

TAKING BACK OUR PROFESSION: REVISITED

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This chapter is presented in three parts, by two authors: (1) Theodore Creighton, Executive Director of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) and (2) Michelle Young, Executive Director of the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA). These are the two major professional organizations representing educational leadership preparation programs and individual professors of education administration (Our Profession).

First, we point to a major step forward by NCPEA in establishing and assembling the knowledge base of education administration to the world in free access in multiple languages; second, a major initiative by UCEA (along with NCPEA, AERA-Division A, AERA TEA Sig) to publish and make widely available the conceptual and research base of knowledge in education preparation; and third, we present our views of existing gaps in university preparation programs.

In previous chapters, we have read of the history of NCPEA (1947) and UCEA (1957) along with some of the political and professional differences felt and expressed by members of both organizations. Our profession is represented BOTH by NCPEA as a professional organization of individual professors of educational administration and UCEA as a professional organization representing doctoral granting universities.

The current executive directors of NCPEA and UCEA began (at the University of Houston hosted 2001 NCPEA Conference) to explore ways the two organizations could work collaboratively in efforts to improve the preparation of school leaders, and also to slowly chip away at some of the existing philosophical, personal, and professional differences existing between the two professional organizations. It has never been our intent to suggest a union of the two professional organizations: we believe each to be individually focused on unique contributions toward the improvement of leadership preparation. BUT, we do believe though our goals and objectives may be different, we both strive to accomplish the same thing: to improve the quality of preparation programs, the quality of school leaders, and ultimately the quality of student learning in our nation's schools.

Part 1. A Puppy Chasing Its Own Tail (Achilles, 2005)

The evidence is clear: the knowledge base issue has been endlessly debated (Papa, Chapter 1; Hoyle, Chapter 2; Achilles, Chapter 4; English, Chapter 5; Murphy, Chapter 6; Beach & Berry, Chapter 7; Bok, 1987; Creighton, Busch, MacNeil, & Waxman; Culbertson, 1990). In July 2004, the NCPEA Executive Board unanimously approved a major project to define (redefine) the knowledge base in educational administration (KB). The impetus of this project is based on the belief that our present knowledge base does not exist in depth, is not representative of the whole profession (scholars and practitioners), and does not exist with convenient (and free) access to all. In addition, the existing KB is scattered across a wide variety of mediums (e.g., texts, journals, papers) and is authored by a select few void of the majority of voices from the professorate and school practitioners in the field. In October 2004, the NCPEA Board entered into a collaborative partnership with the Connexions Project at Rice University to pursue the publishing of a more thorough and inclusive KB with free access to the world in several languages. The details of this project have been presented in an earlier chapter of this book (Beach & Berry) and in other recent publications (Baraniuk & Henry, 2004; Creighton, Bush, MacNeil, Waxman, 2005).

NCPEA's position is that the problem is not so much an absence of a KB, but more that it is incomplete and unorganized, existing in a hodgepodge of textbooks and education journals, and of limited access. What is needed now is the assembly of the KB in one central location, authored by and representative of all professors and practitioners (and other educators), and freely accessible in several languages to all in the world.

To summarize, Rice University and the Connexions Project will help our profession eradicate the following problems:

1. The KB in education administration does not presently exist in one central location.
2. The existing KB (authored by a select few) is primarily accessible to those educators who purchase textbooks (mostly required through masters and doctoral programs), or have subscriptions to professional journals. This makes the access to the KB cumbersome and cost prohibitive.
3. The existing KB is often outdated due to the dynamic nature and constant flux of education administration and the time lapse between writing and publication.
4. The KB is not freely accessible to all (nationally and internationally in multiple languages).
5. The existing KB is absent the contributions of knowledge and expertise of unpublished scholars and practitioners.

NCPEA's plan is to solicit contributions of the KB in education administration from all interested parties (i.e., scholars, practitioners, teachers, students, and other educators). Contributions (publications) may be as short as 2-3 pages or as lengthy as an entire book. The steps for contributions are as follows:

