

STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS: THE IMPACT OF A UNIVERSITY-BASED
LABORATORY SCHOOL ON A CAMPUS-BASED UNIVERSITY
EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM

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LABORATORY SCHOOL ON A CAMPUS-BASED UNIVERSITY
EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

A gap in research on the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program and a decrease in the number of university-based laboratory schools requires current laboratory school programs to evaluate strengths and weaknesses to provide quality evaluative data to ensure continued viability. This qualitative study sought to expand the extant research by identifying perceptions of stakeholders, educator preparation program students, faculty, administrators, and laboratory school teachers, parents, and administrators—to examine the impact of a laboratory school on an educator preparation program. The case study outlined stakeholder perceptions at one university and one laboratory school and investigated the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the impact of a university-based laboratory school to a campus-based educator preparation program. Four major themes emerged related to the impact of a laboratory school on an educator preparation program include: experimentation, early practice and ability to bridge theory to practice, expertise of faculty and teachers, and safety and support of environment to practice new learning. A fifth overarching theme was identified as significant to research: complexity of the organization.

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION IN PRACTICE

Preparing teacher candidates to be effective and successful teachers has evolved from having no formal preparation of teachers in one-room schoolhouses to formal, assessed programming. Former U.S. Secretary of Education King (as cited in U.S. Department of Education, 2016) expressed “as an educator, I know that one of the strongest in-school influences on students is the teacher in front of the classroom” (para 4). Effective programs provide students with practice and experimentation in a collaborative environment that includes educator preparation programs and university-based laboratory schools (Barbour & McBride, 2017). The U.S. Department of Education highlighted that teachers performing in the top 20% of performance can generate 5 to 6 months of student growth compared to teachers who are low-performing (The New Teacher Project, 2012). The majority of fully prepared teacher candidates are prepared in university-based educator preparation programs (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE], 2013). Identifying effective practices and implementing high-quality educator preparation programs will ensure teacher candidates are prepared to enter classrooms with the skills needed to be successful. An emerging literature base provided evidence that fully prepared teacher candidates are more effective with students than less prepared teacher candidates.

Educator preparation programs have a long history beginning with Grace Hoadley Dodge in the 1880s (Teachers College, 2017) and laboratory schools provided high-quality preparation for teacher candidates using exemplary instructional programming (Gresham, 2012). Higher education institutions and laboratory schools associated with universities must examine the quality of learning and establish optimal conditions to

promote change for future educator preparation growth and teacher expertise (Arnold-Grine, 2007; Blakely, 2009). The following sections provide historical background information pertaining to laboratory schools and educator preparation programs.

Laboratory Schools

Laboratory schools were established in the United States in the 1830s to provide clinical experience for teacher candidates in a school setting (Blakely, 2009; Gresham, 2012; Weih & Ensworth, 2006). Laboratory schools, also referenced as training schools, model schools, or demonstration schools, provided training facilities for observation, instruction, modeling, research, and experimentation in a controlled context (Buck & Miller, 1991). The name *laboratory school* emerged during the scientific movement in education, when the educational process was considered scientific experimentation. Laboratory schools influenced the landscape of higher education by providing university-based learning opportunities to university students and provided “safe places where students can reflect on teaching and philosophy” (Gilbert, 1999, p. 71). Fernie and Kantor (1994) defined laboratory schools as “places of experimentation, inquiry, and research, which do not conflict with, and indeed enhance the program agenda” (p. 164). The AACTE supported the importance of laboratory schools in 1926 with the adoption of Standard VII A., indicating that each teachers college should have a training school to provide supervised teaching practice (Buck & Miller, 1991; Gresham, 2012). Of normal schools—schools created to educate teachers on the pedagogy of teaching—73% had laboratory schools in 1873, and this percentage remained consistent for 2 decades (Blakely, 2009; Richards, 1994).

The decline of laboratory schools prompted educator preparation programs to partner with public schools during the mid-1900s, due to the large number of teacher candidates (Blakely, 2009). The decline of laboratory schools continued, resulting in 196 laboratory schools by 1970 affiliated with colleges and universities, many of these operating in a reduced scope from their original design (Sparks, 2015). Operational and philosophical issues caused the failure of many laboratory schools, leaving fewer than 100 schools still in existence by 1990 (Hausfather, 2000; McBride, 1994). Researchers noted significant contributions by laboratory schools, but Goodlad (1980) determined laboratory schools were in the past, and many found difficulty in continuing the mission of constructivist education while also meeting the always-changing mission of universities (Blakely, 2009).

