EXAMINING LEADERSHIP PREPARATION THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE: A

COMPARISON OF GRADUATE EFFECTIVENESS AND IDENTIFICATION OF

PROGRAM COMPONENTS MOST VALUED

by

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The following individuals read and discussed the thesis submitted by student Randy David Lance, and they evaluated his presentation and response to questions during the final oral examination. They found that the student passed the final oral examination.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Madeleine.

May you always be a life-long learner.

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ABSTRACT

The role of the school principal has radically changed over the past half century. Many colleges of education are trying to develop alternative approaches to not only meet the needs of the adult learners who enroll in educational leadership preparation programs, but also to equip future school leaders with strategies for meeting the expectations set forth by the implementation and accountability of the No Child Left Behind legislation.

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether a difference, if any, exists between individuals who graduated from the Boise State University (BSU) non-traditional educational leadership preparation program and a sample from across the nation. This mixed-method comparative case study will examine the following two research questions: (1) How effective are graduates of a non-traditional educational leadership preparation program (BSU) currently working as school principals/vice-principals compared to a national sample? And, (2) how, if at all, do these graduates/practicing principals perceive this non-traditional preparation program (BSU) to have contributed to their effectiveness?

Quantitative data results from the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED^{TM}) survey were used to provide a summary of the school principals', teachers', and immediate supervisors' perceptions of the principals' leadership effectiveness (and leadership behaviors) and were used to provide a comparison to a national sample.

Qualitative data was also collected from semi-structured interviews with the BSU school principals to determine strengths and weaknesses of BSU's educational leadership preparation program with a particular focus on which aspects of the program they felt made them effective.

Results from the VAL-ED^{TM} survey showed significant differences between BSU's graduates' overall effectiveness scores compared to a sample within the United States. Emerging themes from graduates' interviews regarding the BSU Masters of Education in Educational Leadership (MEd Leadership Preparation) program included thinking differently, being people oriented, and connecting theory to practice. These three themes were developed by BSU MEd Leadership Preparation faculty working on problem-based learning scenarios, developing a trusting cohort structure, and utilizing practicing school administrators in various class discussions. Areas of improvement for the program consist of developing a network for post-graduates to draw upon and a stronger focus on school law.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

In the past 60 years, the role of the school principal has radically changed. At the same time, university-based leadership preparation programs have been slow to change and continue to graduate aspiring leaders who are ill-prepared to do the job (Levine, 2005; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). Increasingly, private entities are getting in the business of preparing educational leaders. Typically, these entities circumvent traditional programs in colleges of education (Orozco, 2001; Jensen, 2005). In response, some colleges of education are redesigning their leadership preparation programs to include pedagogical approaches that are not only consistent with both adult and collaborative learning theories, but also provide a support structure for aspiring leaders as they enter the demanding world of the school principalship (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

In the early 1950s, researchers indicated a need for training future educational leaders in conference and interview techniques, and the proper use of the telephone (Lawson, 1949). Some believed in the use of psychodrama, a sort of role playing activity, of the 40 most frequently encountered problems faced by principals at the time to develop competency in the handling of people (Browne, 1949). In the 1970s, preparation programs overwhelmingly focused on the effective management of schools; this resulted in principals attending less to the schools' mission and goals and more on the efficient and effective daily operations of buildings, buses, and bells (Drake & Roe,

2002). Later, in the 1980s, the American Association of School Administrators claimed that school leaders needed to develop skills in the following areas: designing, implementing, and evaluating school climate; building support for schools; developing school curriculum; instructional management; staff evaluation; staff development; allocating resources; and educational research, evaluation, and planning (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1985).

Statement of the Problem

Today, schools are being scrutinized much more closely by policy makers, taxpayers, parents, and other stakeholders, and are expected by these entities to meet heightened expectations. Numerous studies have found strong school leadership to be essential to school improvement (Fullan, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2007; Murphy, 2005b; Sergiovanni, 2001), and ultimately, it is principals who are held accountable for improving teaching and learning in each school. Educational leaders are no longer simply expected to be effective managers or supervisors. Instead, they are now being called upon to lead in the redesign of their schools and school systems. School principals are the front-line managers, the small business executives, and the team leaders charged with leading their faculties to new levels of effectiveness (Hess & Kelly, 2007). Levine (2005) noted that educational leaders of today, in an accountability-driven era, must:

> lead their school in the rethinking of goals, priorities, finances, staffing, curriculum, pedagogies, learning resources, assessment methods, technology, and use of time and space. They have to recruit and retain top staff members and educate newcomers and veterans alike to understand and become comfortable with an education system undergoing dramatic and continuing change. They have

to ensure the professional development that teacher and administrators need to be effective. They have to prepare parents and students for the new realities and provide them with the support necessary to succeed. They have to engage in continuous evaluation and school improvement, create a sense of community, and build morale in a time of transformation. (p. 12)

According to Devita (2005), school principals need to be:

educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. They are expected to broker the often-conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, district office officials, unions, state and federal agencies, and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs. (p. 25)

Finding qualified educational leaders to fill vacancies who are certificated is one problem, but finding quality educational leaders who can handle a multi-faceted role and are able to transform schools into positive and productive workplaces for teachers and vibrant learning environments for children is a much greater challenge (Davis et al., 2005). In this standards-based schooling era, accountability for results is placed directly at the individual school level; thus, finding well-prepared principals poses a remarkable challenge for many communities across the United States. According to Levine (2005) and the 2004 National Center for Educational Statistics, few of today's 250,000 school leaders are prepared to carry out the relatively new demands of the job. Furthermore, according to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics (2008), there will be a tremendous

number of vacancies in administrative positions because of the number of educational administrators expected to retire in the next ten years.

Presently, principals face a dramatically different environment than their predecessors and many existing school principals have been ill-prepared for the new demands. Principals, according to Levine (2005), are required to not only manage schools but also to lead them through an era of profound social change that necessitates a fundamental rethinking of what schools do and how they do it. Levine (2005) also claims the quality of university-based administration programs is a primary weakness in the nation's educational systems. As university preparation programs come under increased scrutiny (Lashway, 2003), colleges of education are trying to redesign ways to satisfy the critical need of preparing educational leaders for the 21st century.

One such attempt to prepare future educational leaders is through the use of non-traditional methods. These non-traditional methods include the cohort instructional model, problem-based learning scenarios (PBLs), the writing of one's theory of action, community service requirements, and incorporating current practicing school administrators into the classroom as cooperating teachers.

Significance of the Study

Effective leadership preparation is essential to meaningful educational reform and improved student achievement. Research-based innovations and best practices in university-based leadership preparation programs are wise approaches for preparing leaders who can effectively improve schools (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Davis et al., 2005; Orr, 2006). Yet nationally, few of the graduate leadership preparation programs (503 master's degree, 169 specialist degree, and 195 doctoral degree leadership preparation

programs) can ascertain program effectiveness and impact on the 16,000 masters' degree graduates they produce annually (Baker, Orr, & Young, 2007). This is primarily because access to valid, reliable methodology and infrastructure for technical assistance, data sharing, and guidance in collecting, interpreting, and using evaluation data for program improvement and enhanced leadership preparation is lacking once graduates have left and entered the workforce.

The Masters of Education in Educational Leadership (MEd in Ed. Leadership) program at Boise State University (BSU), which began in 2006, incorporates a non-traditional approach in the preparation of future educational leaders, and is the focus of this study. Today's educational leaders face the extraordinary challenge of building collaborative communities of practice in which professionals use their collective experience to address common challenges for a common purpose. The non-traditional design, as utilized in BSU MEd in Ed. Leadership preparation program, is intended to foster a community of practice among aspiring leaders. As such, it provides a first-hand experience of a learning community for leadership candidates who will need to facilitate such a community in the schools they will lead in the future (K. Budge, personal communication, November 15, 2010). In the BSU cohort model, students complete 30 credit hours over a two-year period, encompassing 5 semester modules. Potential cohort members submit an application and are chosen based on a review of the candidates' application and then a personal interview, with preference given to the selection of a cohort of diverse leadership candidates.

With full disclosure, I was a member of the first cohort. As a member of the first cohort of students, I did not find the weaknesses, as documented in the literature review,

to be true of my experience with the BSU Ed. Leadership Program. At any given time I did not feel my voice was silenced; I felt comfortable sharing my personal opinions and ideas on a variety of issues. I am, however, a white male, and was in a cohort consisting of equal numbers of males and females, the majority of whom were also white. From the beginning of my cohort experience, the professors encouraged us to have a "circle of trust" and to "turn to wonder," allowing me, and perhaps others in the cohort, to express ideas with a sense of comfort and ease. I felt able to communicate my thoughts without the fear of being condemned by my peers.

Participating in the BSU Ed. Leadership program allowed me to observe and experience positive cohort characteristics as well. The cohort in which I was involved included individuals from diverse backgrounds and a wide spectrum of experience. Students worked in all levels of education (elementary, middle, and high school), represented an array of school sizes (rural to suburban), and brought multiple levels of experience. Because cohort members did not fit the "traditional student" age, I believe deeper discussions and reflections occurred as a result of working in our unique communities and describing to one another how we would handle certain situations encountered as a school leader. There were several times, especially during our Problem-Based Learning (PBLs) scenarios, where a community of learners developed by working as one. Cohort members worked collaboratively together in small groups, similar to a leadership team within a school, and shared ideas related to a problem of practice.

Rationale for the Study

Previous literature reveals university's educational leadership faculty evaluate themselves primarily through self-critique and introspection (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Young, Creighton, Crow, Orr, & Ogawa, 2005) and many leaders are trying to find new ways to look in the mirror to self-assess and improve educational leadership preparation at both the national and state levels (Adams & Copeland, 2005; Davis et al., 2005). Though there is an abundance of evidence supporting the preparation of principals who are skilled instructional leaders, more research is needed on the relationship between preparation and the development of specific skills and behaviors needed to effectively lead instruction (Orr, 2006).

Stein and Gewirtzman (2003) proposed questions for educational leadership preparation programs, such as how does a university faculty know if it is running a "quality" program, and, how does the university know if the program does what it says it does? The most common way to evaluate the success of an educational preparation program is to look at the employability of its graduates, and the degree of satisfaction reported by the primary employers. However, when an economic downturn occurs, which characterizes the past five years, this evaluation can be inaccurate due to labor shortage and the inability for graduates to secure jobs.

In 2011, *Educational Administration Quarterly* devoted an entire journal issue to the importance of policy, practice, and research in leadership preparation education. Pounder (2011) recognized a need for educational leadership research to begin with leadership behaviors and their relationship to school conditions that subsequently influence student outcomes. She also noted future leadership inquiry would be much

more beneficial if it focused on the relationship between quality preparation program features and candidate outcomes, most notably on-the-job leadership behaviors.

Virtually every school district in the United States (N = 14,000 school districts and over 90,000 schools) requires some form of evaluation of its principals (Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, & Craven, 2009). Though many states and districts have developed their own leadership assessment tools, research conducted in urban school settings indicates that few evaluations have a conceptual framework based upon how school leaders improve student learning (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007). Not only is there a need for a valid and reliable principal leadership, there is also a need to distinguish whether a significant difference exists among types of educational leader preparation programs an individual enrolls in.

Scholars in the field point to the value of the Murphy (2005a) study, which explored school principal effectiveness measured by a valid and reliable questionnaire to ascertain what differences, if any, exist between those prepared in programs using non-traditional methods and those from a national sample. Previous researchers have noted that only limited work has been done to evaluate the effectiveness of university-based leadership preparation programs (Orr, 2003; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2004). It has only been recently that research efforts have yielded an instrument to assess effective leadership behaviors with the development of the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED[TM]).

Most of the research on particular school leadership preparation programs consists of data reported by the programs themselves, with little evidence of how graduates actually perform as principals, or how their behaviors, knowledge, and attitudes have

been shaped by their experience in the program (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, & Orr, 2010). Additionally, including the voices of teachers, who are the most reliable and relevant observers of principal behavior, has not yet been included in leadership preparation research (Pounder, 2011). Identifying any differences—potentially key differences—in effectiveness of school principals by comparing effectiveness rating results from individuals enrolled in a non-traditional model of instruction with those from a national sample, and recognizing key components that have made the non-traditional educational leadership preparation program school leaders more effective, has the potential to inform faculty in the MEd Leadership at BSU, and possibly similar programs throughout the United States.

Definitions of Terms and Conceptual Framework

Terms used in the subsequent literature review are all commonly used and understood terms in the field of education. However, for the purposes of this study, there are a few definitions relevant to the conceptual framework, hypothesis, analysis, and purpose of the study that need to be clarified.

Cohort – a group of students who begin and complete a program of study together, engaging in a common set of courses, activities, and/or learning experience (Barnett & Caffarella, 1992, p. 401).

Cohort Model – an instructional delivery structure or framework for delivering a program to train groups of people with common goals or purpose, to engage social interaction, to work collaboratively for individual and group development, to provide a supportive learning environment, to build professional connections

for networking, and to implement adult learning strategies (Basom, Yerkes, Norris, & Barnett, 1996).

Effectiveness - a measure, based on evidence, ranging from 1 (ineffective) to 5 (outstandingly effective) for 72 different leadership behaviors. Effective school leadership, as defined by Darling-Hammond et al. (2010), is that which promotes and sustains learning gains for students, professionals, schools, and districts. The VAL-ED^{TM} measures effectiveness of school leaders based upon behaviors known to directly influence teachers' performance, and in turn students' learning (Elliott, Murphy, Goldring, & Porter, 2009).

Exemplary – serving as a desirable model; representing the best of its kind.

Non-Traditional Program – emphasis on the principal as a transformational leader with the leader acting as a facilitator or mentor in a system of distributive leadership involving and utilizing the skills of the entire school community.

Traditional Program – emphasis is placed on content such as leader as manager, traditional administration and organizational theories, and series of isolated and mostly theoretical coursework.

The definitions listed above are consistent with the terms used throughout the literature. However, it should be noted that the non-traditional model used in the MEd in Ed. Leadership at BSU includes a plethora of collaboration experiences among its students as well as numerous problem-based and community-building activities within the cohort. These themes are fundamental to the program and may distinguish it from other university programs. Therefore, this program's use of community, collaboration, and cohort are the central focus of this dissertation.

Research Questions

The research questions were developed from references in the literature to cohort

models of instruction in educational leadership preparation programs. References came

from a variety of sources, including the ERIC database, books, previous doctoral student

dissertations, papers presented at conferences, and journals in higher education,

educational administration, and teacher education.

The following research questions were addressed during this study:

1. How effective are graduates of a non-traditional educational leadership

    preparation program (BSU) currently working as school principals/vice-

    principals compared to a national sample?

2. How, if at all, do these graduates/practicing principals perceive this non-

    traditional preparation program (BSU) to have contributed to their

    effectiveness?

Research Hypothesis

This study compares the effectiveness of school principals who graduated from a

particular educational leadership preparation program from the College of Education at

Boise State University with a national sample. With such a dynamic increase in the use

of non-traditional models in principal leadership preparation programs over the past ten

years, the following hypotheses were developed while investigating the effectiveness of a

particular non-traditional model in educational leadership preparation programs.

1. There is a significant difference in the effectiveness of school principals educated in a specific non-traditional model as compared to school principals from across the United States, as measured by the VAL-ED^{TM}, where:

    H_0: BSU = National Sample

    H_1: BSU $\neq$ National Sample

2. Graduates' perceptions of aspects of the BSU's educational leadership preparation program, which benefited them the most are similar to those found within the research of exemplary educational leadership preparation programs.

The next chapter examines themes in the literature related to best practices in educating adult learners, and explores methods used by exemplary school leadership preparation programs.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Two learning theories, adult and collaborative, are currently being used as backgrounds in the designs of exemplary non-traditional educational leadership preparation programs, as well as various strategies exemplary educational leadership preparation programs utilize to assist graduates' capacity to promote school improvement and student learning. Extensive research has been conducted on exemplary leadership preparation programs and quality program features. Specific program strategies include strong collaboration and teamwork through the use of a cohort structure, problem-based learning (PBL) scenarios, and the knowledge and experiences of practicing school administrators. These strategies, which are found in effective leadership preparation programs, along with the theory behind adult and collaborative learning, will be the focus of this review. Throughout the literature review, aspects of the traditional model will be compared and contrasted to the non-traditional model currently utilized in Boise State's preparation program. The latter half of the review of literature will discuss and identify the two leading standards currently used for measuring school leaders' effectiveness and knowledge.