1. Submit a contribution to the NCPEA Executive Office via email as a Word document.
2. Your submission will be immediately reviewed by the NCPEA Connexions Review Board (comprised of scholars and practitioners).
3. Authors will be notified within three weeks of acceptance and/or suggested revisions to be made.
4. Once the author and review board agree on publication, the submission is immediately published to the Contents Commons in Connexions, and available to the world, with free and open access.
5. NCPEA, a third party professional organization independent of Connexions, serves as a lens, endorsing contributions as high quality, and directing professors and practitioners (through UCEA, NAESP, NASSP, AASA, etc.) to all modules and courses deemed professionally rigorous, research-based, and aligned with practice.
6. The author's Dean, Department Chair, and Tenure/Promotion Committee all receive notification of acceptance stating NCPEA's endorsement and recommendation for consideration of scholarly research and contribution to the knowledge base of education administration.
7. An author's contribution (module or course) is accessible to the world, and can be translated into various languages (e.g., Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Thai). All contributions are linked to Google for quick and easy access. For example, a university student in Beijing, China, is researching the relationship between school leadership and student achievement. Utilizing her Chinese language Google version to translate articles from English to Chinese, she has access to all KB modules in the Connexions Content Commons related to leadership and achievement. This further expands an author's contribution to the KB beyond the confines of a local textbook, and can have a significant impact on the global community of learners.

So, why would a professor or school practitioner want to contribute to the KB in education administration? A few reasons follow:

Manageable task. Contributions can be as short as a couple of pages and completed in an afternoon or week-end. Or, if one wishes, an entire book is easily and quickly reviewed and considered for publication.

Rapid turn-around. Peer review by the NCPEA Review Board and acceptance of submission (or request for revisions) can be completed in 2-3 weeks.

Pride of authorship. In addition to individual authors retaining copyright of contributions, any course constructed or other use of the author's work would carry the original author forward (not unlike the present reference to one's work).

Professional organization endorsement. The NCPEA acceptance and endorsement would further recognize one's work as scholarly research and contribution to the KB in education administration.

Course composer. This Connexion's tool is available to individual professors, school administrators, teachers, and students, and allows for searching the entire Content Commons. Of particular interest to NCPEA is the opportunity for professors to search the Content Commons area to construct courses – and print locally as e-books and paper texts, or spool to an on-demand publisher such as Kinko's.

Worldwide recognition. An author's contribution is accessible to the world, and can be translated into different languages. How much of our present KB, published in traditional texts and professional journals, is available in other countries in other languages?

Part 2. The Joint Research Taskforce on Educational Leadership Preparation

Criticisms of leadership education have become increasingly common. Not evident within much of the criticism, however, is the fact that leadership preparation has made important strides in identifying a base of knowledge. This Joint Research Taskforce on Educational Leadership Preparation, sponsored by UCEA, AERA-Division A, AERA TEA Sig, and NCPEA, is meant to make widely available the conceptual and research base on leadership education. Taskforce researchers will search the literature and cite research findings, primarily from the last decade, as well as identify gaps in the leadership preparation knowledgebase, and discuss the implications of what is known and changing contexts for the future of educational leadership preparation and research.

The field must base research and practice on what is currently known about leadership education, in order to implement a reform agenda that is informed, consistent, and forward thinking. Until we have an opportunity to “bring it all together,” leadership education will continue primarily as a cult practice, with wide differences among schools of education, professors, and professional developers, unable to evaluate or replicate specific practice.

When sketching out the general domains of this project, care was taken not to become overly prescriptive. It will be important for the domain leaders and researchers to have plenty of room to fashion their offerings in ways that reflect the research on and needs of the field.

Domain 1- Leadership Education as a Field of Study

Domain Leader: John Hoyle, Texas A&M University, jhoyle@neo.tamu.edu

This domain will explore the bases and issues in leadership education research, as well as its philosophical contexts, historical approaches, and futurist studies. Potential areas to explore within this domain would include: 1) one that explored the context of conducting research on leadership education, including issues of legitimacy, need, as well as interest in conducting and the level of support available to conduct such research; 2) one on the methodological and theoretical approaches used to research leadership preparation, identifying themes over and critical moments within that history; 3) a general overview of the areas in which research has been conducted concerning leadership education (e.g., student recruitment, cohorts, use of cases, internships); and 4) one offering a critique of the research that has been conducted on educational leader preparation, highlighting areas for improvement or expansions concerning theory, method and focus.

Domain 2- The Context of Leadership Education

Domain Leader: Dianna Pounder, University of Utah, pounder@ed.utah.edu

This domain will explore research on university contexts, fiscal affairs, standards, policy-making and issues within the K-12 environment that impact, either directly or indirectly, educational leadership preparation. Potential areas to explore within this domain would include: 1) the emergence of leadership standards and their impact on program content, accreditation, and program approval; 2) the impact of state certification and licensure policies on leadership preparation programs; 3) contextual issues of the university, including institutional prestige and economic issues; 4) the role of advisory boards and school partnerships in developing and delivering leadership preparation, 5) the issue of PreK-12 accountability and its impact on leadership preparation programs.