Educator preparation Programs

Prior to 1880, formal U.S. educator preparation was not available. Anyone, primarily male, who completed a specified level of education could teach. Education took place in many settings that included churches and homes and led by a variety of adults: parents, preachers, and community leaders (Larabee, 2008). The common school or normal school (schools created to educate teachers on the pedagogy of teaching) initiated in the 1830s prompted a process of education that is similar to the system in place today (Larabee, 2008).

Pestalozzi and Educator preparation

The idea of public institutions specifically designed for elementary school teacher preparation began with Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who started educator preparation institutions and believed children should guide their own learning, rather than a teacher

imposing learning on the child (Coble, Edelfelt, & Kettlewell, 2004; Helton, 2008).

Pestalozzi was a constructivist educator who believed children should experience learning naturally, without the intervention of teachers and parents (Coble et al., 2004).

“It is what they do together that is really educative” (Green, 1905, p. 31).

In 1774, Pestalozzi started a school for disadvantaged children in Switzerland and emphasized learning through experimentation in a supportive atmosphere. Pestalozzi emphasized the importance of personal freedom through physical, moral, and intellectual training in a real-world setting where children learned to grow from the earth and learned from their surroundings (Green, 1905). The literary works of Pestalozzi contributed to social and educational reform that highlighted the observations of children and the importance of knowing each child (Green, 1905).

U.S. Educator preparation

Grace Hoadley Dodge established the first teachers college, named the Industrial Education Association, with a focus on providing age-appropriate toys for kindergarten children (Teachers College, 2017). The Industrial Education Association was renamed The New York School for the Training of Teachers in 1887 and renamed again in 1892 to Teachers College. John Dewey founded the University Primary School in 1896, which would become the University of Chicago Laboratory School (Hutton, 1991; Phillips, 2014). Dewey proposed that instead of repetition and memorization, learners engaged in real-world experiences and collaborations would develop greater knowledge (Phillips, 2014).

Dewey was a constructivist theorist believing that learners construct knowledge individually and socially while interacting with the environment, and constructivism has

guiding principles that influence learner-constructed meaning (Hein, 1991). The guiding principles follow a belief that learning is an ongoing process of active and social learning that involves mental engagement and language usage, that contextual learning that can be applied, and that engagement encourages motivation. Greater knowledge through active, social interactions provides learners with contextual learning that would influence future learning (Phillips, 2014). Dewey left the University of Chicago and joined the faculty of Teachers College in 1904, which influenced the opening of the laboratory school in 1917. The school quickly gained notoriety for experimentation with progressive curriculum and methods of teaching (Phillips, 2014).

Evolution of Educator preparation

Teacher preparation evolved from the early 1800s and requirements increased with advances in science and student accountability (Angus, 1999; Helton, 2008). The efforts of Horace Mann in the 1800s convinced others that oversight was needed and Mann served as the first secretary of the first national board of education in 1837 to ensure educators developed academic standards (New York University, 2016).

According to Diane Ravitch, research professor at Steinhardt, teacher education had no single focus, with irregularities from program to program (New York University, 2016).

The evolution of educator preparation began with Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and the belief that children should guide their own learning through experimentation and exploration (Coble et al., 2004; Helton, 2008). Continued development of educator preparation occurred with the works of Grace Hoadley Dodge and the establishment of Teachers College. The University of Chicago Laboratory School was the first to provide

clinical experience for teacher candidates in a school setting, influencing the educational landscape for years to come (Blakely, 2009; Gresham, 2012; Weih & Ensworth, 2006).

In the 20th century, educator preparation moved from normal schools to regional universities with continued processes for higher qualifications and varied forms of assessment. Teachers received training and certification to ensure children received quality education. In the mid-1900s, educator preparation transitioned to departments in universities and followed the path of other professions, initiating apprenticeships and internships (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997).

Statement of the Problem

Problem of Practice

The problem of practice this research study addressed is a lack of information about the impact of laboratory schools on educator preparation programs. A decrease in the number of university-based laboratory schools requires current laboratory-school programs to evaluate strengths and weaknesses to provide quality evaluative data to ensure continued viability. According to an AACTE (2013) report, programs that provide actual practice opportunities for teacher candidates produce higher quality teachers.