Adult-Learning Theory

With most states requiring school principals to work as teachers in the classroom for several years prior to becoming an administrator, most individuals who enroll in an educational leadership preparation program are returning to the university scene later in their professional lives. As a result, they return to school older and with more professional experiences, which is much different from those they had earlier in their lives. One of the distinguishing characteristics of adult learning is that it is learner directed. In 1970, Malcolm Knowles, who is considered the father of adult learning, conceptualized the term "andragogy" as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (p. 38). He based the term on a set of assumptions that transformed the "learning-teacher transaction" (p. 49) from being teacher centered to learner centered. Knowles's seminal research articulated the assumption that there are significant, identifiable differences between adult learners and learners under the age of eighteen. According to Knowles, the main differences relate to the adult learner being more self-directed, having a repertoire of experience, and being internally motivated to learn subject matter that can be applied immediately. In his new learner-directed approach, the professor's role is to involve learners in as many aspects of their learning as possible and to create a climate supportive of their learning (Houle, 1996, p. 30).

A major tenet of andragogy is that most adults are problem-oriented and desire to immediately apply their learning in real-life situations (Knowles, 1970, p. 48). Sternberg (1990) identified an array of differences between learning for the everyday problems and learning for academic or test-taking situations. These are:

1. Adults must recognize problems in the real world rather than have problems identified for them by someone such as a teacher.

2. Problems have to be not only recognized but also defined because the way they are defined will determine how they are solved.

3. While problems in academic situations are usually well-structured, real-world problems are seldom structured.

4. Real-world problems are highly contextualized while school problems are decontextualized.

5. School problems have one right answer while very few real-life problems have a single right answer.

6. Relevant information is given for school problems while in real life it is often difficult to discover where to get information or even to know what information is relevant.

7. Solving real problems often requires the examination of arguments from the opposing side while most school problems teach people to confirm what they already believe.

8. While students usually get clear feedback in school on problems they face, there is seldom clear feedback on real-life problems—until it is too late.

9. While academic environments encourage individual solutions to problems, adult problem solving is usually arrived at through group decision processes.

In other studies on adults and learning, Kaagan (1998) found that learning and attitude shifts by adults are likely to be promoted by programs that do the following:

- Have a well-defined and well-integrated theory of leadership for school improvement that frames and dictates the learning goals in the program. The theory should provide coherence and provide the foundation for other program elements.

- Use preparation strategies that maximize learning, learning transfer, and leadership identity formation. These strategies include the use of cohorts, student-centered instructional pedagogies, faculty and mentor support, and opportunities to apply theory and practice.

- Provide strong content and also field experiences in leadership preparation that are intellectually challenging and offer comprehensive, coherent, and relevant experiences and high-quality internships. (Orr, 2006)

Learning strategies that provide a positive benefit for adults are those that encourage learning opportunities by promoting real-world problems rather than artificial academic situations, which is a fundamental goal found in the BSU Ed. Leadership preparation program. One such attempt at practice real-world scenarios in the BSU program is through problem-based learning scenarios (PBL's), where members of the cohort work together as "administrative teams" and discuss a variety of ways to solve problems that were designed by current, practicing school administrators.

Adult-learning theory is the foundation upon which purveyors of educational leadership preparation programs are basing their approach. A second initiative is collaborative learning, where universities are modifying curricula to support the adult student who returns to school, not as a young adolescent, but rather as an adult who has

lived through multiple experiences. By allowing students to share these experiences within the classroom, collaborative learning can occur.

Collaborative-Learning Theory

Research has demonstrated that isolation has a negative impact on the quality of work experience for educators (Cookson, 2005; Garmston, 2007; Hord, 2007). Scholars have noted a long history of isolation, deriving primarily from the nature of classrooms and the manner in which educators are spatially grouped throughout school buildings (Dreeben, 1973; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2004). More recently, the issue of school principal isolation has become more relevant, as the demands of the job have changed dramatically. Throughout the history of public education, schools have moved from having no principal, to being loosely led by "principal teachers," to having principals who must take full responsibility for all of the administrative and instructional imperatives of the institution (Dunklee, 2000). As a result, principals today make key decisions, similar to how teachers often behave in isolation (Stephenson & Bauer, 2010).

In order to remedy the isolation felt by educators, schools in charge of preparing future educational leaders are beginning to incorporate a more collaborative learning approach to their curriculum. In the book *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World* (2010), Linda Darling-Hammond, Michelle LaPointe, Debra Myerson, and Margaret Terry Orr, noted that exemplary programs for preparing school leaders have the ability, among other things, to create a collaborative learning organization. Collaborative learning is an overarching term used for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or by students and teachers together (Smith & MacGregor, 2008).

School leadership preparation programs have continually tried to identify the various roles their graduates are expected to fill. Recently, school principals have been expected to create learning environments for everyone within their school buildings, including both students and teachers. A collaborative learning curriculum enables future school leaders to create partnerships with other colleagues in their field, furthering their ability to create such environments.

Guided experiences while working in teams helps future principals recognize they are preparing to lead a team of educators at their school. The philosophy that leadership is not just vested in the principal and that instead everyone in the school has a leadership role is encouraged and fostered in programs that embrace a collaborative-learning style (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Non-traditional educational leadership preparation programs have capitalized on this idea of collaborative learning through the use of the cohort model. By establishing a curriculum that requires students to enroll in the same classes together throughout their program, students have the opportunity to build much stronger relationships than they would in a non-cohort model.

Exemplary Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

There have been extensive research studies on exemplary leadership preparation and quality programs (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Young, Crow, Ogawa, & Murphy, 2009). Common characteristics exist among these exemplary programs, which deviate from the traditional methods. These quality features have now become the basis for developing constructs for research on leadership preparation (Young et al., 2009), and include:

- A well-defined theory of leadership for school improvement that frames and integrates the program features around a set of shared values, beliefs, and knowledge.

- A coherent curriculum that addresses effective instructional leadership, organizational development, and change management, and also aligns with state and professional standards.

- Active learning strategies that integrate theory and practice and stimulate reflection.

- Quality internships that provide intensive development opportunities to apply leadership knowledge and skills under the guidance of an expert practitioner-mentor.

- Knowledgeable faculty in terms of subject matter.

- Social and professional support, including organizing students into cohorts that take common courses together in a prescribed sequence, formalized mentoring, and advising from expert principals.

- The use of standards-based assessments for candidate and program feedback and continuous improvement that are tied to the program vision and objectives. (Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011)

Conversely, traditional programs have been characterized as an ineffective way of preparing school leaders (McCarthy, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Traditional programs tend to lack vision, purpose, and coherence, with students enrolling without admissions consideration to their prior leadership experiences (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). These traditional programs also arrange their courses in a way that

is discrete, unrelated, and without connection to actual practice or local schools (Orr & Orphanos, 2011).

Studies have examined the relationship between program features, traditional vs. non-traditional models, and graduate outcomes. Leithwood, Jantzi, and Coffin (1995) found 11 non-traditional leadership preparation programs, which were redesigned through a Danforth Foundation grant initiative. The study focused on teachers who worked in schools led by graduates from the non-traditional programs, noting that the innovative use of several features by the programs such as instructional strategies, cohort membership, and program content was the most predictive of teachers' positive perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness.

The next three sections of this literature review will focus on these modern instructional strategies (PBL's, cohorts, and the use of practicing school administrators as instructors), which are prevalent in effective leadership preparation programs.

Problem-Based Learning

Problem-based learning (PBL) originally began with Howard Barrows in the 1960s as a result of concerns within the medical field. Barrows (1984) noted that critiques of medical education included the following themes:

- Studies indicated that medical graduates tended to forget a large portion of knowledge included in their coursework by the time of graduation. This was attributed largely to instructional methods that focused on memorization and development of basic understanding of bodies of knowledge.

- Doctors lacked skills in applying what they had learned to patients. This was attributed to a medical curriculum organized around academic disciplines with distal linkages to the problems that patients present to doctors.

- There was a growing perception that doctors did not care for their patients.

- Leaders in the field of medicine feared that doctors were ill-prepared for independent, continuing learning in a context where the knowledge base was changing rapidly; as learners, doctors were too dependent upon teachers, which failed to prepare them for life-long learning.

As a result of the tremendous impact it had within the medical field, the idea of PBL gained in popularity, and other disciplines such as education, law, and business began to implement PBL into their own programs.

Bridges (1992) defined PBL as an instructional learning strategy with the following characteristics:

- The starting point for learning is a problem (that is, a stimulus for which an individual lacks a ready response).

- The problem is one that students are apt to see as professionals.

- The knowledge that students are expected to acquire during their professional training is organized around problems rather than the disciplines.

- Students, both individually and collectively, assume a major responsibility for their own instruction and learning.

- Most of the learning occurs within the context of small groups rather than lectures.

PBL involves more than merely solving a problem. It is focused, experiential learning organized around the investigation and resolution of real-world problems. PBL has the ability to engage students as stakeholders and immerse them in a messy, ill-structured and problematic situation, with the curriculum organized around the holistic problem; this enables student learning in relevant and connected ways, and creates a learning environment in which teachers coach student thinking and guide student inquiry, facilitating deeper levels of understanding while entering the inquiry as a co-investigator (Torp & Sage, 2002).

This sort of learning strategy can be seen at Boise State University. The faculty in the BSU MEd Leadership Preparation program integrates PBL scenarios into the curriculum for students to offer a "real-life experience." Many times, students are given a fixed amount of time, work together in groups, and then re-assemble as a class and present their unique ways of solving the given situation. It is through these PBL scenarios that students are allowed to practice collaborating with others and work as an administrative team; this also provides them the opportunity to hear how others in the cohort would undertake the same problem.

The Cohort Model

The cohort model was influenced by early educational pioneers such as Dewey, Vygotsky, and Bruner. John Dewey (1933) discussed the idea of cohorts in his educational philosophy by encouraging collaborative learning that would "foster community and poise the teacher as more of a facilitator within a group of learners than merely as an outside authority" (p. 59). In his book, *Experience and Education* (1938), Dewey greatly encouraged relationships between teachers, learners, the curriculum, and

learning. Dewey was a strong advocate of learner-centered instruction where the teacher serves as both a facilitator and guide.

Vygotsky (1978) proposed the theory of the zone of proximal development, which consists of two levels. First, learners solve problems independently and then accomplish goals by seeking the assistance of a more knowledgeable peer (John-Steiner & Mahn, 2003). Vygotsky believed that having the same group of peers interacting and sharing their learned experiences would further one's own knowledge and understanding (Unzueta, 2008).

The cohort model was also reflected in Jerome Bruner's (1996) philosophy of education. Bruner commented that "one of the most promising experiments is that of mutual learning cultures…sharing of knowledge, ideas, mutual aid in mastering material, division of labour and exchange of roles, and opportunity to reflect" (Bruner, 1996, p. xv). The cohort model is designed so students and teachers/professors are mutual learners; opportunities are built into the structure to facilitate group work as well as personal reflection.

Cohorts have traditionally been an integral part of medicine and law programs, but have only recently emerged in other areas of study (Agnew, Mertzman, Longwell-Grice, & Saffold, 2008). Student cohorts have been used intermittently in university programs outside the professional schools since the 1940s; depending on how well such a collaborative approach fit the prevailing views of curriculum theory (Maher, 2004). Today cohort models are used across a wide range of higher education programs, particularly in programs designed to attract non-traditional (age twenty-five and older) part-time students who may also be employed full-time (Maher, 2005). Adult-learning

theory theorizes that powerful learning happens through doing, and adults most easily remember knowledge they put to immediate use (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Coming, Garner, & Smith, 2000; Knowles, 1990). Merriam and Caffarella (1999) indicate that adults' greatest learning occurs when they can direct their own learning, influence decision making, focus on problems relevant to practice, utilize their vast experiential background, and build strong relationships with peers. Stein and Gewirtzman (2003) found that when adults preparing to become educational leaders participate in learning opportunities in which they solve problems, trigger and incorporate prior knowledge, and reflect critically on their problem-solving practices, they engage in a process of constructing the new knowledge they will need when they encounter similar problems in the future.

These established strategies are all ways in which the non-traditional educational leadership model helps meet the distinctive needs of the adult learner. Social psychologists have demonstrated that groups become cohesive when participants can reflect on their accumulating experience, evaluate their own learning, and rely on others in the group for support (Basom et al., 1996). Basom et al. (1996) noted that "when programs are developed with these principles in mind, cohort members become active learners, trusting in their individual capabilities and depending on each other for guidance" (p. 102).

With its long history of success in other disciplines, the cohort model has the propensity to unite people from various backgrounds for the common cause of educational leadership preparation. Universities across the nation have taken notice and

have replicated the cohort design to match the relationship building that often occurs within school administrative teams.

Cohort Models Used in Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

Educational leadership preparation programs began using graduate student cohort groups as early as the 1950s. Foundations and reform initiatives, such as the Kellogg Foundation, the Cooperative Program in Educational Administration (CPEA), and the Leadership in Education in Appalachian Project, offered students instruction in the cohort designs (Achilles, 1994). These early attempts at cohorts disappeared over time, mostly due to lack of funding; thus, the cohort model has not yet become institutionalized within the university system (Basom et al., 1996).

In the 1980s, the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986), the National Commission for Excellence in Education (1987), and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (1989) produced reports that were critical of existing educational administration preparation programs (as cited in Barnett & Caffarella, 1992). These reports reviewed the ways school administrators across the nation were being prepared and endeavored to strengthen the standards designed to assess the quality of professional preparation training received by aspiring educational leaders. Parts of the reports discussed the lack of rigor in the preparation programs as well as the inattention to matters of curriculum and field experiences (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). An aim of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy was to do for education what the Carnegie Corporation did for medical standards and prestige (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1988). The National Commission for Excellence in Education offered a number of recommendations to restructure "the national

understanding of the requirements for educational leadership of the future" (p. xvii). All three studies helped determine the need to restructure educational leadership programs and curriculum for preparing school leaders more effectively; the studies also emphasized the need for increased collegial interaction.

In 1986, The Danforth Foundation responded to criticisms of educational administration preparation programs by creating the Danforth Program for the Preparation of School Principals (DPPSP) (Milstein, 1992). Though it began with just four principal preparation programs in 1987, five years later twenty-two universities participated in the Danforth initiative. The Danforth plan included improving communication between the universities and schools; emphasizing recruitment of candidates rather than self-selection; improving the recruitment and retention of women and minorities in principal preparation; increasing hours of field experiences; increasing attention of instructors to needs and characteristics of adult learners; enlarging the scope and duration of their preparation beyond school and university; and studying and revamping university coursework (Ohana, 2004).

As a result of the DPPSP, universities had the opportunity to restructure their educational leadership programs, but were asked to include integral features that the DPPSP believed to be associated with exemplary preparation of administrators. These attributes regarded methods used for the recruitment and selection of students, the structure of the program, internships, mentors, program content, and the use of cohorts (Leithwood et al., 1995). The DPPSP initiative is thus credited for the cohort model, which became a structure to develop educational leaders who exemplified qualities consistent with the educational theories of the times (Anstrom, 1999).

Though the participating educational leadership preparation programs had similar features, they were also unique in certain ways. Yerkes, Basom, Norris, and Barnett (1995) discussed differences in the features of the DPPSP, including the use of cohorts. Though most programs had closed cohorts, some utilized an open cohort, while some even allowed for a fluid cohort membership. The number of students enrolled in a cohort varied from as few as five to over thirty, and the instructional leadership varied from a single faculty member taking responsibility for all coursework to a cohort team of professors (Ohana, 2004).