Domain 3: Models and Theories of Leadership Education

Domain Leaders: Edie Rusch, UNLV (rusche2@unlv.nevada.edu) and Fen English, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (fenglish@attglobal.net)

This domain considers models of pre-service and advanced university-based leadership education and the underlying theories of leadership education. Potential areas to explore within this domain would include: 1) the historical development leadership education, 2) theories of leadership education both for ed leadership and in other fields; 3) the organizing theories that programs use to construct their programs (e.g., ethics, social justice, management, transformational leadership); 4) various university-based preparation models; 5) preparation programs that are designed and delivered by school districts, either alone or in collaboration with universities; 6) alternate paths that states make available to leadership candidates; and 7) leadership preparation programs.

Domain 4: Recruitment, Selection and Development of Leadership Candidates

Domain Leaders: Theodore Creighton, Sam Houston State University (creitheo@unxmail.shsu.edu) and Trisha Brown-Ferrigno, University of Kentucky (ferrign@pop.uky.edu)

This domain focuses on research about leadership candidates. Potential areas to explore within this domain would include: 1) recruitment and selection procedures, 2) processes used to develop individual candidates; 4) candidate learning and adult learning in general; 5) candidate engagement; 6) development of candidate leadership identity, and 7) how programs connect to students following graduation and how they sustain them as leaders (i.e., mentoring and inducting).

Domain 5: Providers of Leadership Education

Domain Leaders: Martha McCarthy, Indiana University (mccarthy@indiana.edu) and Nelda Cambron-McCabe, Miami University (cambron@muohio.edu)

This domain is concerned with the individuals involved in teacher educations. Potential areas to explore within this domain would include: 1) characteristics of university faculty; 2) the preparation and professional development of leadership faculty; 3) the contributions of adjunct and clinical (non-regular) faculty vis-à-vis tenure-track (regular) faculty; 4) the characteristics and preparation of non-regular faculty members; 5) the work life and evaluation of regular faculty; 6) partnerships with districts and communities and inclusion of district practitioners in preparation.

Domain 6: Curriculum and Pedagogy in Leadership Education

Domain Leader: Robert Kottkamp, Hofstra University, edarbk@hofstra.edu, and Marilyn J. Bartlett, University of South Florida, bartlettm@earthlink.net

This domain examines the content of leadership preparation programs including the content taught in courses and the pedagogy (cases, action-research, problem-based learning, portfolio development) used to facilitate learning. Potential areas to explore within this domain would include: 1) the evolution of program content overtime; 2) the use of reflection, journaling and storytelling within the leadership curriculum; 3) the use of cases and problem based learning in the leadership classroom; 4) the use of portfolios as a learning tool; 5) internships and other practicum experiences, and 6) a comparison of preparation in educational leadership programs to preparation in other professions.

Domain 7: The Delivery of Leadership Preparation

Domain Leader: Margaret Grogan, University of Missouri-Columbia, groganm@missouri.edu

This domain will analyze research on the delivery of leadership preparation. Potential areas to explore within this domain would include: 1) a description of how programs have been delivered overtime; 2) a comparison of the delivery of leadership preparation to that of professionals in other fields;

3) the use of distance technology; and 4) the use of cohorts in the delivery of leadership preparation.

Domain 8: Student Assessment and Program Evaluation

Domain Leader: Terry M. Orr, Teachers College-Columbia, mto10@columbia.edu

This domain examines assessment of individual leadership candidates as well as program evaluation strategies for institutional change. Potential areas to explore within this domain would include: 1) strategies used in evaluating student learning; 2) procedures used for course assessment; 3) the use of assessment centers; 4) state wide reviews of educational leadership preparation programs; and 5) past trends and new developments in program assessment.

Domain 9: Professional Learning

Domain Leader: Fran Kochan, Auburn University, kochafr@auburn.edu

This domain examines leadership education within the larger context of professional learning. Potential areas to explore within this domain would include: 1) mentoring and induction programs; 2) how leaders are socialized into their roles; 3) research on continuous professional learning; 4) the types and quality of professional learning available; and 5) the role of professional associations in professional learning.