Funding. Reduced federal and state support for higher education institutions has increased the need for accountability of university-based laboratory schools. The 2016 Fiscal Survey of the States semiannual report stated that at least 24 states reported revenues came in weaker than expected. Missouri Governor Greitens stated,

Universities, college professors, administrators are going to get less money than the politicians had promised them in the past. And that is one of the places where

we're going to have to ask them to tighten their belts so we can fund our priorities. (as cited in Rosenbaum, 2017, para 4)

Pressures on higher education educator preparation programs, coupled with reductions in funding, raise financial questions about the sustainability of all institutional programming, and particularly funding associated with educator preparation in laboratory schools. Funds to support laboratory schools come from private and public sources. Private sources include foundations, direct clientele, and tuition. Public-funding sources include federal, state, and local governmental jurisdictions. Some laboratory schools, unable to charge tuition, offset expenses with the use of admission fees, instructional fees, textbook fees, and equipment rental (Buck & Martin, 1991).

Local decisions. Local decisions discern the funding sources making each laboratory school unique. Public universities typically provide partial funding for laboratory schools through the education department or college of education. Because the primary mission of departments or colleges is educator preparation, universities support laboratory schools as part of the commitment to higher quality teacher-preparation programs (Gresham, 2012).

Existing Gap in Literature

Prior laboratory-school researchers examined specific areas of laboratory-school programming that included finance and financial sustainability, classroom instruction, enhanced preschool-teacher education, and specific teacher-education courses taught in the laboratory school (Arnold-Grine, 2007; Blakely, 2009; Epstein & Willhite, 2015). Previous research studies did not examine the impact of laboratory schools on educator

preparation programs and did not include stakeholder perceptions when evaluating or reporting research findings.

Furthermore, results from prior studies indicated a decline in the number of university-based laboratory schools due to a lack of financial sustainability and an inability to meet the demands of changing educator preparation programs (Gresham, 2012; Hausfather, 2000). Federal and state mandates such as Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation, No Child Left Behind, and state standards for the preparation of educators required teacher candidates to receive an authentic process in teacher-education program (Farnan, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

Based on gaps in extant literature relating to laboratory schools, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to collect stakeholder perceptions of the impact of one university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program. The review involved collecting stakeholder perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of one laboratory school and one educator preparation program to advance research in the field of educator preparation. In this qualitative study (aligned with Creswell, 2014), the researcher conducted an investigation to explore stakeholder perceptions, working to extend research and inform future decision making by educators in laboratory schools and educator preparation programs. According to Arnold-Grine (2007) three important roles of a laboratory school include the facilitation of research about learner development and growth; provision of model educational sites for children and college students learning about child development; and provision of training, educational expertise, and professional-community presence.

No research emerged that reviewed stakeholder perceptions of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program. The pressure to transform to traditional educational methods caused many university-based laboratory schools to close (Abdal-Haqq, 1998; Hausfather, 2000). Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget provided extensive research to impact the work of laboratory schools, using the following constructivist tenet:

Learning is an active, contextualized process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring it. Knowledge is constructed based on personal experiences and hypotheses of the environment. Learners continuously test these hypotheses through social negotiation. Each person has a different interpretation and construction of knowledge process. The learner is not a blank slate but brings experiences and cultural factors to a situation. (Gresham, 2012, p. 68)

This research case study contributes research to the field of education to address the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program. Previous researchers have not examined the impact of a laboratory school on an educator preparation program through the stakeholder lens. This case study will examine the impact through the stakeholder lens.

Research Question

The overarching research question guiding this case study was, How do stakeholders view the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program at one Midwest university?

Theoretical Framework

Program Theory

Two thousand years ago, Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus wrote, “first say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do” (Funnell & Rogers, 2011, Ch. 2, para 3). Intentional action, according to Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004), is “a particular conception or view of something to be done or of the method of doing it,” (p. 93) that defines program theory, and Chen (1990) defined program theory as “a systematic configuration of stakeholders’ prescriptive assumptions” (p. 18). In addition, Funnell and Rogers (2011) continued the definition of program theory to include how a program contributes to the overall results of intended outcomes while providing clarity and relevance to a program (Sharpe, 2011).