Thanks to the efforts of the Danforth Foundation, it is only recently that cohort models have become more commonplace. A 1995 study by the Center for the Study of Preparation Programs found that "half of the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) units used cohorts at the master's level and 80% used them at the doctorate level" (as cited in McCarthy, 1999, p. 128). Another study of 223 university educational leadership programs in 2000 found that 63 percent used graduate student cohort groups in their preparation programs (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000). Increasing numbers of educational leadership programs are moving to a cohort model with the expectation that students and faculty become a "learning community" much like what is expected in K-12 schools (Chenoweth, Carr, & Ruhl, 2002). As a result, there appears to be movement away from the traditional, self-paced 3-credit course design, with universities moving instead toward cohort models that integrate modules of study requiring cooperative learning, collaborative research, and reflective practice.

Despite what appears to be many benefits of cohort models, Saltiel and Russo (2001) note:

Cohort-based programs should be viewed within the context of other program models. They will not supplant traditional programs in institutions but will instead complement them by bringing in students and resources that probably would not have come to a traditional program. These students expand the networks of administration and faculty. The specificity of cohort-based programs are, by design, limited to a precisely defined student with distinct and clear goals that cannot be met by the traditional academic program model. It is this basic tenet of the cohort-based program that will expand your organization. If you build a cohort-based program, they will come. (p. 112)

Educational leadership preparation programs across the nation have seen many benefits from the cohort-model design. Though the use of cohorts in preparing school leaders is relatively new, research indicates that there are considerable strengths to the design.

Cohort Strengths

Multiple benefits for both students and faculty have been identified with the use of the cohort model in a variety of educational settings, most notably leadership preparation programs. Documented benefits of the cohort design include accelerated learning, greater diversity of student participation, a reality to the daily activities of school leader practice, a higher percentage of students completing the program, stronger relationships amongst the students, development of a community of learners and transformative leaders, and intellectual stimulation. Kraus and Cordeiro (1995) noted that cohorts tend to increase the academic performance of group members and promote their own reflective abilities. Students reported in interviews that going through their

graduate program as a group allowed for accelerated learning, more productive dialogues, the development of a closer relationship with professors, and an enhanced opportunity to learn from the expertise of others. While studying the outcomes of learning in cohorts within an educational leadership preparation program, Norris and Barnett (1994) reported that students viewed their learning to be more meaningful, relevant, and self-directed. Also, the process of combining theory with reality was much more enhanced, and students were better able to clarify their values and personal belief systems for future use as school leaders.

Cohort models encourage a much broader spectrum of students to participate due to the nature of their structure and format. Prospective educational leaders are typically teachers already, and are usually individuals who are working full-time and do not fit the "traditional student" age. Typically, these non-traditional students have other commitments in their lives, such as a full-time job, a family, and other responsibilities that undergraduates tend to not have (Fallahi & Gulley, 2008). As a result, pursuing a graduate program can seem especially difficulty to them, and if they do seek a program, they usually look for one that will help them reach their goal in a short period of time (Fallahi & Gulley, 2008).

Within the context of educational leadership programs, the cohort model mimics the reality in which school leaders practice their daily activities. Basom et al. (1996) suggested that "to view cohorts simply as a method of course delivery, as a vehicle for socialization, as a convenient scheduling design, or as a fashionable approach to program delivery, is to do the cohort structure a great injustice" (p. 20). Teitel (1997) asserted that the cohort model has a tremendous potential for developing the kind of collaborative,

transformational leaders that are needed in schools today. Yerkes et al. (1995) identified three critical aspects of cohort development. They include a sense of common purpose, influence on each other through social interaction, and individual and group development. When all three of these critical aspects of cohort development are combined, they help to promote transformational leadership.

Whitaker, King, and Vogel (2004) assessed student perceptions of a reformed leadership development program. The students noted that the use of cohort learning was an esteemed element of the program. Although effective use of cohorts in higher education requires considerable collaboration and additional work for the faculty (Muth & Barnett, 2001), the cohort model has the special ability to build relationships among the participants, as well as among practicing administrators who can serve as mentors, and provides networks of professional support that promote both entry into administration and the retention of school leaders (Whitaker et al., 2004). The cohort model also allows for a sequential set of learning experiences and greater connection between theory and internship activities. Jackson and Kelley (2002) reviewed data (phone interviews with program administrators and through document collection and review) collected on the characteristics of six school and district administrator preparation programs identified by experts in the field as exceptional or innovative and discovered that virtually all exemplary leadership preparation programs are cohort based.

Maher (2005) investigated what it meant to belong to a cohort and how belonging influenced students' relationships with one another and with the instructor. Major themes relating to community learning included seeing peers as part of family; seeing peers as part of a task-oriented team; a comfort zone or mindset of being accepted; and the ability

to learn through small group participation. Potthoff et al. (2001) identified the family atmosphere as the most powerful theme in their study, along with the importance of faculty support. Qualitative research on cohorts indicates that working in a cohort improves an individual's ability to acquire new knowledge and perspectives, as well as improving one's academic standing and personal expectations regarding learning (Hill, 1995; Potthoff et al., 2001).

The cohort model has the ability to be beneficial in developing a community of learners. Lawrence (2002) observed how cohort-learning groups in higher education create and sustain community. He stated that "cohorts foster a spirit of cooperation by involving the members in a collaborative decision making… [and] they recognize that individual success depends on the success of the collective" (p. 86). He also noted that how these communities (cohorts) develop is important to the learning process:

Communities develop over time and with intention…members of the community must come to know each other and develop a respect for one another's strengths, weaknesses, similarities, and differences. When commitment is high and contributions from all members are valued, communities have the potential to co-create knowledge, make effective decisions and affect change. (p. 84)

McPhail, Robinson, and Scott (2008) surveyed 50 first and second-year doctoral students and conducted two focus groups with a total of 20 doctoral students. The overall guiding question used throughout their inquiry was "How do doctoral students as a 'community of learners' perceive their experience in a cohort preparation program?" They identified the positive aspects of the closed cohort model with the doctoral students

in the community college leadership program, citing improved completion rates, collegial partnerships, and provision of group-based exercises.

Furthermore, research regarding cohort programs in educational leadership indicates the majority of university administrators, faculty, and students praise cohort programs as vehicles for influencing student values, increasing student interaction, and also encouraging interdependence (Barnett et al., 2000; Norris & Barnett, 1994).

Other studies of programs at the doctorate level show a positive view of cohort development, which provides the students with collaborative learning and shared knowledge, diverse learning options, interdependence and interaction, and unique instruction and facilitation (McPhail, 2001; Reynolds & Herbert, 1998). When participants responded to a survey that explored the value of certain characteristics in DPPSP programs, participants noted that "the highest value was attributed to opportunities provided in their program participation within their cohort group, particularly activities such as engaging in group learning and developing and sharing in a common purpose" (Leithwood et al., 1995). Research also shows that students involved in cohorts within university settings describe receiving psychological support from group members, feeling a reduced sense of loneliness, and developing strong affiliations (Hill, 1995; Kasten, 1992).

Involvement in a cohort model has also been shown to improve academic success and members describe cohort participation as being intellectually stimulating, which was found by Eifler, Potthoff, and Dinsmore (2004) as they explored the effectiveness of peer instruction by collecting data with the use of a 73-item Likert-type scale instrument, which asked participants to self-assess their learning within a cohort. The improved

academic success fostered by the cohort model also leads to improved success in the member's chosen field (Ross, Stafford, Church-Pupke, & Bondy, 2006). Therefore, students who participate in the cohort model are more successful as they make their way through their individual programs; and upon graduation, they become more successful when they have the opportunity to practice their craft.

The cohort model, with all of its documented strengths and benefits, has also had its critics who believe the representation of cohorts in the literature is inaccurate, and may actually be doing a disservice to students.

Cohort Weaknesses

While many researchers have identified a plethora of benefits related to the use of the cohort model, some studies have noted disadvantages of using this technique. Cohort weakness noted in the research includes mimicking the troubles of contemporary culture burdening faculty members, forming relationships that can begin to strain over time, and the development of cliques. One area of concern within the cohort model is that it may copy society's hierarchical power structure. Agnew et al. (2008) claimed the cohort model replicated society's ills, and questioned the degree to which marginalized students, such as minorities and women, could find their voice in the cohort forum. Burbels and Rice (1991) found that there may be tacit rules of communication within some cohorts, which may demoralize, intimidate, or silence student voices.

Another shortcoming is the direct impact that the model may have on faculty members. Barnett and Muse (1993) indicated that cohort students demand more time from their instructors than students in traditional program settings and are more likely to challenge conventional instructional approaches and the relevance of the content, which

can lead to rising tension between faculty and students. The faculty advisement workload

for a professor involved in the cohort method of instruction becomes greater, and as a

result, there is a possibility of a division among those faculty members who are and those

who are not teaching in a cohort program (Norton, 1995).

Additionally, though interpersonal relationships have been noted as benefits of the

cohort model, they have also been identified as a disadvantage. As cohort members

begin to develop friendships with one another, and spend more and more time together,

personal conflicts can emerge. Also, because of the close friendships and familiarity that

develops within cohorts, students' personal dilemmas, such as marital and family

problems, may become more visible among group members (Barnett & Muse, 1993).

Students may also feel threatened academically by others in the cohort. Hill

(1995) discovered academic competitions among group members and found that students

began feeling a sense of pressure to monitor others in the cohorts who were not

performing adequately. Faculty members do not necessarily agree that cohort members

are well served, identifying problems with increased time demands placed upon them,

possible grade inflation, a few students dominating the group, and a "watering down" of

the curriculum as a result of exposing students to less theory (Norton, 1995).

Another problem with the cohort model is the tendency for the formation of

cliques. The negative influence of cliques was reported by Dinsmore and Wenger

(2006), where students who were not part of the "in crowd" had a sense of feeling left

out. Indeed, although cliques occur within most groups, this one potential negative of

cohorts is important to note, especially in small closed cohorts, where its development

has the greatest impact. Wesson, Holman, Holman, and Cox (1996) observed evidence of

"collusion" and inappropriate forms of interaction in a cohort that encouraged the use of markers at intervals throughout to check appropriateness of self-organizing.

One weakness that resonated with me from the research and mirrored my experience in the cohort concerned the issue of cliques. In my cohort, there were individuals who connected immediately and began to spend time together after class. I made friendships that were stronger with some of the cohort members than others, and would often share experiences or events with those few individuals rather than with everyone in the cohort. Often, cliques became evident during out of classroom times such as determining where to go to lunch, as well as with whom to study or share reflective writing pieces. Nonetheless, because my experience with the cohort model was largely positive, I will continuously guard any bias it may present as I conduct this proposed study. To ensure that I guard against my biases, I will conduct journal writings and monitor myself as I interview participants.

In 2006, a group of students came together to become the initial BSU MEd Leadership cohort. In 2008, these same individuals who came together through coursework, problem-based scenarios, study sessions, and out of area retreats, earned the right to graduate and became certified within the state of Idaho to hold a credential for an Administrator School Principal. Similarly, as other cohorts have begun and graduated, currently five in total, these individuals from BSU's Ed. Leadership program have searched and accepted employment as school administrators throughout the state. One cannot help but wonder if the preparation they received, especially that of the cohort model, has enabled them to become an effective school leaders.

Utilization of Practicing School Administrators in Leadership Preparation

Several approaches have been used to incorporate practitioners in the training of school leaders. The first approach is to hire practitioners as adjunct instructors. With universities generally providing minimal guidance or direction for the courses to be taught, practitioners choose what they want to teach and therefore may or may not have any connection to the overall study of the program, and may or may not duplicate the readings or assignments in other courses, or reflect, build, or nurture the information the students encounter in other courses (Stein & Gewirtzman, 2003).

The second approach is to make a "parallel play" of both the professors and practitioners, where they both contribute what they think aspiring leaders should know and be able to do (Stein & Gewirtzman, 2003). In this scenario, professors provide the theoretical perspective while practitioners discuss the daily realities, but a shortcoming of this approach is that the knowledge they communicate is rarely integrated. Known as "Christmas Tree Schools," students are decorated with knowledge on various reform efforts that never come together as a collective whole (Bryk, Easton, Kerbow, Rollow, & Sebring, 1993).

However, a different model of course delivery involves the idea of co-construction (Stein & Gewirtzman, 2003). This method includes professors and practitioners coming together in one classroom and teaching what they know from their respective situations. Hale and Moorman (2003) found university-based programs that get the highest marks for preparing principals to meet demands of the job in the 21st century are often viewed as deviations from the norm. The programs they found to be exceptional had, among other things, faculty working together with practicing school

administrators to develop and integrate the program in ways that enable students to

master identified critical competencies. These types of programs tend to be more

demanding of participants, more coherent and focused, pay closer attention to the

scheduling and sequencing of courses, and have strong collaboration with area districts

(Jackson & Kelley, 2002).

The final section of this literature review examines the standards used for

measuring school leaders and the rationale for the choice of using the VAL-ED^{TM} survey

as an instrument to assess effectiveness.

Standards for Measuring School Leaders

Assessing school principals has become necessary due to increased demands

placed upon schools with the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002.

By measuring the effectiveness of school leaders, districts have a way of ensuring

accountability for results and emphasizing strong leadership practices. During the past

few years, many states have started to use validated measures in summative assessments

of beginning principal competency as a basis for certification decisions. At present,

Idaho does not require school leaders to take a test for school leadership certification.

Though these measures are psychometrically sound, they cannot be used as formative

performance assessments or serve as the basis for professional development planning

(Reeves, 2005).

A common set of standards known as the Standards for School Leaders was

developed in 1996 by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), a

group developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers in collaboration with the

National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA), to help strengthen

school leadership preparation programs (VanMeter & McMinn, 1998). These newly written standards for school leaders provide a set of common expectations for the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of school leaders, grounded in principles of effective teaching and learning (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). They were adopted "to focus on standards" because "they were convinced that standards provided an especially appropriate and particularly powerful leverage point for reform"; they "found a major void in this area of educational administration – a set of common standards remains conspicuous by its absence," and they believed that "the standards approach provided the best avenue to allow diverse stakeholders to drive improvement efforts along a variety of fronts" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996). As of 2005, 41 states have either adopted the ISLLC standards or aligned their own standards with ISLLC's for use in reforming educational administration certification programs in their states (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). Furthermore, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has used them to develop their own standards, tens of thousands of principal licensure candidates have taken the ISLLC licensing exam, and hundreds of preparation programs have revised their curricula to be aligned with the ISLLC standards.

Organizations such as the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) have recommended the use of ISLLC standards by their memberships. Though other organizations, such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the American Association of School Administration (AASA), have their own set of standards for their own memberships, they all use the ISLLC standards in some way. Van, Meter

and McMinn (1998) noted that ISLLC's standards were different from previous efforts because of their "specific focus on high expectations of success anticipated for 'all' students, their emphasis on teaching and learning as the primary grounding for school leadership, and because of the importance the standards place on beliefs and values in providing direction for school leaders" (p. 32).

The following are the six ISLLC's Standards for School Leaders:

1. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared by the school community.

2. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional growth.

3. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

4. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, and mobilizing community resources.

5. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

6. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

In 2001, the NAESP combined its Standards for Quality Elementary and Middle Schools and Proficiencies for Principals into a new document entitled "Leading Learning Communities: NAESP Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do." The following standards are included in this publication:

1. Lead schools in a way that places student and adult learning at the center.

2. Set high expectations for the performance of all students and adults.

3. Demand content and instruction that ensures student achievement of agreed upon academic standards.

4. Create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals.

5. Use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement.

6. Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.

Several principal performance assessments have been developed, including the Change Facilitator Style Questionnaire (Vandenberghe, 1988), Diagnostic Assessment of School and Principal Effectiveness (Ebmeier, 1992), Instructional Activity Questionnaire (Larsen, 1987), Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2002), Performance Review Analysis and Improvement System for Education (Knoop & Common, 1985), Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), Principal

Profile (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986), and the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED[TM]) (Porter, Murphy, Goldring, & Elliott, 2006).

Though these performance assessments evaluate quality and accountability, Condon, Clifford, and Milanowski (2010) note that few have been rigorously developed or make details of their psychometric testing available for public review. One explanation for this is that few of the assessments are being used in the field, but Goldring et al. (2009) propose that many different principal performance assessments of varying quality are being employed. There are also several different approaches to collecting data within the diverse assessments, including some using "more intensive 360-degree surveys from multiple constituents to create an aggregate profile, which can provide comparative information based on multiple perspectives to principals about their performance" (Condon et al., 2010, p. 10). For the purposes of this study, the VAL-ED[TM] was chosen because not only is it a 360- degree survey instrument, it has also undergone psychometric testing for both validity and reliability. The final section of this literature review discusses the VAL-ED[TM] in further detail.

