A Case Study of Strategic Leadership and Research in Practice:
Principal Preparation Programs that Work – An Educational Administration Perspective of Best Practices for Master's Degree Programs for Principal Preparation

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years there have been a number of reform and restructuring efforts directed towards improving educational leadership training programs (Mitchel, 2001; Young & Petersen, 2002). As stated by Murphy and Forsyth (1999), the desire to improve the profession is widespread" (p. 263). The desire is there and many efforts have been initiated; many feel that attempts to change education leadership programs have accomplished little (Bjork & Ginsberg, 1995). Whereas in the United States of America formal administrator preparation has a history dating back more than 60 years, in most parts of the world, initiation of systems of formal preparation and development of school principals is a more recent phenomenon (Hallinger & Lu, 2013). "Recently in the United Kingdom (UK) the National College of School Leaders undertook a project to rethink the linkages between their leadership preparation programs and master of education degree programs. In addition to exploring current program structure and content offered in master of education programs globally, they also wished to examine approaches used in MBA and MPA degree programs" (Hallinger & Lu, 2013, p. 436). Their goal was to identify innovations in those domains that could potentially add value to current approaches employed in the preparation of educational leaders. Within the current context, there is programmatic expansion and increased experimentation with different approaches to principal preparation and development. "Globalization has inspired change and development in many spheres including politics, economy and society thus forcing transformations within education systems that are charged with future citizens' preparation in society. One of the main goals of educational organizations is to keep pace with such progress and to successfully lead processes of change. Graduate programs in educational administration prepare students for leadership roles in schools and thus offer a key arena for transformation and development of future schools' leadership" (Yemini & Giladi, 2015, p. 424). This chapter describes the process ensued for the development and subsequent implementation of the educational administration preparation programs and for the design and implementation of a new graduate programs in teacher leadership. Because the state did not guarantee matching funds, six of the seventeen original institutions that were tasked with re-designing and/or implementing new programs backed out of the process. As a result, at present, there are only eleven institutions offering the Master's Degree in Instructional Leadership formerly the educational administration program.

BACKGROUND

In 2000, Malone and Caddell stated that the principalship has gone through five evolutionary stages:

1. One teacher school house,
2. Lead teacher,
3. Teaching principal,
4. School principal, and
5. Supervising principal.

The principalship is currently in its sixth stage, "change agent" (p. 63). For the purpose of this study, the principalship as it has evolved in the last fifteen years will be the focus of this case study.

One of the first sociological studies of the principalship was published in 1975 by Lortie. Lortie recommended that a tridimensional research approach be followed to include the following:

1. Field-based practice,
2. Professional growth opportunities, and
3. Formal academic preparation.

In 1999 Bloom stated, school effectiveness studies conducted during the 1980s brought a new focus upon the importance of instructional leadership. Daresh and Playko (1992) stated many principal preparation programs during this time began to focus on good leadership as being good management.

In a seminal article published by Jackson and Kelley (2002) educational administrator preparation programs received criticism for inadequate program quality. Despite these criticisms, there are a number of programs and features of programs that are both innovative and exceptional. The authors highlight the features of successful programs at the University of Washington, East Tennessee State University and California State University, Fresno. Programs that were successful then and can be successful now, must employ a clear vision that drives programmatic decisions and provides candidates with opportunities to connect to the knowledge base through carefully designed field experiences integrated into the academic program.

Jackson and Kelley (2002) wanted to identify successful programs because a 1987 report issued by the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEA) related to the structure and focus of educational administrator preparation programs took on new emphasis as programs were reviewed in attempting to respond to deficiencies. Despite, these efforts, many preparation programs continued to lack the curricular coherence, rigor, pedagogy and structure to provide the kinds of knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to produce a large supply of exceptional school and district leaders.

In 2005, DyceFaucett stated that there was little research concerning best-practice for graduate level principal preparation programs during the 1980s, however, there were several studies that concluded these programs were unreliable. These programs were unreliable in the sense that they could not guarantee that a student would gain the appropriate knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are needed to be good at performing the duties of the job. The findings of these studies pointed to the fact that these programs had deficiencies.

Yee and others in 1997 believed that principal preparation programs often failed as effective approaches for developing leadership capabilities in school administrators. In general, there were two concerns: First, educational administrators were not as competent as administrators in other fields. Secondly, administra-

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