In the 1980s, Chen (1990), Rossi et al. (2004), Bickman (1987), and Weiss (1972) became leading researchers of program theory and contributed substantial evidence to the field of research. Program theory is an evaluation framework analyzing how an explicit theory causes outputs guided by theory (Chen, 1990; Funnell & Rogers, 2011; Jarvelin, 2011; Rossi et al., 2004). Program theory can be formulated using logic models that are postulated theories (Pawson, 2006) with a sequence of inputs and outputs using a formal process seen as a blueprint of program design (Chen, 1990). Researchers conduct ethnographic evaluation to understand and describe a program with the use of interviews and interactions with stakeholders to provide a “social reality” (Rossi et al., 2004, p. 136). The social reality (Rossi et al., 2004) includes conceptual and persuasive means of recognizing and understanding a program. The following sections provide explanations of theory-based program evaluation and change relating to program theory.

Theory-based program evaluation. In the 1967 book *Evaluative Research: Principles and Practice in Public Service and Social Action Programs*, Edward Suchman (1967) provided five categories of criteria and a series of objectives to evaluate a program. Suchman's broad framework provided a means to evaluate using processes and without a focus on results. In the mid-1970s, researchers King, Morris, and Fitz-Gibbon (1987) defined theory-based evaluation as "one in which the selection of program features to evaluate is determined by an explicit conceptualization of the program" (p. 1). a theory attempts to explain how a program produces a desired effect (King et al., 1987). Evaluation of a program includes description of program goals and objectives, assessment of models, and identification of stakeholder interests to determine how findings can be used (Rossi et al., 2004).

The strategic-assessment approach to restructuring program theory involves interactions with stakeholders and program participants to identify assumptions of program effectiveness and performance (Leeuw, 2003). When a program is well understood, the program is articulated (Weiss, 1997). An implicit program is a program that has not been fully articulated (Weiss, 1997). Indirect change impacts situations because programs typically do not exercise direct control (Rossi et al., 2004), and stakeholder perceptions rest on prescriptive and descriptive assumptions (Chen, 1990, 2005).

Change. Program theory includes the theory of change and functions as the central processes by which change occurs (Funnell & Rogers, 2011; Rossi et al., 2004). At Urban Institute in the 1970s, an evaluation research group analyzed program theory and found evaluation of programs difficult, leading the group to develop a process

situation analysis to examine change (Funnell & Rogers, 2011; Rossi et al., 2004). Change theory was refined through reflection of practices and Fullan (2006) deemed seven core principles must be present to impact change: focus on motivation, capacity building, learning in context, changing in context, bias for reflective action, trilevel engagement, and persistence to stay the course. Change is not a quick process and can be challenging to sustain unless “system thinkers” are present and share knowledge with others to impact change (Fullan, 2006, p. 13). The seven core principles of change demonstrate the relevancy of intended outcomes and actual outcomes of program theory (Rossi et al., 2004). Program theory increases commitment, focus, and effectiveness of programming and ensures essential components are clearly defined and relevant to all stakeholders (Rossi et al., 2004). When using program theory, educators must consider the representation of components in conjunction with program outcomes (Dauphinee, 2015).

Furthermore, program-theory evaluation assesses a program through the use of research methods to systematically examine and determine program effectiveness (Funnell & Rogers, 2011; Rossi et al., 2004). The functions of program theory include the identification of resources and program outcomes (Wholey, 1979). The assumption of program theory is that a program will improve conditions resulting in a positive impact as a result of the program (Weiss, 1972).

In continuation of change, two components deem program theory operational: change and action (Fullan, 2006). Change includes the use of organizational processes that provide intended program delivery such as resources, facilities, personnel, and services (Chen, 2005; Rossi et al., 2004). The success of the service-delivery system

with resources and organization enable services to reach the intended population.

Changes cause action, which develops a discrepancy between what is said and what is done with action delivery and program construct (Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, & Newton, 2010).

The development of program theory generally represents an intended outcome. Discrepancies will occur, especially from stakeholders farther removed from the program (Rossi et al., 2004). Regardless of the type of program theory applied to a program evaluation, educators articulate the theory to explain the process of change through implementation and evaluation (Leeuw, 2003; Rogers, Petrosino, Huebner, & Hacs, 2000; Weiss, 1972). Program theory, articulated to program stakeholders in a meaningful way, ensures all formulate assumptions and expectations well (Rossi et al., 2004).