The VAL-ED[TM] Survey

The VAL-ED[TM] is a conceptually and theoretically grounded survey instrument used to obtain reliable and valid scores, which can be used to evaluate learning-centered leadership. It was chosen for use in this research study as a result of its conceptual framework based on the review of the learning-centered leadership research literature, its alignment to the ISLLC standards, its 360-degree survey technique, and its documented psychometric testing, notably of which it is the only school administrator assessment that is accessible to the public.

The VAL-ED^{TM} focuses on two key elements of leadership behaviors: core components and key processes. The authors of the VAL-ED^{TM} believe school leadership assessments should include measures that intersect these two elements (Goldring et al., 2009). Core components are defined as characteristics of schools that support the learning of students and enhance the ability of teachers to teach (Marks & Printy, 2003; Sebring & Byrk, 2000). Key processes are behaviors associated with the processes of leadership that raise organizational members' level of commitment and shape organizational trust (Leithwood, 1994). Thus, the ultimate goal of the VAL-ED^{TM} is to assess the convergence of what principals must accomplish to improve academic and social learning for all students (core components) and how they create those core components (key processes).

Six core components represent the constructs of effective learning-centered instructional school leadership that is found in the literature. The VAL-ED^{TM} user's guide (Elliott et al., 2009) describes them as:

1. <u>High Standards for Student Learning</u>. High standards for student learning is defined as the extent to which leadership ensures there are individual, team, and school goals for rigorous student academic and social learning. Considerable evidence indicates that a key function of effective school leadership concerns shaping the purpose of the school and articulating the school's mission (Hallinger & Heck, 2002; Knapp et al., 2003; Murphy et al., 2007). Research over the last quarter century has consistently supported the notion that having high expectations for all, including clear and public standards, is one key to closing the achievement gap between advantaged and

less advantaged students, and for raising the overall academic achievement of all students (Betts & Grogger, 2003; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Newmann, 1997; Purkey & Smith, 1983).

2. <u>Rigorous Curriculum</u>. A rigorous curriculum is defined as the content of instruction, as opposed to the pedagogy of instruction, which is dealt with in the following section. Rigorous curriculum is defined as ambitious academic content provided to all students in core academic subjects. School leaders play a crucial role in setting high standards for student performance in their schools. These high standards, however, must be translated into ambitious academic content represented in the curriculum of student's experience. Murphy and colleagues (2007) argue that school leaders in productive schools are knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the school's curricular program. These leaders work with colleagues to ensure that the school is defined by a rigorous curriculum program in general and that each student's program, in particular, is of high quality (Newmann, 1997; Ogden & Germinario, 1995). Learning-centered leaders ensure that each student has an adequate opportunity to learn rigorous content in all academic subjects (Boyer, 1983).

3. <u>Quality Instruction</u>. Quality instruction is defined as effective instructional practices that maximize student academic and social learning. This component reflects research findings over the course of the past few decades about how people learn (National Research Council, 1999). Effective instructional leaders understand the properties of quality instruction and find ways to

ensure that quality instruction is experienced by all students in their schools. They spend time on the instructional program, often through providing feedback (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

4. <u>Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior</u>. Research has demonstrated that schools organized as communities, rather than as bureaucracies, are more likely to exhibit academic success (Bryk & Driscoll, 1985; Lee, Smith, & Croninger, 1995; Louis & Miles, 1990). Further, research supports the notion that effective professional communities are deeply rooted in the academic and social learning goals of the schools (Little, 1982; Rosenholtz, 1989). Often termed teacher professional communities, these collaborative cultures are defined by elements such as shared goals and values, focus on student learning, shared work, deprivatized practice, and reflective dialogue (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996). School leadership plays a central role in the extent to which a school exhibits a culture of learning and professional behavior and whether integrated professional communities exist (Bryk, Camburn, and Louis, 1999; Louis et al., 1996).

5. <u>Connections to External Communities</u>. Leading a school with high expectations and academic achievement for all students requires robust connections to the external community. There is a substantial research base that has reported positive correlations between family involvement and social and academic benefits for students (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). A study of standards-based reform practices, for instance, found that teacher outreach to parents of low-performing students was related to improved student

achievement (Westat and Policy Studies Associates, 2001). Similarly, schools with well-defined parent partnership programs showed achievement gains over schools with less robust partnerships (Shaver & Walls, 1998). Learning-centered leaders play a key role in both establishing and supporting parental involvement and community partnerships.

6. <u>Performance Accountability</u>. Accountability stems from both external and internal accountability systems (Adams & Kirst, 1999). External accountability refers to performance expectations that emerge from outside the school and the local community. Simultaneously, schools and districts have internal accountability systems with local expectations and individual responsibilities. Internal goals comprise the practical steps that schools must take to reach their targets. Schools with higher levels of internal accountability are more successful within external accountability systems, and they are more skillful in areas such as making curricular decisions, addressing instructional issues, and responding to various performance measures (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Elmore, 2005). Learning-centered leaders integrate internal and external accountability systems by holding their staff accountable for implementing strategies that align teaching and learning with achievement goals and targets set by policy makers.

Additionally, the VAL-ED^TM conceptual framework features six key process constructs. Following a systems view of organizations, the authors acknowledge that the processes are interconnected, recursive, and reactive to one another. Again, the VAL-ED^TM User Guide (2009) explains in detail each of the six key processes:

1. Planning. An essential process of leadership is planning. Planning is defined as articulating shared direction and coherent policies, practices, and procedures for realizing high standards of student performance. Planning helps leaders focus on resources, tasks, and people. Learning-centered leaders do not see planning as a ritual or as overly bureaucratic; they engage in planning as a mechanism to realize the core components of the school. Effective principals are highly skilled planners and, in fact, they are proactive in their planning work (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Planning is needed in each of the core components because it serves as an engine of school improvement that builds common purpose and shared culture (Goldring & Hausman, 2001; Teddlie, Stringfield, Wimpleberg, & Kirby, 1989).

2. Implementing. After planning, leaders implement. In a comprehensive review of the research on implementation of curriculum and instruction, Fullan and Pomfret (1977) concluded that "implementation is not simply an extension of planning… it is a phenomenon in its own right" (p. 336). Effective leaders take the initiative to implement and are proactive in pursuing their school goals (Manasse, 1985). Learning-centered leaders are directly involved in implementing policies and practices that further the core components in their schools (Knapp et al., 2003). For example, effective leaders implement joint planning time for teachers and other structures as mechanisms to develop a culture of learning and professional behavior (Murphy, 2005a). Similarly, they implement programs that build productive parent and community relations as

a way to achieve connections to external communities (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

3. <u>Supporting</u>. Leaders create enabling conditions by securing the financial, political, technological, and human resources necessary to promote academic and social learning. Supporting is a key process that ensures that the resources necessary to achieve the core components are available and used effectively. This notion is closely related to the transformational leadership behaviors associated with helping people be successful (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). The literature is clear that learning-centered leaders devote considerable time to supporting teachers, for example, in their efforts to strengthen the quality of instruction (Conley, 1991; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). This support takes varied forms. Leaders demonstrate personal interest in staff and make themselves available to them (Marzano et al., 2005). Leaders also provide support for high-quality instruction by ensuring that teachers have guidance as they work to integrate skills learned during professional development into their instructional behaviors (Murphy et al., 2007).

4. <u>Advocating</u>. Leaders promote the diverse needs of students within and beyond the school; advocating for the best interests and needs of all children is a key process of learning-centered leadership (Murphy et al., 2007). Learning-centered leaders advocate for a rigorous instructional program for all students. They ensure that policies in the school do not prevent or create barriers for certain students to participate in classes that are deemed gateways to further learning, such as algebra. They ensure that special needs students receive

content-rich instruction. Similarly, effective leaders ensure that all students

are exposed to high-quality instruction and they manage the parental pressures

that often create favoritism in placing students in particular classes.

Additionally, leaders ensure that both the instruction and content of the

school's educational programs honor diversity (Ogden & Germinario, 1995;

Roueche & Baker, 1986). Through advocacy, learning-centered leaders work

with teachers and other professional staff to ensure that the school's culture

both models and supports respect for diversity (Butty, LaPoint, Thomas, &

Thompson, 2001; Goldring & Hausman, 2001).

5. Communicating. Leaders develop, utilize, and maintain systems of exchange

    among members of the school and with the school's external communities. In

    studying school change, Crandell and Loucks (1982) found that "principals

    played major communication roles, both with and among school staff, and

    with others in the district and in the community" (p. 42). Learning-centered

    leaders communicate unambiguously to all the stakeholders and constituencies

    both in and outside the school about the high standards for student

    performance (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Knapp et al., 2003). Leaders

    also communicate regularly and through multiple channels with families and

    community members, including businesses, social service agencies, and faith-

    based organizations (Edmonds & Frederiksen, 1978; Garibaldi, 1993;

    Marzano et al., 2005). Through ongoing communication, schools and the

    community serve as resources for one another that inform, promote, and link

    key institutions in support of student academic and social learning.

6. <u>Monitoring</u>. Monitoring is defined as leaders systematically collecting and analyzing data to make judgments that guide decisions and actions for continuous improvement. Early on, the effective schools literature identified the key role of instructional leadership as monitoring school progress in terms of setting goals, assessing the curriculum, and evaluating instruction (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Learning-centered leaders monitor the school's curriculum, assuring alignment between rigorous academic standards and curriculum coverage (Eubanks & Levine, 1983). They monitor students' programs of study to ensure that all students have adequate opportunity to learn rigorous content in all academic subjects (Boyer, 1983; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Learning-centered leaders also undertake an array of activities to monitor the quality of instruction, such as ongoing classroom observations (Heck, 1992). Monitoring student achievement is central to maintaining systemic performance accountability.

Summary

Today's schools require a certain kind of leader in order to be effective. This leader needs to be a collaborator, thinker, problem-solver, team-player, transformer, and possess many other attributes. Increased demands have been placed upon universities to prepare such educational leaders and there are many models used by them; however, limited research has been done to evaluate the effectiveness of university-based leadership preparation programs (Murphy & Vriesenga, 2004). Critics of educational leadership preparation programs argue that the programs have not systematically examined the efficacy of their own practice. Overwhelmingly, surveys and interviews of

principals show that preparation programs do not prepare principals sufficiently for the enormous demands of their job (Schulman, Golde, Bueschel, & Garabedian, 2006). In general, research points to the benefits of the non-traditional model, as with Orr, Silverberg, and LeTendre (2006), who found a positive relationship between the strength of programs' use of innovative program features and graduates' learning and career outcomes. Black and Murtadha (2007) note that educational leadership preparation programs have little evidence from which to respond to questions about program accountability, such as whether a particular program makes a difference in leadership behavior, organizational change, student achievement, or social justice/equity-oriented leadership.

This review of literature indicates that there are exemplary leadership preparation programs present. Components of exemplary programs consist of coherent curriculum aligned to state and professional standards, philosophy and curriculum that emphasize leadership of instruction and school improvement, student-centered instruction, knowledgeable faculty, cohort structure, targeted recruitment, and supervised internships (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). However, consensus throughout the educational leadership preparation community is lacking on what should or should not be implemented and how much time should be spent on each component.

In 2005, BSU had the opportunity to respond to the national critique of educational leadership preparation programs by designing its own leadership preparation program. The MEd in Ed. Leadership at Boise State provides a mission-driven curriculum designed to engender a particular kind of leader. The program has fostered such leadership by including key elements in its pedagogical model, specifically the use

of cohort learning, PBLs, critical-thinking scenarios to develop one's theory of action, and providing students with experiences from practicing school administrators.

This study aims to measure the effectiveness of graduates who are practicing school administrators from the BSU MEd in Ed. Leadership preparation program compared with a national sample, as well as to identify program features from those graduates that they believe to be beneficial and/or lacking as a result of their training. The questions this study will answer include:

1. How effective are graduates of a non-traditional educational leadership preparation program (BSU) currently working as school principals/vice-principals compared to a national sample?

2. How, if at all, do these graduates/practicing principals perceive this non-traditional preparation program (BSU) to have contributed to their effectiveness?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methods and procedures used in a proposed mixed-method study, which examines whether there is a difference in effectiveness of school principals who graduated from BSU's MEd Educational Leadership program, a non-traditional educational leadership preparation program, compared to similar programs from across the nation. Research questions were derived from the literature base and the call for improvement in educational leadership preparation programs, and were also inspired by the recent increase in the use of non-traditional modes of instruction as a way to improve the quality of school leaders.

The questions for this proposed study are:

1. How effective are graduates a non-traditional educational leadership preparation program (BSU) currently working as school principals/vice-principals compared to a national sample?

2. How, if at all, do these graduates/practicing principals perceive this non-traditional preparation program (BSU) to have contributed to their effectiveness?

The hypothesis was BSU's non-traditional educational leadership preparation program would produce more effective leaders than those from the national sample as

measured by the VAL-ED^{TM}. The null hypothesis stated no difference would exist among the scores.

The BSU MEd Leadership preparation program incorporates practicing school administrators from whose expertise future school leaders can draw. Many of these school administrators share their knowledge on daily happenings, assist in the writing of PBL scenarios, and share valuable tips for interviewing for an administrator position.

The cohort model in the BSU Educational Leadership program helps build community through a weekend retreat that occurs during the first weeks of the program. During this time, students travel outside of their hometown region to McCall, Idaho, a remote town approximately 80 miles away from Boise. It is here where cohort members, removed from their daily lives, become integrated into life as a cohort. During this retreat, cohort members make and share life maps and spend an afternoon at a ROPES Training Course. On the ROPES course, trust begins to develop between cohort members as they catch each other's falls and build strong relationships. Similar to that which Lawrence (2002) discussed in her work, cohort members achieve a high comfort level as they get to know one another at deeper levels, which allows for more intimate dialogue in the future. The fear of failure or "looking stupid" is diminished as cohort members learn what they can expect from their peers, thus leading them to take more risks and allowing for self-disclosure. Fully functioning cohorts, according to Sergiovanni (1992), are repositories of values, sentiments, and beliefs that provide the needed cement for uniting people in a common cause. Within the past two decades, uniting people for a common cause is something school principals are increasingly asked

to do in order to accomplish the latest demands placed upon schools, and the cohort design within educational leadership preparation programs encourages this to occur.

Mixed-Method Research Design

For this research, mixed methods were used to collect data to identify the differences in effectiveness and knowledge gained from students enrolled in a non-traditional educational leadership program from one university located in the Pacific Northwest as compared to the national average; data was also studied to determine what aspects of the non-traditional program graduates attribute to their effectiveness. Creswell (2002) noted that a mixed-method research design can produce strong evidence for conclusions through corroboration of research findings.

Participants

This mixed-methodology study consists of two components: quantitative and qualitative measures. Purposeful sampling techniques were utilized to recruit the school principals, ensuring that participants graduated from the BSU non-traditional educational leadership preparation program and were school administrators within the 2008-2011 time frames. For the quantitative measures, school principal participants reflected and completed the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED^{TM}) survey with regards to their own leadership effectiveness. Additionally, each school principal's faculty and immediate supervisor also participated by completing a VAL-ED^{TM} survey while considering the effectiveness of their individual school principal. For the qualitative measures, school principal participants were interviewed using a semi-structured format.