Domain 10: Leadership Education Around the Globe

Domain Leader: Miles Bryant, UNLV, bryant@unlserve.unl.edu

This domain will examine leadership education within countries outside the US. Potential areas to explore within this domain would include: 1) leadership education within specific countries; 2) how contexts, cultures and economies have shaped leadership education, 3) how public education systems influence the need and design for leadership education, 4) how leadership education is provided, and 5) the nature of scholarship on leadership education.

Individual professors and practitioners interested in contributing to any one of the 10 domains identified by the Research Taskforce, should contact the domain leader via email listed with each domain. It is important to note that though this project will result in a published Handbook of Educational Administration, it will lend itself naturally for inclusion in the Content Commons of the Connexions Project.

Part 3. Existing Gaps in University Preparation Programs

The field of educational administration has long been criticized for the ways in which men and women have been prepared for school leadership positions. In 1960, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) characterized the preparation of principals as a “dismal montage” (Murphy, 1999, p. 84). Later, Farquhar and Piele (1972) described university-based preparation programs as “dysfunctional-structural incrementalism” (p. 17). In 1990, Pitner discussed the “zombie programs” (p. 131) in educational administration. As recently as March 2005, the Education Schools Project published a report written by Arthur Levine, then president of Teachers College, Columbia University stated:

The quality of preparation of the nation’s school leaders ranges from ‘inadequate to appalling.’ University-based programs designed to prepare the next generation of educational leaders are not up to the task. Many programs are engaged in a ‘race to the bottom’ in which they compete for students by lowering admission standards, watering down coursework, and offering faster and less demanding degrees. (p. 1)

In 1987, the National Commission for the Advancement in Excellence in Educational Administration identified gaps in the preparation of school leaders calling for large-scale reform in the preparation and development of our nation’s school leaders. Douglas Fiore (2002) stated “to date, many of the Commission’s recommendations have been ignored, resulting in schools leadership preparation and performance gaps that have been harming schools” (p. 2).

Three specific gaps appear as a common thread across the 1987 Commission, and the standards documents of ISLLC, ELLC, NAESP, SREB, and McREL: (1) improving recruiting and selection processes to tap higher performers with demonstrated knowledge of curriculum and instruction and with a passion for getting students to meet high-achievement standards; (2) reforming the licensure and accreditation systems; and (3) establishing substantive professional development activities that become an integral component of the careers of professors and practicing administrators.

Gap 1: Improving Recruitment and Selection

Clearly, the field of educational administration still has serious problems in the ways candidates are selected into educational leadership programs. Some argue, and with just cause, that our profession has NO selection process – but practices self-selection whereas the sole criteria for admission is the candidate’s willingness to pay tuition and fees. Effective educational leadership programs consist BOTH of program experiences and the quality of entering candidates. The selection of candidates is fully as critical as the preparation program itself.

There is some evidence that a more proactive stance to the selection of potential school leaders in the nation's university preparation programs has taken place over the last decade. But progress has been slow partly because university programs are under pressure to take in adequate numbers of candidates to justify the program's cost and existence. This pressure results in admitting individuals of borderline quality, with a continued program dependence on traditional selection criteria such as Graduate Record Examination scores, grade point average, and letters of recommendation.

The professional practitioner organizations (NASSP, NAESP) along with the higher education professional organizations (NCPEA, UCEA) must combat such "cash cow" mentality with a call for rigorous admission and graduate standards and realistic strategies for fostering collaboration between universities and school districts. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) seems to be the most logical potentially effective body to make this happen.

Gap 2: Improving Accreditation and Licensure

The second identified gap (licensure and accreditation) may not be as problematic due to the recent progress in this area. The accreditation of departments of educational administration is a relatively new process – as recently as the 1990s, the National Policy Board of Educational Administration (NPBEA) approved a specialty professional association (SPA) to conduct accreditation of departments of educational administration in colleges of education, but only as part of the NCATE review. As of 2004, less than half of the colleges of education in the United States (575 of the approximately 1,200) are NCATE accredited. However, the number of colleges of education seeking NCATE accreditation has tripled in the past 5 years. More troubling is the fact that the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC), the SPA for educational administration departments, has only approved approximately 178 programs. The gap seems to be the number of programs not being reviewed by either NCATE or ELCC.