Stakeholders

Obtaining the perceptions of diverse stakeholders is significant to establish program effectiveness for future university planning and programming (Aksoydan & Mizikaci, 2015). All stakeholders are not the same, and the importance of assessment and classification of stakeholders is relevant “to discover through multiple rounds of analysis, which stakeholders constitute the key stakeholders” (Strober, 2011, p. 2). Stakeholders provide information related to their experiences with the laboratory school or the educator preparation program. Stakeholders and researchers assume varying levels of power and must be knowledgeable of interest and power dynamics (Eden & Ackermann, 1998). The Project Management Institute defined impact as the ability to “effect changes to the project or execution, and influence as a stakeholder’s active involvement in the project” (Strober, 2011, p. 3). Educators must consider the varying

priorities of stakeholders, essential in the assessment of the impact of a program (Aksoydan & Mizikaci, 2015; Strober, 2011).

The perceptions of stakeholders and how stakeholders communicate program effectiveness reflect the impact of a program. Stakeholders have an interest or common thread in the educational setting of the laboratory school and educator preparation program (Eden & Ackermann, 1998). Stakeholders are key to the systematic arrangement when defining program theory (Chen, 1990). Stakeholders provide clarity and relevance to program theory with the addition of assumptions and viewpoints (Funnel & Rogers, 2011).

University-Based Laboratory School

John Dewey, philosopher and leader of progressive education, founded the first experimental school in the United States in 1896. The school, located at the University of Chicago, had a vision of teachers and researchers working together to put theory into practice and develop instructional innovation (Blakely, 2009; Hutton, 1991). As a constructivist theorist, Dewey believed learners need to experience learning while being engaged with the environment (Hein, 1991). Fernie and Kantor (1994) defined laboratory schools as “places of experimentation, inquiry, and research, which do not conflict with, and indeed enhance the program agenda” (p. 164). By the 1920s, most teacher-training institutions had laboratory schools, and by the 1930s, the large number of student teachers halted experimentation to gain practical experience in public school settings (Cassidy & Sanders, 2002; Hutton, 1991). A survey conducted by Kelly, asked respondents to list the functions of a laboratory school with the following results in rank order: observation, demonstration, student teaching, research, participation,

experimentation, and in-service education (1964, as cited in Buck & Krausse, 1991). The order changed in 1969 when Howd and Browne conducted a survey with research, experimentation, and in-service education as the main functions, based on respondent results. Between 1960 and 1980, half of all laboratory schools closed, and by the 21st century, the International Association of Laboratory Schools estimated that only 100 laboratory schools were still operational (Blakely, 2009). Many factors contributed to the demise of laboratory schools, but Hendrick (1980) deemed the failure was due to halting of the experimentation that led to innovation. According to A survey conducted by the National Association of Laboratory Schools in 1988, surveying 68 laboratory schools, found that curriculum development and research had become more apparent (Buck & Krausse, 1991). Hallmark laboratory-school programs collaborated with teacher-preparation programs to provide practice and experimentation (Barbour & McBride, 2017).

Laboratory schools were a valued component of educator preparation in the early years and higher education institutions supported model teaching practices in laboratory schools (Gresham, 2012). According to Gresham (2012), “state appropriations and regular student tuition were instrumental in providing facilities and funding for university faculty connected to the lab schools, but in no way were these funds sufficient to support the staffing and operational expenses” (p. 139). Hargreaves (1999) posited that the knowledge gap between researcher and practitioner creates limitations to actionable knowledge and Ruthven (2016) theorized that university education departments can minimize the gap by creating and disseminating professional knowledge with knowledge-creating schools. Government policy changes reducing the financial support for

universities has made it increasingly challenging for universities to sustain laboratory schools and prompted reconfigurations of the model (Ruthven, 2016).

Campus-Based Educator preparation Program

Educators contributing to this qualitative case study (aligned with Creswell, 2014) were those who provided experiences for adult learners in a educator preparation program. Educator preparation programs provide classwork, clinical experience, and meaningful opportunities for practice. At Walters University, students receive foundational development with classroom observations, field experiences, and clinical practices. Classroom observations consist of students entering classrooms, observing children, and taking notes of education strategies, behaviors, and overall classroom management. Field experiences include university students practicing what they learned in coursework with close supervision and immediate feedback from university faculty.