Sample Population Participating in the VAL-ED^{TM} Survey

The BSU MEd Leadership Program began in 2006, with its first class of students

graduating in 2008. This study included four classes of graduates from the years of 2008-

2011. After obtaining the data on individuals who graduated from the BSU MEd

Leadership Preparation program and identifying who were at the time employed as a

practicing school principal/assistant principal, it was determined that twelve (12)

individuals fit the requirements for this study. This number represents the total graduates

from the BSU MEd Leadership Preparation program who were working as school

principals/assistant principals at the time the study was conducted. Seven (7) of those

agreed to participate in the VAL-ED^{TM} survey, as well as their staff and their direct

supervisors. However, two (2) of the principals who initially agreed to participate were

unable to gather sufficient data. As a result, five (5) out of twelve (12), or 41.6%, of

those practicing principals were evaluated on their effectiveness as school leaders using

the VAL-ED^{TM}. In addition to the two (2) principals with insufficient data (i.e., lack of

completion from supervisor and teachers), the remaining five (5) principals who did not

participate in the VAL-ED^{TM} indicated they would have liked to participate in the survey,

but they either "felt they were too busy," "had only been at the school for less than a

year," or who had teachers who were "going through tremendous amounts of change and

did not want to give them one more thing on their plate."

The developers of the VAL-ED^{TM} survey instrument sampled 300 randomly

selected principals from across the nation to establish norms. This sample consisted of

100 elementary school, 100 middle, and 100 high schools principals from 150 urban, 100

suburban, and 50 rural schools. The final sample included 235 schools, with over 8,863 teacher responses. The mean teacher response rate was 68%.

This instrument was administered to five (5) principals who graduated from BSU's Ed. Leadership Preparation program, together with their immediate supervisors, and teachers in their schools. Each individual completed the survey considering the principal's effectiveness. Table 1 shows an overall average completion rate of 100% from principals, 100% from their supervisors, and 43.3% from teachers.

Sample Population Participating in the Interview Session

Though not everyone agreed to participate in the VAL-ED^{TM} survey, all twelve (12) practicing school principals who graduated from BSU's MEd Leadership Preparation program, 100%, agreed to share their perceptions and thoughts on the program as well as discuss what they felt with regards to the program and its influence on them as educational leaders.

Data Collection

In order to answer the first research question (How effective are graduates of BSU's non-traditional educational leadership preparation program currently working as school principals/vice-principals compared to a national sample), the VAL-ED^{TM} was distributed to participants. This 72-item measurement tool is a multi-rater assessment of principals' learning-centered leadership (Porter et al., 2010). Not only did the school principals who were the primary subject of this study complete the survey, but also the teachers and immediate supervisors who work with them.

Table 3.1 Completion Rates for VAL-ED™ survey on BSU graduates

Principal	Type	# of Responses	Possible	%
	Principal	1	1	100
	Supervisor	1	1	100
	Teachers	17	36	47.2
Ressie				
	Principal	1	1	100
	Supervisor	1	1	100
	Teachers	8	31	25.8
Louie				
	Principal	1	1	100
	Supervisor	1	1	100
	Teachers	5	12	47.1
Mary				
	Principal	1	1	100
	Supervisor	1	1	100
	Teachers	13	21	61.9
Virginia*				
	Principal	1	1	100
	Supervisor	1	1	100
	Teachers	9	20	45
Jim*				
	Principal	5	5	100
	Supervisor	5	5	100
	Teachers	52	12	43.3
Total				

Virginia & Jim are Assistant Principals.
Note: All names are pseudonyms.

The VAL-ED^TM was developed from the Standards for Educational and Psychological Assessment, in response to the need for a valid and reliable leadership evaluation tool (Murphy, Goldring, Cravens, Elliott, & Porter, 2007). The instrument was developed to assess eight unique criteria, including:

1. Work well in a variety of settings and classrooms.

2. Be construct valid.

3. Be reliable.

4. Be unbiased.

5. Provide accurate and useful reporting of results.

6. Yield diagnostic profiles for formative purposes.

7. Be used to measure progress over time in the development of leadership.

8. Predict important outcomes.

The VAL-ED^TM was administered as an on-line assessment and was used as an evidence-based approach to measure the effectiveness of school leadership behaviors known to influence teacher performance and student learning. The VAL-ED^TM measures both core components and key processes. Core components refer to characteristics of schools that support the learning of students and enhance the ability of teachers to teach and key processes refer to how leaders create those core components.

Qualitative data were collected throughout this study as well, with the use of semi-structured interviews of all twelve school principals, who were chosen using purposeful sampling which helped answer the second research question (How, if at all, do these graduates/practicing principals perceive BSU's non-traditional preparation program to have contributed to their effectiveness). Bogdan and Biklen (2002) noted that

qualitative research is not putting together a puzzle that is already known, but rather is constructing a picture that takes shape as one begins to collect and examine the parts. While conducting the interviews, written consent was obtained for permission to use and record the interviews for this research study. All interview recordings remained confidential, and remained locked securely in the researcher's home office.

Procedures

Prior to administering both the VAL-ED™ and the semi-structured interview, permission was granted through the Boise State University Institutional Review Board. Also, prior to using the VAL-ED™, consent was received from the authors of the VAL-ED™, as well as Discovery Education, publishers of the survey.

A script was read verbatim to each participant prior to his or her completion of the VAL-ED™. Each participant was informed that completing the survey was completely voluntary, and that his or her responses would remain anonymous. A cover sheet was attached to the front of the survey completion directions, indicating that submitting a completed survey would be considered an act of informed consent to participate in the study. There was no compensation for completing the VAL-ED™ survey. Participants were told the survey would take approximately 20 minutes to complete, and if they were chosen, the semi-structured interview would take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

When completing the VAL-ED™, participants were asked how effective the school leader is at performing specific actions that affect core components of learning-centered leadership. The effectiveness ratings ranged from 1 = Ineffective, to 5 = Outstandingly Effective for each of the 72 behaviors. These behaviors sampled all 36 cells of the conceptual model of leadership equally and served as indicators of the

construct of leadership that the model measures. Participants rated the extent to which

the building principal ensures behaviors and actions are taken within the school,

acknowledging that school principals themselves do not necessarily perform the

behaviors, but frequently designate these leadership practices and behaviors throughout

the school. The specific directions given to school principal respondents were:

1. Read each item describing a leadership behavior. In some cases, you may not
   have actually performed the behavior, but you have ensured that it was done
   by others in the school. Either way the behavior should be rated.

2. Check the key Sources of Evidence you use for the basis of your assessment.
   Note, at least one source of evidence must be checked for an item before you
   make an Effectiveness rating. If you check No Evidence, then Ineffective
   must be marked in the Effectiveness column.

3. If you check any sources of evidence other than No Evidence, always make an
   effectiveness rating. The number of Sources of Evidence checked is not
   necessarily indicative of the effectiveness rating.

4. Mark the 1 to 5 Effectiveness Rating to indicate how effectively the behavior
   was performed. Outstandingly effective means you have carried out a
   particular behavior (e.g., providing necessary support) with a very strong,
   positive effect on the targeted area of school activity (e.g., rigorous
   curriculum). Ineffective means you have either not done the particular
   behavior (e.g., not provided necessary support) or has carried out the behavior
   with very low quality that does not have a positive effect on the targeted area
   of school activity (e.g., rigorous curriculum).

After participants completed the VAL-ED[TM] questionnaire, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with all of the school principals. Designated questions were asked (see Appendix F) to the participants to help reveal aspects they believe BSU's Educational Leadership Preparation program contributed to their effectiveness, or lack thereof. A tape recorder was used to document the interview conversation, and was transcribed and coded at a later date.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the VAL-ED[TM] were analyzed, comparing those who graduated from BSU's Ed. Leadership Preparation program with other practicing principals from across the nation. Comparisons were examined across the board with teachers', supervisors', and principals' responses in core components of leadership effectiveness ratings such as High Standards for Student Learning, Rigorous Curriculum, Quality Instruction, Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior, Connections to External Communities, and Performance Accountability, as well as effectiveness in key leadership processes such as Planning, Implementing, Supporting, Advocating, Communicating, and Monitoring.

For the second question, various aspects and components of the program that interviewees discussed were recorded and coded. Interviews were analyzed using interpretive techniques of qualitative data coding and categorizing, which according to Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, and Steinmetz (1991) created themes for comparisons across principals' interviews. Thomas (2006) described inductive analysis as an approach that primarily uses detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher.

Using inductive coding, as described by Creswell (2002), emerging themes were developed by reviewing interview transcripts repeatedly and identifying how responses interconnected. By recognizing key words or phrases most frequently stated, with regards to the BSU program, fundamental elements might help highlight how influential it was with its graduates. Creswell (2002) highlights the coding process in inductive analysis in these steps:

1. Initial reading of text data (many pages of text).

2. Identify specific text segments related to objectives (many segments of text).

3. Label the segments of text to create categories (30-40 categories).

4. Reduce overlap and redundancy among the categories (15-20 categories).

5. Create a model incorporating most important categories (3-8 categories).

Through the first read, coding included terms based on the literature review. This included cohort structure, PBL, use of practicing school administrators as faculty members, and a coherent curriculum. During the second read, internal codes became evident through specific participant comments. As a result, explicit themes began to emerge that highlighted strengths and/or weaknesses of BSU's MEd Leadership Preparation program.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are four general types of trustworthiness in qualitative research—credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. For this study, data analyses included conducting peer debriefings and member checks to establish credibility, conducting a research audit for dependability, and using member checks once again to ensure trustworthiness. Furthermore, data triangulated was used in this study by incorporating interviewees' answers with the

various participants' (principals, supervisors, and teachers) survey responses. Finally, a continuous collaboration effort took place to confer with research adviser(s) to check for any unintended foci or bias.

Limitations

Inherent within any research, a common concern is the limitations of the study, which identifies potential weaknesses of the study (Castetter & Heisler, 1977). This study is no exception. Limitations to this study include the lack of generalizability, due to the small sample size, the use of purposeful sampling, and the sample of participants having attained their educational preparation backgrounds from one university, within one geographical area of the United States. Due to the sampling of graduates from BSU's non-traditional university educational leadership preparation program, I do not claim that the potential findings can be generalized for educational leadership preparation programs across the nation. Therefore, the findings of this study are limited to this particular non-traditional leadership preparation program, situated within this given area, at this moment in time, for the participants involved.

A second limitation of this study concerns the researcher's biases. In a qualitative study, the researcher(s) must interpret complex, multidimensional evidence and the data will, to some extent, "reflect the notion of the researcher as instrument" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 162). There was a continuing optimistic effort to ensure that other researchers could evaluate the usefulness of the theories and hypotheses generated by this study, and thereby add to the limited literature base on the effectiveness of non-traditional educational leadership preparation programs.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

With the role of the school principal coming under increased scrutiny for making

schools more successful, the purpose of this study was to investigate differences in

performance, if any, between school principals who graduated from Boise State

University's MEd Leadership Preparation program and a national sample.

This chapter examines the results obtained from the VAL-ED^{TM} survey, which

asked study participants, together with their supervisors and the teachers in their schools,

to assess their effectiveness as principals and assistant principals. The hypothesis was

BSU's non-traditional educational leadership preparation program would produce more

effective leaders than those from the national sample as measured by the VAL-ED^{TM}.

In addition to the VAL-ED^{TM} survey, an interview was conducted to examine

principals' attitudes and perceptions regarding the program. Specifically, principals were

asked to identify characteristics of the program they believed contributed to their

effectiveness as educational leaders. There were two distinct data sets used for the

purposes of this study: (a) VAL-ED^{TM} effectiveness results and (b) the results provided

during the interview. This chapter includes the following: (1) the results of the VAL-

ED^{TM} assessment disaggregated by principal, supervisor, and teaching staff and (2)

findings of the VAL-ED^{TM} and from the interviews related to those aspects of the

program.

Disaggregated Data from the VAL-ED^{TM} Survey

<u>Overall Effectiveness</u>

The purpose of the VAL-ED^{TM} survey is to assess principals' behaviors known to directly influence teachers' performance and student learning. The VAL-ED^{TM} provides information on a total effectiveness score as well as six subscale scores for both core components and key processes each. The overall principal effectiveness, core components, and key processes scores are all based on a continuous scale ranging from a low of 1.0 (Ineffective) to a high of 5.0 (Outstandingly Effective). The overall effectiveness score provides a score based upon the average ratings of all respondents from the survey, with each respondent group weighing equally using the 5-point scale. Figure 4.1 provides the data obtained on the total effectiveness score for each participant. The overall effectiveness scores of BSU graduates ranged from 3.85 - 4.03, where 3 equals satisfactorily effective and 4 equals highly effective. The average overall effectiveness scores of BSU principals equaled 3.96, slightly below highly effective. The national average of principals overall effectiveness score was 3.61, or proficient.
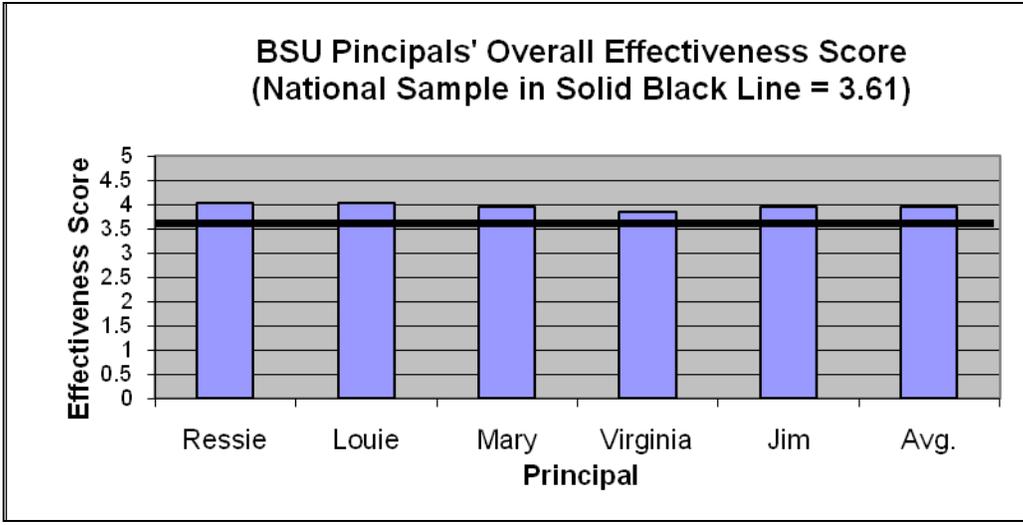
Figure 4.1 Overall effectiveness scores for BSU graduates. Solid black line represents national sample average (3.61).

Most of the BSU principals in the study came from suburban area, while one (Mary) was in a rural school setting. Table 4.1 indicates the national sample overall effectiveness score averages were slightly higher for suburban principals (3.66) than the rural principals (3.50). Examining the national sample from a geographical perspective, principals in the Northeast scored the highest with an overall effectiveness score of 3.68, and principals from the West scored 3.48. Though no statistical test was done to see if there was a significant difference, the data indicates they do appear to be different.

Table 4.1. Comparison of Overall Effectiveness Scores

		Overall Effectiveness Score
Geography	Northeast	3.68
	South	3.67
	Midwest	3.60
	West	3.48
Setting	Urban	3.66
	Suburban	3.63
	Rural	3.50
	BSU	3.96

<u>Core Components</u>

One section of the VAL-ED^{TM} assessment is core components, which measures the characteristics school leaders use in their buildings which support learning of students and enhance the ability of teachers to teach (Marks & Printy, 2003; Sebring & Bryk, 2000). The six core components includes: High Standards for Student Learning, Rigorous Curriculum, Quality Instruction, Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior, Connections to External Communities, and Systemic Performance Accountability. Table 4.2 reveals how BSU school principals ranked themselves with respect to the six core components, as well as how both their immediate supervisors and teachers rated the BSU principals.

