produced jointly by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, the University of Minnesota, and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the University of Toronto.
- Levine, A. (2005). *Educating school leaders*. Washington, DC: The Education Schools Project.
- Marzano, R., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. (2005) *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Matthews, L., & Crow, G. (2003). *Being and becoming a principal: Role conceptions for contemporary principals and assistant principals*. New York, NY: Allyn & Bacon.
- May, D., Chan, A., Hodges, T., & Avolio, B. (2003). Developing the moral component of authentic leadership. *Organizational Dynamics, 32*(3), 247-260.
- McCarthy, M. (1999). The evolution of educational leadership preparation programs. In J. Murphy & K.S. Louis (Eds.), *Handbook of research on educational administration* (pp. 119-139). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- McCarthy, M., Kuh, G. (1997). *Continuity and change: The educational leadership professoriate*. Columbia, MO: The University Council for Educational Administration,
- Murphy, J. (2006). *Preparing school leaders: Defining a research and action agenda*. Rowman & Littlefield Education, Lanham, MD.
- Murphy, J. & Hallinger, P. (1987). New directions in the professional development of school administrators: A synthesis and suggestions for improvement. In J. Murphy & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *Approaches to administrative training in education* (pp. 245-281). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- National Center for the Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice (2011)*. Retrieved on March 24 from <http://www.edleaderprep.org/>.
- Normore, A., & Jean-Marie, G. (2008). Female secondary school leaders: At the helm of social justice, democratic schooling, and equity. *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal, 29*(2), 182-205.
- Normore, A. (2007). A continuum approach for developing school leaders in a large urban school district. *UCEA Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 2*(3). Available[On-line]: <http://www.ucea.org/JRLE/issue.php>
- Orr, M. (2011). Pipeline to preparation to advancement: Graduates' experiences in, through, and beyond leadership preparation. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 47*(1), 114-172.
- Orr, M., & Orphanos, S. (2011) Conventional leadership preparation programs for principals school leaders: A comparison of the outcomes of exemplary and how graduate-level preparation influences the effectiveness of principals. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 47*(1), 18-70.
- Orr, M., King, C., & LaPointe, M. (2010). *Districts developing leaders: Lessons on consumer actions and program approaches from eight urban districts*. Washington, DC: The Wallace Foundation.

- Palmquist, M., Carley, K., and Dale, T. (1997). Two applications of automated text analysis: Analyzing literary and non-literary texts. In C. Roberts (Ed.), *Text Analysis for the Social Sciences: Methods for Drawing Statistical Inferences from Texts and Transcripts*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Preis, S., Grogan, M., Sherman, W., & Beatty, D. (2007). What the research and literature say about the delivery of educational leadership programs in the united States. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 2(2). Available [On-line]: <http://www.ucea.org/JRLE/issue.php>
- Riehl, C., Larson, C., Short, P., & Reitzug, U. (2000). Reconceptualizing research and scholarship in educational administration: Learning to know, knowing to do, and doing to learn. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 36 (3), 391-427.
- Riffe, D., Lacy, S., & Drager, M. (1996). Sample size in content analysis of weekly news magazines. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 73(3), 635-645.
- Roberts, C. (1997). *Text analysis for the social sciences: Methods for drawing inferences from texts and transcripts*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Shapiro, J., & Hassinger, R. (2007). Using case studies of ethical dilemmas for the development of moral literacy: Towards educating for social justice. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 45(4), 451-470.
- Shapiro, J. & Stefkovich, J. (2011). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education: Applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas (3rd edition)*. New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis,
- Starratt, R. (2007). Leading a community of learners: Learning to be moral by engaging the morality of learning. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 35(2), 165-183.
- Starratt, R. (2004). *Ethical leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Taylor, C. (1991). *The ethics of authenticity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Thomas, S. (1994). Artfactual study in the analysis of culture: A defense of conceptual and relational analysis in a postmodern age. *Communication Research*, 21(6), 683-697.
- Whitaker, K., & Barnett, B. (1999). A partnership model linking K-12 school districts and leadership preparation programs. *Planning and Changing*, 30 (3/4), 126-143.
- Waters, T., Marzano, R., & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.
- Weber, R. (1990). *Basic content analysis* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Young, M., & Peterson, G. (2002). The National Commission for the Advancement of Educational Leadership Preparation: An introduction. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38, (2)130-13.

EDITORIAL OBJECTIVES: The Journal of Authentic Leadership in Education (JALE) is a refereed journal established in January 2010. This journal is published quarterly, on line and in traditional paper format. JALE is a project operated by the Nipissing University Centre for the Study of Leadership and Ethics (NUCSLE). NUCSLE is part of the Centre for the Study of Leadership and Ethics (CSLE), which was established as a program centre of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) in 1996. JALE is housed in the Schulich School of Education of Nipissing University under the editorship of Dr. Ron Wideman and Dr. Heather Rintoul.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION: The editors will review all articles to determine their suitability for this publication. In addition, at least two additional reviewers will conduct blind reviews of the article.

MANUSCRIPT REQUIREMENTS: Manuscripts may be submitted directly to the editors as Word files attached to e-mail. Manuscripts should be double spaced and leave wide margins. Manuscripts should not identify the author(s) of the work. A separate page should be included which provides the author(s)' details, including contact information (address and e-mail). In addition, an abstract of 100-150 words should be included, as well as up to six keywords which identify the central subjects addressed in the manuscript. Diagrams, tables, and figures should be kept at a minimum, appear in black and white, and follow the manuscript in numbered order corresponding to numbered placeholders in the text. Footnotes and Endnotes should be avoided whenever possible. References should appear in the following format: Stanley, R. J. & Hollander, M. P. (1992). Beyond the boundaries: The quest for knowledge. *Administrative Life*, 2(3), 36-49. References and citations should be in alphabetical order, and chronological within alphabetical order. The editor reserves the right to make changes to the manuscript to ensure that it conforms to the house style. Generally, manuscripts should be between 2,500 and 5,000 words in length. Prospective author(s) must include a statement which indicates they agree to the submission of the manuscript, and that the manuscript has not been published, and is not under consideration for publication, in part or in substance, elsewhere.