Clinical practices provide university students with practical application of skills to develop specific skills with supervision and guidance. Foundational development experiences provided at the laboratory school provide an onsite supervised experience for university students. “The laboratory school is an integral part of the teacher training programs at Walters University, providing university students opportunities for teacher and child observations, demonstration teaching and practicum experiences” (Solheim, 1990, p. 74). An integral part of an educator-training program would, according to the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2017), provide well-prepared teachers who would influence student achievement, remain in education, and develop knowledge and skills to succeed.

Educational changes, when viewed through program theory, identify many challenges for K–12 education including the decline of experienced teachers in the workforce and retention of novice teachers. Educator preparation programs and university-based programs need better approaches to understand the strengths and weaknesses of beginning teachers and target support areas to provide appropriate preparation (Bastian & Marks, 2017). The model-school or laboratory-school setting was deemed ideal for teacher candidates to apply theories to real-world application and receive immediate support and feedback from supervisors. Educators believed such schools would provide a crucial link between theory and practice for educator preparation and teacher-candidate success (Clifford & Guthrie, 1988; Fraser, 2007). In addition to interviews and focus groups, the researcher collected and analyzed artifacts (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) including the vision and mission for Walters University School of Education and Harriett Laboratory School.

Design of the Study

The goal of this qualitative case study (Creswell, 2014) was to identify stakeholder perceptions of the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program. Qualitative research using a bounded case-study methodology allows researchers to use an inductive process of data collection to identify the complexity of stakeholder perceptions (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The focus of this case study—stakeholder perceptions of the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program—provided additional research to the field of education to deepen understanding of university-based laboratory schools.

Basic research is motivated by “intellectual interest in a phenomenon and has as its goal the extension of knowledge” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 3). Triangulated data collection (Seidman, 2013) may include interviews, focus groups, and artifact collection (Emerson et al., 2011; Fink, 2017; Krueger & Casey, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Seidman, 2013). Focus groups provide a better understanding of how people perceive a specific topic with participants feeling relaxed and among peers, emboldened to share views (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Interviews afford researchers personal contact with stakeholders to gain access to experiences and effectively develop meaning for research (Seidman, 2013). Through interviews and focus groups, time with stakeholders afforded the researcher an intimate setting to become familiar with stakeholder perceptions and beliefs about laboratory school and educator preparation programming. The interview process builds a knowledge base about stakeholder perceptions (Rossi et al., 2004). The involvement of stakeholders (Chen, 2005) increases relevance and usefulness of program outcomes.

Setting

Walters University is a 4-year institution with a student population of approximately 6,400. This 4-year institution focuses on preparing students for careers in industry, business, education, health and wellness, public service, agriculture, government, and recreation. The university-based laboratory school, Harriett Laboratory School, includes preschool through sixth grade with a population of 164 students. The preschool program has an enrollment of 80 children and 84 children are enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade. According to the 2016 U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the community population of Brownville is approximately 12,000. Walters University is

a public institution. Harriett Laboratory School is tuition based with a 2017–2018 annual tuition of \$2,160, making the laboratory school semiprivate. Located in the center of a nationally acclaimed arboretum campus, Harriett Laboratory School and the School of Education share a building, providing accessibility to teacher candidates.

Participants

Participants in this case study were laboratory school and university stakeholders who provided varying perspectives about the impact of a university-based laboratory school and a campus-based educator preparation program. The stakeholders included Walters University School of Education teacher candidates, Harriett Laboratory School teachers, administrators, and parents; Walters University Professional Education faculty; and Walters University administrators. Interviews, focus groups, and surveys were used to gather data of participant perceptions to provide the necessary qualitative data (Field, 2013; Krueger & Casey, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Seidman, 2013). Purposive sampling was used to gather stakeholder perceptions to “discover, understand, and gain insight” (aligned with Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; p. 96). To provide a more productive and more complete study, snowball sampling was used to expand the perimeters of the study (as suggested by Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Researcher Context

Qualitative studies use the researcher as the primary data-collection instrument and in doing so can create bias. Proper procedures must be identified and in place to preserve the quality of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As a member of Harriett Laboratory School, the researcher is embedded in the study setting as an insider researcher, defined as one who conducts research in a social group or organization (Drake

& Heath, 2011; Greene, 2014; Smyth & Holiam, 2008). Insider researchers can struggle with role duality to balance the insider perspective and that of researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Unluer, 2012). Insider researchers must be aware of biases and take steps to conduct error-free research, but remain aware that insider bias can also be a source of insight (Aguilar, 1981).