Table 4.2. Comparison of Core Components Scores vs. National Sample

		BSU	National
Principals'	High Standards	3.55 (0.366)	3.59 (0.502)
	Rigorous Curriculum	3.42 (0.178)	3.47 (0.538)
	Quality Instruction	3.63 (0.336)	3.70 (0.568)
	Culture of Learning	3.83 (0.221)	3.72 (0.565)
	External Community	3.27 (0.329)	3.12 (0.633)
	Accountability	3.35 (0.307)	3.39 (0.552)
Supervisors'	High Standards	4.19 (0.705)	3.65 (0.735)
	Rigorous Curriculum	4.33 (0.388)	3.63 (0.752)
	Quality Instruction	4.42 (0.386)	3.74 (0.765)
	Culture of Learning	4.39 (0.290)	3.78 (0.722)
	External Community	4.07 (0.148)	3.51 (0.740)
	Accountability	4.29 (0.146)	3.60 (0.779)
Teachers'	High Standards	4.01 (0.822)	3.61 (0.449)
	Rigorous Curriculum	3.99 (0.742)	3.60 (0.412)
	Quality Instruction	4.09 (0.698)	3.71 (0.429)
	Culture of Learning	4.10 (0.776)	3.69 (0.441)
	External Community	3.95 (0.886)	3.46 (0.444)
	Accountability	3.94 (0.760)	3.53 (0.462)

The Table (4.2) provides the standard deviations in parenthesis for each

component. It is worth noting, though not statistically different, the results show BSU

principals scored themselves slightly lower than national samples in most components (4 out of 6), while both the supervisors and the teaching staffs rated their BSU principal higher than the national averages in all components. This is important as the VAL-ED^{TM} overall effectiveness score is a combination of principals', supervisors', and teachers' ratings of the school leader. Thus, if BSU principals had scored themselves as high as the national average, while maintaining the supervisors' and teachers' ratings, their overall effectiveness score would have even been higher.

In addition, the data could be further disaggregated between BSU principals' core components scores compared with the national sample. Examinations from how BSU principals responded compared to the national sample of principals who evaluated themselves indicate BSU principals score themselves slightly lower than the national sample in four of the six components. Table 4.3 shows BSU principals' tend to score themselves, on average, slightly lower than the national sample of principals in high standards, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, and performance accountability of the core component category. BSU principals' score themselves higher in culture of learning and connections to the external community.

Further analysis of core component ratings comparisons show supervisors of BSU principals score the BSU graduates significantly higher in quality instruction and performance accountability. Table 4.4 shows the comparison of supervisors' average ratings for BSU principals with the supervisors in the national sample.

Table 4.3. Comparison of BSU Principals' Core Components Scores vs. National

Sample

	BSU	National	z value
High Standards	3.55 (0.366)	3.59(0.502)	-0.177
Rigorous Curriculum	3.42 (0.178)	3.47 (0.538)	-0.216
Quality Instruction	3.63 (0.336)	3.70 (0.568)	-0.276
Culture of Learning	3.83 (0.221)	3.72 (0.565)	0.421
External Community	3.27 (0.329)	3.12 (0.633)	0.516
Accountability	3.35 (0.307)	3.39 (0.552)	-0.162

Table 4.4. Comparison of Supervisors' Core Components Ratings of BSU Principals

vs. National Sample

	BSU	National	z value
High Standards	4.19 (0.705)	3.65 (0.735)	1.64
Rigorous Curriculum	4.33 (0.388)	3.63 (0.752)	2.10*
Quality Instruction	4.42 (0.386)	3.74 (0.765)	1.98*
Culture of Learning	4.39 (0.290)	3.78 (0.722)	1.89
External Community	4.07 (0.148)	3.51 (0.740)	1.68
Accountability	4.29 (0.146)	3.60 (0.779)	1.99*

Note: *p < .05.

One important data set included the comparison of teachers' core component ratings of BSU principals compared with the teachers' ratings in the national sample. Table 4.5 indicates significant differences were found to exist in all six of the core component categories, with the most noteworthy being connections to external

communities and rigorous curriculum. Even the smallest difference between the BSU

principals and the national sample, quality instruction, was found to be significant.

Table 4.5. Comparison of Teachers' Core Components Ratings of BSU Principals

vs. National Sample

	BSU	National	z value
High Standards	4.01 (0.822)	3.61 (0.449)	1.98*
Rigorous Curriculum	3.99 (0.742)	3.60 (0.412)	2.19*
Quality Instruction	4.09 (0.698)	3.71 (0.429)	1.97*
Culture of Learning	4.10 (0.776)	3.69 (0.441)	2.09*
External Community	3.95 (0.886)	3.46 (0.444)	2.46*
Accountability	3.94 (0.76)	3.53 (0.462)	2.05*

Note: *p < .05.

Key Processes

Other important measures the VAL-ED[TM] assesses are key leadership processes.

These processes are leadership behaviors that school principals use to raise organizational

members' levels of commitment and shape organizational culture. The six key processes

measured include Planning, Implementing, Supporting, Advocating, Communicating, and

Monitoring. Table 4.6 provides the data obtained from the principals' self-evaluations, as

well as supervisors' and teachers' evaluations of the principals. These are also compared

with the national sample. Again, numbers in the parenthesis indicate standard deviation.

Table 4.6 Comparison of BSU Principals' Key Processes Scores vs.

National Sample

		BSU	National
Principals'	Planning	3.44 (0.306)	3.51 (0.518)
	Implementing	3.39 (0.203)	3.50 (0.499)
	Supporting	3.76 (0.205)	3.71 (0.544)
	Advocating	3.62 (0.161)	3.42 (0.513)
	Communicating	3.63 (0.210)	3.47 (0.542)
	Monitoring	3.25 (0.474)	3.40 (0.537)
Supervisors'	Planning	4.22 (0.270)	3.64 (0.729)
	Implementing	4.34 (0.139)	3.63 (0.743)
	Supporting	4.45 (0.343)	3.78 (0.709)
	Advocating	4.39 (0.189)	3.61 (0.754)
	Communication	4.44 (0.177)	3.67 (0.717)
	Monitoring	4.30 (0.268)	3.64 (0.741)
Teachers'	Planning	3.96 (0.782)	3.56 (0.447)
	Implementing	3.96 (0.786)	3.59 (0.456)
	Supporting	4.11 (0.768)	3.73 (0.428)
	Advocating	4.04 (0.688)	3.57 (0.402)
	Communicating	4.07 (0.732)	3.62 (0.436)
	Monitoring	3.96 (0.794)	3.59 (0.443)

A closer examination of the key processes as self-reported by principals indicated there was no significant difference between BSU principals and the national sample (see Table 4.7). Similar to the core components, BSU principals on average scored themselves lower than the national sample on the key processes scores on three out of six items. The items BSU principals scored themselves low on included planning, implementing, and monitoring. Conversely, they scored themselves higher on supporting, advocating, and communicating. Differences between BSU principals and the national sample ranged the greatest in monitoring (3.25[0.474] vs. 3.40 [0.537]) and advocating (3.62 [0.161] vs. 3.42 [0.513]), respectively. Both BSU principals and the national sample were almost identical in supporting, where it averaged 3.76 to 3.71, respectively.

Table 4.7 Comparison of Principals' Key Processes Scores vs. National Sample

	BSU	National	z value
Planning	3.44 (0.306)	3.51 (0.518)	-0.301
Implementing	3.39 (0.203)	3.50 (0.499)	-0.484
Supporting	3.76 (0.205)	3.71 (0.544)	0.206
Advocating	3.62 (0.161)	3.42 (0.513)	0.865
Communicating	3.63 (0.210)	3.47 (0.542)	0.669
Monitoring	3.25 (0.474)	3.40 (0.537)	-0.608

In contrast, supervisors' ratings in comparison to the national sample demonstrated significant differences. Table 4.8 identifies five out of the six key processes, the lone being planning, as being significantly different between the BSU principals over the national principals' average.

Furthermore, in comparing teachers' ratings of BSU principals and the national sample, significant differences were found among four of the six key processes: planning, supporting, advocating, and communicating, with implementing and monitoring not significant (See Table 4.9).

Table 4.8 Comparison of Supervisors' Key Processes Ratings of BSU Principals vs. National Sample

	BSU	National	z value
Planning	4.22 (0.270)	3.64 (0.729)	1.77
Implementing	4.34 (0.139)	3.63 (0.743)	2.13*
Supporting	4.45 (0.343)	3.78 (0.709)	2.13*
Advocating	4.39 (0.189)	3.61 (0.754)	2.33*
Communication	4.44 (0.177)	3.67 (0.717)	2.39*
Monitoring	4.30 (0.268)	3.64 (0.741)	1.99*

Note: *p < .05.

When comparisons were made between BSU principals and the national sample, it became evident that BSU principals were different than the national sample. Table 4.10 indicates BSU principals had a much higher overall effectiveness score as compared to the national sample, 3.96 to 3.61. The z score (1.96) indicated this was statistically significant and Table 11 shows the entire comparison of BSU principals with the national sample with the z scores.

Table 4.9 Comparison of Teachers' Key Processes Ratings of BSU Principals vs.

National Sample

	BSU	National	z value
Planning	3.96 (0.782)	3.56 (0.447)	1.99*
Implementing	3.96 (0.786)	3.59 (0.456)	1.79
Supporting	4.11 (0.768)	3.73 (0.428)	2.00*
Advocating	4.04 (0.688)	3.57 (0.402)	2.59*
Communicating	4.07 (0.732)	3.62 (0.436)	2.34*
Monitoring	3.96 (0.794)	3.59 (0.443)	1.86

Note: *p < .05.

The null hypothesis stated no difference would exist between the BSU school principals and those from a national sample. The alternate hypothesis stated BSU school principals would be more effective than those from a national sample. At a 95% confidence interval, and using 1.96 for the critical value for z, differences in the overall effectiveness and seven other sub-category z scores (Rigorous Curriculum, Quality Instruction, Culture of Learning, Performance Accountability, Supporting, Advocating, and Communicating) between BSU principals and the national sample proved to be statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Principals' Perceptions of the BSU MEd Leadership Preparation Program

The next section focuses on the qualitative data gathered in this mixed-methods study. Semi-structured interviews with twelve (12) school principals/vice-principals, who graduated from the BSU MEd Leadership Preparation program, were conducted. The sample participant population is 100% of all BSU graduates who were, at the time of this study, working school principals or assistant principals.

Table 4.10 Comparison of BSU Principals and National Sample Overall Effectiveness Scores

	BSU	National	z value
Overall Effectiveness	3.96 (0.07)	3.61 (0.35)	2.23*
CORE COMPONENTS			
High Standards	3.98 (0.02)	3.68 (0.37)	1.83
Rigorous Curriculum	3.91 (0.14)	3.58 (0.37)	2.00*
Quality Instruction	4.05 (0.23)	3.70 (0.37)	2.08*
Culture of Learning	4.17 (0.15)	3.76 (0.39)	2.37*
External Communities	3.69 (0.28)	3.45 (0.39)	1.40
Accountability	3.83 (0.10)	3.48 (0.40)	1.96*
KEY PROCESSES			
Planning	3.87 (0.09)	3.59 (0.36)	1.74
Implementing	3.90 (0.08)	3.60 (0.38)	1.74
Supporting	4.11 (0.16)	3.73 (0.36)	2.36*
Advocating	4.02(0.11)	3.55 (0.36)	2.90*

| Communicating | 4.05 (0.13) | 3.64 (0.37) | 2.47* |
| Monitoring | 3.83 (0.12) | 3.56 (0.39) | 1.17 |

Note: p<.05

As described earlier, emerging themes were developed by reviewing interview transcripts repeatedly and identifying how the responses interconnected. One way to analyze responses from interview participants occurred by importing them into a Wordle™ document, where key words were identified to determine specifically which words were repeated more than others (See Figure 4.2). The words BSU principals used most often included *think, different, program, people, cohort, school*, and *leadership*. As a result, after multiple reviews of participants' transcripts and identifying the most abundant words used throughout the interviews, emerging themes included: (1) Thinking differently, (2) Building trusting relationships, and (3) The idea of bridging theory with practice.

Figure 4.2. Wordle™ document showing common words used by BSU school principals during their interviews.

Thinking Differently

One premise school principals' identified as a key influence the BSU MEd

Leadership Preparation program had in developing them into becoming effective school

leaders was the idea of thinking differently. Unlike traditional educational leadership

preparation programs, the BSU program focuses its training exercises on developing a

different type of leader. An example of this unusual thinking occurs during one of the

first meetings the students encounter when starting the BSU MEd Leadership Preparation

program. It consists of a weekend retreat in a secluded mountainous area located two

hours away from the campus. During this three-day retreat, students swing through trees,

walk blindly through the woods, and share life-experiences that have impacted who they

are with the use of life maps. These do not seem like usual practices for a school

leadership preparation program—and it's not. BSU's Ed. Leadership Preparation

program utilizes a non-traditional model of training, and unlike most, mimics the

complexities of changes in education that is being seen today.

Throughout the one-on-one interviews with the principals, various responses were

given as to what participants perceived the BSU program did differently with other

educational classes they had been in. Many noted how the BSU program was unlike

anything they had ever experienced before. Examples included:

> I think it allowed me to see for the first time a different type of emphasis
> where leadership and administration ceases to be about managing people
> and is more about building relationships with people. (Richard*, 1)

> The design of the program was different. The whole concentration of
> people and instructional leader. That was a major focus in our program.
> The discussions and debates we had and how we worked off each other. It
> flowed into my career. I am very comfortable working with others as a
> result of the collaborative experiences [from the program]. (Cathy, 1)

> I have worked with administrative interns from different programs and they struggle with developing relationships and people….which was a dynamic the BSU program created. (Jim, 3)[1]

Others added how they, as a result of the uniqueness of the program and its ability to make them think differently, have been able to observe how those unusual experiences translated into being a different type of leader not seen in the local schools.

> When I see people who were trained in different programs, and the way They attack and approach things…they look more at operations and things running smoothly. The BSU program trained me to be a leader of people and not a building manager. (Louie, 2)

> The BSU MEd Leadership Preparation program was one which "develops transformational leaders, rather than a program which developed building managers." (Ressie, 3)

Building Trusting Relationships

Another emerging theme participants discussed was the concept of building trusting relationships. Participants talked about how the structure of the BSU MEd Leadership Preparation program helped to foster trusting relationships, a critical feature that allowed for more thoughtful discussions amongst all members of the class, a deeper sense of self-accountability, and a greater support for one another. The closed cohort model used by the BSU program allows students to build strong relationships with one another during their two years of study. During this two year collaborative learning experience, students gain an advantage by developing lasting connections with professors who share their extensive knowledge and backgrounds, and with practicing school administrators and fellow cohort members. Students benefit during their time within the

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[1]*Throughout this paper, all individuals' names are identified with pseudonyms. The number after participant pseudonyms refers to the interview transcript page number.*

closed cohort and after graduation as well, where interactions continue as individuals join

the field of practicing administrators.

One such example of developing bonds with complete strangers occurred through

the formation of the cohort structure. Participants identified the cohort structure as

critical in making them the effective school leaders they are today. Some stated the

cohort was essential for enabling all of the other characteristics in the program to take

place (Virginia, 2; Mary, 2).

As found in the literature, professional support in the form of a cohort structure

along with formalized mentoring and advising by knowledgeable faculty and expert

principals is instrumental in preparing successful school leaders (Lave, 1991; Leithwood,

et al., 1995; Barnett et al., 2000; Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Daresh, 2001).