The public has a crucial stake in the quality and caliber of educational administration program accreditation: the organization, management, and evaluation of preparation programs are the rationale for accreditation in educational administration. Nationally recognized accreditation expert Kenneth E. Young and his associates in their 1983 *Understanding Accreditation*, present five aspects or themes of institutional and specialized accreditation. Though written two decades ago, these guidelines remain relevant today, especially in the field of educational administration:

1. Accreditation is a valuable – perhaps even essential – social tool whose usefulness and effectiveness have not been fully appreciated and whose full potential has yet to be realized.

2. Accreditation began as a voluntary, non-governmental process and should remain so if its values are to be preserved and enhanced.
3. Accreditation is a process that, at its heart, consists of guided self-evaluation and self-improvement and serves as the centerpiece as the little understood, informal, but elaborate commitment to self-regulation in post-secondary education. The primary value of accreditation is to be found in the process itself, not in the formal results of the process – that is, the announced decision of whether a program is accredited.
4. Accreditation should be judged by its effectiveness in encouraging and assisting the program to evaluate and improve its educational offerings. All other outcomes and uses of accreditation are secondary to this objective and should not undermine it. To be effective, accreditation must focus primarily on the program, just as education must focus on the student.
5. Accreditation is highly vulnerable to misuse and abuse by those who wish to turn it into other purposes.

Accreditation is the mechanism whereby university preparation programs in educational administration review, renew, and improve their preparation of school leaders. Accreditation serves the interests of the students enrolled in our programs as well, by signifying the preparation they are receiving meets or exceeds the standards that our profession has judged appropriate academic preparation. Accredited programs attract more highly-qualified candidates, and more highly-qualified candidates have greater potential to improve practice as education leaders.

Any accreditation process can be misused or abused. In addition, some argue that the process is counterproductive and actually promotes standardization at the expense of creativity, experimentation, and innovation. The application of the “one right method” closes off any serious reconsideration of the outcome and the processes involved in the constructive process.

In the field of educational administration, the adoption of the ISLLC standards and implementation of the ELCC accreditation process have been important components of program improvement. Currently, efforts are underway by the National Policy Board to review existing program standards and focus additional attention of educational administration accreditation and licensure.

No professional field (including educational administration) remains static. Our knowledge base continues to change as new research affects what we know about effective leadership. The accreditation of preparation programs and the licensure of school leaders must be an ongoing dynamic process – as opposed to a once-every-five-years process. And, there is some debate suggesting the national accreditation bodies (NCATE and TEAC) are the wrong tools for validating quality and acting as a driver of program improvement in educational

administration. This position suggests that the real problem may relate to the absence of an accrediting process that accredits educational administration programs independently. Though the ELCC process is specialized to administration programs, it may be too closely tied to the NCATE college of education accreditation. Some educational experts are questioning whether specialty fields such as educational administration should rely entirely on unit organizations for accreditation? Alternatives include accrediting our program independently, as is done in the field of psychology, two of whose organizations – counseling and school psychology – have greatly improved program quality standards and accreditation processes more independent of national accreditation bodies (Cibulka, 2004).

Gap 3: Providing High-Quality Professional Development

Lastly, there appears to be a large gap in our ability to provide high-quality professional development and training activities in which school leaders, university professors study leadership issues together. In a report of the task force to evaluate and redesign preparation programs (Virginia Department of Education, 2003), the issue of quality professional development was addressed:

The role of the school leader is a career-long collaborative endeavor that must be supported by high-quality professional development. Activities must be planned, must be rigorous and systematic, and promote continuous inquiry and reflection. The activities must focus on student learning and achievement, school-wide educational improvement, leadership, subject content, teaching strategies, and use of technologies and other essential elements in teaching to high standards. And it is important that institutions of higher education become more entrepreneurial in service delivery and structure school leader preparation programs to support the goals and objectives established by school districts within the region to be served in principal preparation programs. (p. 7)

There is strong recent evidence indicating that several bright spots are appearing from individual state initiatives and the collaborative work between universities and public schools. In addition, we think both the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration Connexions Project and the UCEA/AERA/NCPEA sponsored Joint Research Taskforce on Educational Leadership Preparation will radically improve professional development opportunities for both university professors and practicing school leaders.

We agree with James Smith in the Epilogue as he says, “an active orientation is needed,” and with Chuck Achilles, “actions and conversations about the education administration criticisms (1969-2005) are long overdue.” And, we are equally concerned with Fenwick English’s signal that “it may be too late to do anything about it,” and Achilles’ warning that “if we do not respond soon, there may not be anything left to take back.”

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