Furthermore, participants discussed how the cohort structure enabled them to

work together with everyone in the class, build a trust not otherwise found in the

traditional class setting, and practice collaboration techniques with others that they

continue to use on a daily basis. The incredible value of having built such powerful bonds

and trusting relationships with their fellow classmates was emphasized repeatedly by

interview participants. One principal discussed the ability to speak truthfully to other

cohort members in the class and not feel afraid for his words. He said:

> I appreciate the honesty we had with each other. And that was the bottom
> line, we could be honest with each other. We could say, 'I agree with you'
> and 'I don't agree with you.' We created that atmosphere. In comparison,
> I have had administrative interns and that (relationship building) is where
> they struggle big time. (Billy, 3)

Another participant described the power of the cohort's design in terms of

building relationships in the BSU MEd Leadership program:

> The cohort was powerful because you created bonds with others who are going on the same journey. It was valuable because you can learn from each other, share with each other, help each other throughout and make it not a frustrating school experience, but something that you actually look forward to going to because you have created bonds with the cohort members. (Jim, 2)

The ability for individuals to build strong relationships that are not typically found in traditional classroom settings was discussed numerous times in the interviews. Our community of learners evolved into family as we spent more time together. Individuals began sharing personal life stories with members of the cohort, and we built stronger relationships in the course of this sharing. Several cohort members had difficult times during the two-year program, and may not have finished had it not been for the strong bonds—bonds that I attribute to the cohort model. All but one student from the cohort graduated on time. Powerful relationships were built throughout the program, and continue to this day. When principals were asked about the cohort structure and the BSU program's ability to foster relationships as a result of this format, principals were eager to express their thoughts. Statements included:

> Yeah, it absolutely did. It definitely fostered relationships. It did a great job of allowing to be heard and have a voice. A lot of our learning was done in open dialogue with each other and was facilitated correctly. I think that was the strength of the program. Like I said earlier, the cohort and the ability to foster those relationships, even for just its cheesy stuff, it does create a sense we are in it together. (Jim, 3)

> I think the cohort program absolutely helped foster relationships. We helped each other with the academic side and the personal side. We all had jobs, we all had families, and there were a lot of things happening in our lives. We were there to listen, to hear what everybody was going through. We were there to support each other. I think in a regular program you maybe do not have those relationships that a cohort builds with its members. Yeah, so somebody is getting married, big deal. Or somebody has a spouse who is going through cancer and having to be away. In a cohort, you know what is going on with that person every week and you know you are anxious to see them. (3)

Finally, participants noted the program's ability to build strong relationships was accomplished by integrating the practice of collaboratively working with others, similar to what is observed in the real world. For instance, Jim mentioned that he enjoyed the idea of working together as a team throughout program to help solve complex issues and problems:

> I think the aspects of the BSU Ed. Leadership Preparation program that helped me become a successful leader were the real-world examples and giving a chance to work through scenario problems with my cohort and being able to look at different perspectives on different problems. So learning from different members of my cohort with those scenario problems so that when I did become an administrator not everything that I encountered was foreign or just based on philosophy and theory. (1)

Bridging the Ideas of Theory to Practice

For the final emerging theme, participants considered the BSU Ed. Leadership Preparation program to have had a tremendous influence on their effectiveness as practicing school administrators by linking theory to practice. As cited in the literature, one common component of exemplary leadership preparation programs is their ability to link theory with practice and encourage reflection among students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). Several BSU graduates reiterated that the idea of connecting theory to practice was significant when discussing how the PBL scenarios were an effective variation to the traditional mode of learning at the graduate level. Russell stated:

> Whenever you are working in problem-based learning, whether it be assessment or whether it be a project, you are having to do more than just regurgitate data, information, or policy. It requires analysis and synthesis, which is higher order thinking. The (PBL) method is a better model of instruction than giving someone something to regurgitate they read the night before. If you can take the information, whatever you are studying, and combine it together, one will have to synthesize the information and apply it to another situation. It takes creativity and thought to work through a problem-based scenario. (2)

Principals also shared their thoughts on the PBL exercises and their helpfulness, especially when problems arose while they were actually working in the field. One principal noted:

> The most important aspect I think the program used in helping me prepare
> to be an effective leader was the problem-based approach it had. Actually
> going through and having realistic problems that we were to solve or address
> was really helpful. I have actually had to face a lot of the problems we
> worked on. (Wilbur, 1)

Another principal discussed the value of the PBL model in helping her understand her own personality type. Mary discussed how she "needed to be comfortable with whom I am working and the problem-solving scenario based problems. It was huge. It was a huge eye opener" (1).

The value of incorporating practicing school administrators into the classroom was noted as a significant factor for participants in their development as effective school leaders. The ability to intermingle with working school principals from local school districts, who offered real-life scenarios, helped strengthen the content in the literature base. Some likened the experience to reading a book about a foreign country and then going to actually visit that country. Kermit noted:

> As far as one of the best-selling points of the program, [it] is having actual,
> working administrators as part of the classroom. You can take the theoretical
> part out of the classroom, and ask a principal, say this is what we discussed
> in class, how does this really look in schools? (2)

Furthermore, participants enjoyed the idea of having a working school administrator, with several years of experience in the field, share with them what they could expect. Responses included:

> …having the opportunity to have exposure to conversations and other
> principals that had been in the trenches was tremendous. That was really

nice to have the feel of what it would be like to be in the principal position and the thought processes that you have to go through. (Billy, 1)

The people they brought in who were working administrators that they brought in from different school districts and connected to Boise State was huge. They would come in and say this is how it really is. They would give us what it is like in this district? Some of that real life was what you do not always get in a college class. (Virginia, 2)

I was not shocked with an adult situation. As a teacher, I only know what happens in my classroom. [In the BSU program] we would have principals that would come in and talk about scenarios. And I thought, 'Oh that doesn't happen'. And they would be like, "that happened in our district.' So getting over that shock of 'does that really happen.' I think that prepared me so that when something did come up, I was able to remember what the principals told us. (Mary, 4)

Regarding Boise State's program, interviewed participants made recommendations for program changes they believed might have further helped ease the transition from teacher to principal. Three common themes emerged from the interviews, with the most predominant complaint of graduates regarding the lack of time working with the topic of special education law. Many principals discussed the need for a more concentrated effort in working with these laws, with one principal stating:

I would definitely suggest more time on Special Ed. Law. And I remember the summer we talked about special ed. law. It just seemed like it was crammed into a few weeks, and I think for a couple of those days, I might have been traveling for my job. It seems like it is a huge part of my job and I wish I knew more about that. (Louie, 2)

Another principal had similar feelings. He said:

One thing I think the BSU program lacked a little bit, we didn't get a lot of special education. You know, I am in a school that is 100% Special Ed, so I am completely immersed in it here. Maybe you're a teacher coming into that program that has no Special Ed. experience, boy that is really crucial. (Richard, 3)

A second criticism from principals regarded the lack of program focus on working with school finances, though these principals also acknowledged that it is difficult to discuss finance in schools, as school districts vary greatly in terms of their expectations for principals. Principals noted:

One of the things….and I don't know how to even suggest how the program could do this better, because each district, even though they receive the same types of money, they look at the budgets completely different. How those funds are allocated and how they move them and what systems they use in balancing numbers is nothing we really touched. (Billy, 5)

I am not entirely certain I would be completely prepared to walk into a high school, or junior high, and deal with and handle a budget. (Richard, 3)

The participants in this study unequivocally recommended this program for individuals aspiring to become future school leaders. Indeed, areas of improvement were noted, such as can be seen in any program that truthfully self-evaluates itself and uses reflection to find ways to improve.

Summary

This chapter aimed to provide both the quantitative findings, from the VAL-ED[TM] results, and the qualitative findings, from the one-on-one interviews with the principals. Both data sources—the VAL-ED[TM] survey and the interview responses from the BSU graduates working as school principals/vice-principals—provide evidence that the BSU MEd Leadership Preparation program produces effective school leaders as a result of essential components built into the program. The VAL-ED[TM] responses from

principals/vice-principals, along with their immediate supervisors and teaching staffs, indicate BSU principals are more effective compared to a national sample.

The findings indicate significant differences in the BSU participants and the national sample in overall effectiveness, core components (rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, culture of learning, and performance of accountability) and key processes (supporting, advocating, and communicating). BSU principals were rated by the VAL-ED^{TM} as distinguished in both core components (quality instruction and culture of learning) and key processes (supporting, advocating, and communicating). The principals' interview responses illuminated three key themes related to how the program contributed to their effectiveness: thinking differently about leadership, building trusting relationships, and linking theory to practice. No single program characteristics or learning experience was identified as having contributed to principals' effectiveness; rather, it appears the relationship among several aspects of the program influenced the development of effective school leaders. The relationship among these aspects of the program will be discussed further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter includes a brief review of the purpose of the study, the methodology

used, and a discussion of the findings and conclusions drawn. Additionally, the study's

implications and recommendations for further inquiry are discussed.

This study tested the hypothesis that principals prepared in a non-traditional

leadership preparation program at Boise State University are more effective than a

national sample. Quantitative data were gathered in this mixed-methods study to test this

hypothesis. The VAL-ED^{TM} survey instrument was used to assess the overall

effectiveness of five self-selected program graduates currently working as school

principals/assistant-principals. In addition to the principals taking the survey themselves,

the VAL-ED^{TM} also entails surveying each principal/assistant principal's immediate

supervisor and their teaching staff. The VAL-ED^{TM} examines six core components and

six key processes that have been identified as helping schools become more successful as

a result of effective school leadership. The hypothesis was supported by the results

obtained from the VAL-ED^{TM}. Significant differences between the traditional and non-

traditional programs were determined using a z test. Specifically, principals who were

prepared at Boise State scored higher than the national sample of principals in four of the

six core components (Rigorous Curriculum, Quality Instruction, Culture of Learning, and

Performance Accountability) and three of the six key processes (Supporting, Advocating,

and Communication).

In addition, the study also sought to understand graduates' perceptions of program characteristics or learning experiences they believe contribute to their effectiveness in practice. All twelve (12) program graduates currently working as school principals or assistant principals were interviewed. All those interviews were working within the state of Idaho, in either suburban or rural school districts. Three inter-connected themes emerged. Program graduates viewed their preparation as contributing to their effectiveness by (1) fostering a different way of thinking about leadership (different from their peers' experiences in other preparation programs as well as the way they had thought about leadership prior to beginning the program), (2) developing trusting relationships, and 3) linking theory with practice.

Discussion

The questions posed at the beginning of this study were:

1. How effective are graduates of a non-traditional educational leadership preparation program (BSU) currently working as school principals/assistant-principals compared to a national sample?

2. How, if at all, do these graduates/practicing principals perceive this non-traditional preparation program (BSU) to have contributed to their effectiveness?

When I began this study, I believed the cohort structure would be viewed as the pre-dominate factor influencing principals' effectiveness. In contrast, while the closed cohort was identified as important, study participants also pointed to other program characteristics. The three factors participants viewed as contributing to their success (thinking differently, trusting relationships, and understanding the link between theory

and practice) appear to be *the result of the relationship between various program characteristics.* Specifically, the inter-connection between various combinations of the cohort structure; team-building retreats; collaboration among students; the integrated, spiral curriculum designed by faculty who draw upon each other's expertise in developing syllabi that build upon one another; incorporating critical-thinking and reflective practice through the use of problem-based learning, and utilizing the knowledge and skill of practicing school administrators as faculty and mentors influenced the development of effective leaders.

Figure 5.1 visually represents the three themes that emerged from analysis of interview data together with the way in which the components of Boise State's program relate to each theme. The major themes (Thinking Differently, Building Trusting Relationships, and Linking Theory to Practice) are shown in the three large ovals, with components of the BSU MEd Preparation Leadership program in the squares indicating how each component correlates to the theme(s). It is the intersection of these themes that appears to have contributed to the development of effective educational leaders.

Influencing Aspiring Leaders to Think Differently

Fostering in aspiring leaders the ability to think differently began at BSU by doing things differently than other educational leadership preparation programs. Faculty began thinking differently at the inception of the program. According to Sykes (2000), traditional educational leadership preparation programs put most attention on financial management, labor negotiations, school law, and facilities planning, whereas the non-traditional programs include facets such as a cohort structure, use of school leaders as faculty members, and a coherent curriculum that embeds topics such as financial
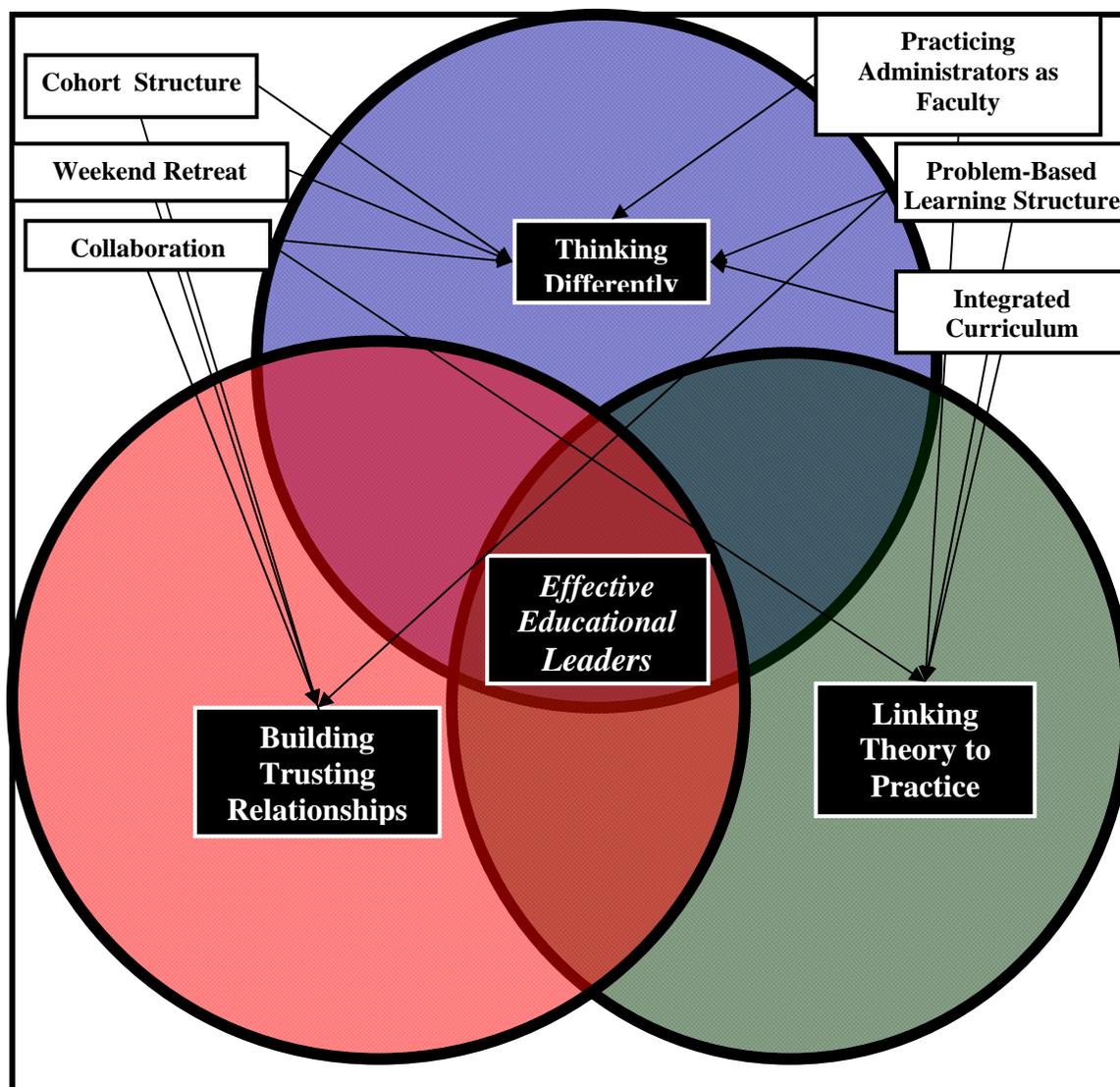
Figure 5.1 Venn diagram of the interconnectedness of the emerging themes from principals' interviews and BSU's MEd Leadership Preparation program components

management, labor negotiations, and school law. Boise State's program incorporates those topics covered in traditional educational leadership programs (finance, labor negotiations, school law, and facilities planning) through the use of a closed cohort structure, weekend retreats, PBL scenarios, strong collaboration among students and

teachers, practicing school administrators as mentor/faculty, and an integrated curriculum that is spiraled from semester to semester. Although many non-traditional programs claim to use a cohort model by having students take classes together, BSU's cohort model is more than students simply taking classes together. Doing things differently, in both structure and design, has engendered a different kind of school leader—one who can inspire, mobilize, and support people to continuously improve student learning and achievement while also developing school cultures, conditions and people capabilities that are proven to support high levels of student learning and achievement.

One example of thinking differently while making use of the cohort model includes taking students on a team-building, weekend-long retreat at the beginning of the program. Many principals spoke of their initial reluctance to attend this retreat. As they explained, they would be away from their families and with a group of strangers with whom they had no common bond. Nonetheless, after two days of leaping through trees, doing team building exercises, walking blindly through the woods, and sharing personal stories over life maps, they spoke of not wanting to leave when the weekend retreat was over and looking forward to the next class meeting. They described the experience as an opportunity to learn more about their new classmates than they thought they ever would.

Willingness on the part of the faculty to do things differently provided a model for students to think differently from the onset of their preparation. The retreat caused relationships to form much faster than any traditional class setting could. Principals spoke about how the experience was critical to the development of a more open dialogue than would have otherwise been possible. Furthermore, the retreat added an aspect to their learning experience that endured throughout the program. Principals discussed the

various retreat team building exercises as being an integral part of developing a connectedness to one another, which allowed for deeper collaboration efforts, greater support for each other's success, and a higher level of learning, all with the help of the cohort structure in maintaining the togetherness.

Influencing Aspiring Leaders to Build Trusting Relationship

The cohort structure and the team-building retreats also allowed these principals to build lasting relationships with each other as well as powerful trust in one another. For school leaders, these attributes are imperative in making schools successful. Norris and Barnett (1994) researched cohort dynamics in educational leadership preparation programs and determined that "interaction (which results in cohesiveness among group members), purpose (which promotes collaboration), and interdependence (which represents the hallmark of a group's realness)" characterized the development of a group moving to transformational leadership (p. 32). This interpersonal support proves invaluable to isolated school leaders, and ultimately benefits the school districts in which they are employed. Not only do professional learning communities develop within the cohort model as previously mentioned, but the network of support graduates can draw upon is also a major advantage found within the design. Such networking makes information-gathering and advice-seeking available through professional friendships (Laing, 2006).

One benefit of these strong relationships is demonstrated by the program's graduation rate of 90%. Lawrence (2002) identified a distinct advantage of learning in the cohort model is a reduced chance of individuals giving up when going through a difficult period. If one member is considering dropping out, others within the group will

often help to retain the individual in the cohort. One reason for this compassion within

the cohort is that the cooperative spirit is essential to the health of the cohort. Nimer's

(2009) work also suggests that a cohort model increases the number of individuals who

complete their degrees and provides a higher rate of continued interaction among

members over the lifetime of their professional careers. Both of these ideas were evident

throughout the principals' interviews when they discussed the cohort as influential

throughout the program and how they still have communication with cohort members

years later. Furthermore, the cohort maximizes the available faculty and provides

essential personal and professional support for its members.

Influencing Aspiring Leaders to Link Practice with Theory (and Research)

Using practicing school administrators as faculty members and mentors was a

major contributor to the principals' success. Neuman (1999) suggested that traditional

university programs fail to utilize their local schools and capitalize on experience within

them as learning resources for prospective principals. During the interviews, principals

frequently articulated that the practicing school principals who were faculty/mentors had

a unique ability to bridge the theory read and discussed in class with the realities

occurring in school districts around the valley, particularly through the use of problem-

based learning scenarios. Likewise, Bridges (1999) noted that problem-based learning has

as a starting point—a problem that students are likely to face as future professionals.

Traditional preparation programs are often viewed as too theoretical and irrelevant to the

daily demands on contemporary principals (Hale & Moorman, 2003). This was evident in

Jim's interview response:

> Just the opportunity to have exposure to conversations to working principals that had been in the trenches…that was really nice to have the feel of what it would be like to be in the principal's position and the thought processes that you have to go through and just kind of working those situations out in the problems we did. (1)

Another important aspect exemplary school leadership preparation programs have been identified as doing is organizing coursework into a logical and developmental array of content and learning activities while using structures based on adult learning theory principles, such as constructivist, problem-based approaches (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Rather than organizing curriculum into single-topic courses, the BSU MEd Leadership Preparation program utilizes an integrated curriculum format, with faculty members in continuous collaboration with one another, developing syllabi that scaffolds from one semester to the next, and working alongside each other during class sessions. Participants in this study discussed how the integrated curriculum, in partnership with real-world PBL scenarios, influenced their learning experiences when practicing school administrators worked in concert with BSU faculty.

> The design of the program. I thought it was very beneficial. The whole concentration of instruction, and the emphasis of being an instructional leader. It was the major focus of the program and we talked about it constantly. From one semester to the next. I think it carried over into my career. (Cathy, 1)

Finally, as Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) identified, the ability to design a curriculum that links prior learned experiences to newly acquired knowledge can help promote deeper understanding and reflection for adult learners. One individual noted:

> I had previous leadership experience and had the skills to be a school leader. This program filled in all of the little in between stuff that, it just wasn't my thing at the time, like the connecting on a personal level with the employees. I did, in my previous job, I showed up and trained the employees. I hired them and I really didn't want to have a relationship with them because I may

have to fire them. And this program really helped me fill in those gaps of
how to build that rapport and to inspire people. And to work with the staff
that way. More of good coaching instead of I am here to train you. (Wilbur, 2)

Implications for Further Research

The results of this study, as well as others, suggest further research is needed in

the area of non-traditional school leadership preparation programs. Colleges of education

across the United States should be evaluating their programs to determine whether or not

they are adequately preparing students to become effective school leaders. The results of

this study indicate that graduates from the BSU MEd Leadership preparation program

who are practicing as school principals/vice-principals are more effective than others

from around the nation. However, it should be noted, the BSU sample sizes for both the

VAL-ED^{TM} survey ($N = 5$) and the interview session ($N = 12$) were reasonably small.

Though this number represented 42% (VAL-ED^{TM} survey) and 100% (interviews) of the

BSU MEd Leadership Preparation program graduates that were working as school

principals/assistant-principals at the time the study was conducted, the transferability to

other educational leadership preparation programs is limited due to its small number of

participants. Therefore, a recommendation for future research is to have additional

educational leadership preparation programs replicate this study to assess whether or not

they are producing effective school leaders, and subsequently interviewing those school

principals to ascertain elements of their leadership preparation program they consider

imperative in developing them to become effective school leaders. Colleges of education

could share their results with others, which potentially could lead to the development of

better programs to help meet the diverse needs of the adult learners trying to fill an ever-

changing position.

Future research might also consider giving attention to the behaviors of educational leaders, which preparation programs help shape, and how those behaviors affect leadership effectiveness. The VAL-ED^{TM} utilized in this study was used by principals, teachers, and supervisors to assess principals' leadership behaviors. As Pounder (2011) noted, leadership preparation inquiry may be most fruitful if it focuses on the relationship between preparation program quality features and candidate outcomes, most notably on-the-job leadership behaviors. This study has attempted to this, but additional studies would add to the limited literature base.

One final suggestion for further research is to focus on program qualities, such as cohorts, PBLs, integrated curriculum, etc., and how those qualities influence principal effectiveness. The results from this study indicate that the non-traditional program that BSU uses to prepare school leaders does make leaders more effective than a national sample. However, questions still remain unanswered as to how each of these program qualities influences the development of effective school leaders.

Recommendations

As universities across the nation seek to meet the needs of prospective school leaders who can handle the challenges schools are facing today, determining the best ways to meet this challenge can be daunting. Universities have a choice to make—they can continue making their colleges of education "cash cows" and an easy route for individuals to obtain a degree or redesign them in such a way to better prepare school leaders for the demands associated with the currently evolving system. With the literature suggesting that school leadership is second only to the classroom teacher as the most important factor in student learning (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005), it is imperative for

universities to devise non-traditional methods to help better meet the needs that are

required of school principals today.

Conclusion

Today, school leaders face a multitude of challenging tasks such as ensuring all

students are proficient on high-stakes standardized tests, managing staff (teachers,

janitors, para-professionals), and networking with a plethora of different stakeholders,

including students, parents of students, community members, and business leaders.

Many believe the expectations of the job to be unattainable. Universities across the nation

are being called to develop creative and unique ways of preparing effective school

leaders and meet adult learning needs, while concurrently cutting their budgets. In a

report written by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2002), they

note:

> Every educational reform report over the last decade concludes that the
> United States cannot have excellent schools without excellent leaders. A
> key leverage point for meeting major challenges facing the nation's
> schools, therefore, is effective leadership. The immediate task is to
> develop competent professionals to lead the changing schools, by, in part,
> making the new conditions facing school leaders are reflected in
> redesigned preparation programs and certification programs. (p. 2)

Preparing future school principals to be 21st century school leaders will have a

tremendous impact on future generations. Simply doing what has been done for decades

in leadership preparation will not foster school leaders who can handle the increasing

demands of the job. When educational leadership preparation programs encourage their

students to think differently, build trusting relationships with one another, and link theory

to their professional practice, as the Boise State's program appears to have accomplished,

more effective leadership is the result. It is possible that if more educational leadership

preparation programs were to replicate the BSU model, more graduates would be better

prepared to meet the demanding tasks being asked of school leaders today.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Letter (Principals)

Dear _____ *(Real Names will be used in actual emails/letters),*

I am a graduate student at Boise State University, working on my dissertation research in order to earn a doctorate. The purpose of my study is to further the knowledge base regarding the preparation of educational leaders. You are being asked to complete a survey and answer questions during a brief interview. The results obtained from these items will provide valuable feedback in the preparation of future educational leaders.

By submitting a completed VAL-ED^{TM} survey and answering questions in an interview, you are giving consent to use the results in a research study that will be made available to the public. Both the survey and interview will remain completely anonymous. Your individual name will never be used and will NOT be made public. The VAL-ED^{TM} questionnaire and the interview are voluntary. You are free to withdraw and discontinue at any time.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 208.562.0255. Your cooperation in completing this is greatly appreciated.

Randy Lance
12323 W. Nancee Drive
Boise, ID 83709
208.562.0255
docjill99@cableone.net

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Letter (Teachers and Immediate Supervisors)

Dear _____ *(Real Names will be used in actual emails/letters),*

I am a graduate student at Boise State University, working on my dissertation research in order to earn a doctorate. The purpose of my study is to further the knowledge base regarding the preparation of educational leaders. You are being asked to complete a survey based on the effectiveness of your school principal as well as answer questions during an interview. The results obtained from these items will provide valuable feedback regarding the preparation of future educational leaders.

By submitting a completed VAL-ED^{TM} survey, you are giving consent to use the results in a research study that will be made available to the public. The survey results will remain completely anonymous. Your individual name will never be used and will NOT be made public. Both the VAL-ED^{TM} questionnaire and the interview are voluntary. You are free to withdraw and discontinue at any time.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 208.562.0255. Your cooperation in completing this is greatly appreciated.

Randy Lance
12323 W. Nancee Drive
Boise, ID 83709
208.562.0255
docjill99@cableone.net

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Phone Script

Hello, this is Randy Lance, from Boise State University. I am calling to speak to
_____ (Name of School Principal).
　　　　(When School Principal is on the phone, repeat the above line):
　　　　Hello _____, is this a good time to talk?
　　　　(If no, ask for better day/time to call back)
(If now is a good time to talk):

Great, thank you. I am calling you about the research project I am currently conducting.
I am wondering if you fit the category of being a school principal who has graduated
from an educational leadership preparation program within the past five years (that would
mean you have graduated on or after May of 2006. Is that correct?

　　　　(If Yes)
Wonderful! The research I am interested in deals with the effectiveness and knowledge of

educational leaders who are currently practicing in the field as an administrator and

have graduated within the past five years. For this research, I am planning on using a

360-degree survey tool known as the VAL-ED^{TM} survey, which means you, as well as

your teachers and immediate supervisor, will complete an anonymous survey regarding

your (and their) perceptions of your effectiveness as an educational leader. Also,

another component of the research is to identify how your preparation program

contributed to their effectiveness. After collecting the quantitative data via the VAL-

ED^{TM} survey, I would also like to sit down for a brief interview with you. Do you have

any questions about the research?

　　　　(If person has questions about research, answer questions)

　　　　Are you still interested in being involved in this study?

　　　　(If no, '*thank you for your time. If you change your mind, please let me know*.'')

　　　　(If Yes)

Great! I would like to come by your school sometime during the following week (go to
the next week if they do not have time available). Looking at your schedule, is there a

day and time that would be best for you?   The VAL-ED^{TM} survey will be completed on-line, and I will simply need to discuss this with your teachers and immediate supervisor prior to administering it. Possibly during a staff meeting I could come by and talk very briefly to your staff and inform them of the study and what I am asking of them. The survey should take about 20 minutes to complete. The interview will last approximately 40 minutes. Is there a certain day and time that I could come by and meet with you and your staff?

Okay, I have down that we will meet on _____, at _____am/pm, at _____(location).

If you need to reach me before then, please call my cell phone at 208.562.0255, or email at docjill99@cableone.net

Do you have any other questions? (If yes, answer them).

Okay, I look forward to seeing you then!

Good bye.

APPENDIX D

Instructions for Completing VAL-ED^{TM} Survey

The Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) measures the effectiveness of a principal's key leadership behaviors that influence teacher performance and student learning. You will be asked to make an effectiveness rating for each of 72 leadership behaviors based on evidence from the **current school year.**

1. Read each item describing a leadership behavior. In some cases, the principal may not have actually performed the behavior, but he or she has ensured that it was done by others in the school. Either way the behavior should be rated.

2. Check the key **Sources of Evidence** you use for the basis of your assessment. Note, at least one source of evidence must be checked for an item before you can make an Effectiveness Rating. If you check **No Evidence**, then **Ineffective** or **Don't Know** must be marked in the Effectiveness column. (Principals do not have the option to check Don't Know for themselves, but teachers do).

3. If you check **any sources of evidence other than No Evidence**, always make an effectiveness rating even if you must **estimate** the effectiveness of the behavior. The number of **Sources of Evidence** checked is **not** indicative of the effectiveness rating.

4. Mark the **1** to **5 Effectiveness Rating** to indicate how effectively the behavior was performed.

Outstandingly effective means the principal (or the principal's designee) has carried out a particular behavior (e.g., providing necessary support) with a very strong, positive effect on the targeted area of school activity (e.g., rigorous curriculum).

Ineffective means the principal (or the principal's designee) has either not done the particular behavior (e.g., not provided necessary support) or has carried out the behavior with very low quality that does not have a positive effect on the targeted area of school activity (e.g., rigorous curriculum).

APPENDIX E

School Principal Interview Protocol

Pseudonym: _____ Graduation Year: _____

Cohort:_____ Years as an Administrator: _____

Years at the school in survey: _____

Guiding Questions: "How effective are graduates of a non-traditional educational leadership preparation program currently working as school principals/vice-principals compared to a national sample? How, if at all, do these graduates/practicing principals perceive this non-traditional preparation program to have contributed to their effectiveness?"

Turn on Voice Recorder

This is Randy Lance. It is _____, 2012, and I am in _____, with _____, for an interview for the study on effectiveness of educational leaders. Before we begin, I have some verbal paperwork to take care of, if you don't mind. First, did you review the informed consent forms? Do you give your consent to be interviewed? May I tape-record your interview? May I use quotes from your interview, under pseudonym?

1. To begin, I'd like to hear about your own experiences in your educational leadership preparation program. During what time frame did you attend Boise State University's educational leadership preparation program? When do you graduate?

2. What aspects or components of the program do you feel were most important to you becoming a successful school leader? Why?

3. What kind of leader did your program prepare you to be?

4. What were the primary teaching methods used most commonly in the program?

5. What do you believe are your strengths as a school leader? Weaknesses?

6. How, if at all, did your preparation program influence these areas of strength and weaknesses?

7. What influence, if any, did the educational leader preparation program have on your ability to meet the challenges you have had to face as a school principal?

8. Did the preparation program that you went through foster relationships among participants in the program? If so, how?

9. Do you stay in contact or have regular communication with your fellow classmates and/or your instructors? If so, how often, and what is discussed?

10. What did your program stress as the role and purpose of education, and, how did it do so? (Coursework, field experiences, related experiences, etc.)

11. What beliefs and values about school leadership did your program stress, and how did it get emphasized in the program?

12. How did your program shape your own beliefs about public education and/or school leadership? What aspect(s) of the program most influenced your beliefs?

13. If I told you that your staff and supervisor rated you as superior as an effective educational leader, what aspects do you believe your educational leadership preparation program did to help you achieve this?

14. If I told you that your staff and supervisor rated you as below proficient as an educational leader, how, if it all, did your preparation program contribute to this rating?

15. What kinds of support have you sought and/or received in your role as principal? (Possible prompts: family, friends, colleagues; instructional leader, district principal professional development, informally, readings, study groups, visitations, video-taping, and coaching or mentor principal, other networks?)

16. What are the first things that come to mind when you think about your lasting memories or impressions of the program?