Three advantages of insider researcher include understanding of culture, natural flow of social interaction, and established rapport to determine truth from untruth (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002). Insider researchers must develop an approach that enables them to negotiate conflicts and provide credible clarity for readers without bias, and retain awareness of challenges such as loss of objectivity, assumptions, and balance of insider and researcher roles (Costley, Elliott, & Gibbs, 2010; Drake & Heath, 2011; Unluer, 2012). An insider researcher must frame research beyond relationships with colleagues, accessing a professional code of practice to report accurate data and thereby inform research (Drake & Heath, 2011).

Established safeguards were used to ensure interactions were objective and concise. The use of triangulated data and development of an audit trail that included detailed field notes and findings ensured objectivity. The researcher implemented ethical considerations such as honesty, privacy, and responsibility when conducting this case study. Precautions were taken to ensure that, as an insider researcher, data accrued appropriately and efficiently to maintain the integrity of the study.

Data Collection

Qualitative research methods to gather stakeholder perceptions of the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based teacher-education program

included triangulation of interviews, focus groups, and artifact analysis (aligned with Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All research data collected are secured, based on Institutional Review Board requirements to protect participants and the research process (Pritchard, 2002). Surveys, used as a tool for data collection, were administered by an online system to reach past participants at Harriett Laboratory School and Walters University School of Education (aligned with Fink, 2017). Careful review of related literature did not reveal an instrument that matched this survey. Therefore, survey questions were designed to specifically address the impact of a laboratory school on a teacher-education program. Instrument validity determines if the instrument measures what was intended through collection and analysis of data, and pilot testing was used to determine population generalizability (Creswell, 2014).

Interviews provide participants the opportunity to “symbolize their experience through language” and provide context to their actions (Seidman, 2013, p. 8). Face-to-face and online synchronously semistructured interviews were conducted with open-ended questions (as suggested by Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). “Every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness” (Vygotsky, 1987, as cited in Seidman, 2013, p. 7). Interviews were conducted with laboratory-school teachers, School of Education professors, university administration, and students. The use of an interview guide provided an order to the inquiry and the openness of questions allowed freedom to probe for additional clarity (in line with Patton, 2002). Audio recorded transcripts were used in addition to field notes (as suggested by Krueger & Casey, 2015). Data collected through interviews provided a picture of real-life experiences that provided an understanding of the context in which perspectives formed

(as in Crossman & Clarke, 2010). Assurance of reliability and validity result in consistent data collection and accurate information (Fink, 2017).

Focus groups were conducted to give participants the opportunity to share information and participate in a nondirective environment with open-ended questioning (aligned with Krueger & Casey, 2015). Focus-group participants included Harriett Laboratory School parents, practicum students in the Walters University School of Education, Harriett Laboratory School teachers, and students completing field experiences at various school districts in a three-state area. Focus groups provide opportunities for participants to share perceptions, thinking, and feelings about issues and provide an environment where stories are told and other participants add to the stories to fill in details that might otherwise go untold (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The focus groups, lasting 30–45 minutes each, were held in three locations on the campus of Walters University, for participant convenience (as in Krueger & Casey, 2015). An online transcription service (rev.com) transcribed the focus-group recordings. The transcripts and field notes were reviewed to ensure accuracy. Artifacts (as suggested by Emerson et al., 2011) included the School of Education vision and mission statements, professional-education-unit resources, the teacher-candidate handbook, and the Harriett Laboratory School handbook.

Recommendations of the American Educational Research Association (Pritchard, 2002) were used to ensure informed consent clearly defined the scope of the research, confidentiality, ethical considerations, and privacy of information. The informed-consent form explained research procedures, provided a description of risks and benefits of

participation, researcher contact information, and instructions to withdraw without penalty (in line with Fink, 2017).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is “the process of making meaning” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 202). Making meaning of data requires a researcher to sort, categorize, interpret, and analyze (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Analysis of data was used from interviews, surveys, focus groups, and archival documents by reading, organizing, and coding the data to determine patterns and themes (as suggested by Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Initial open coding (Krueger & Casey, 2015) provided structure to the data-collection process. Focus groups provided data to compare and contrast across groups through the use of open-ended questioning (as in Krueger & Casey, 2015). The use of interview and focus-group transcripts to chunk data into meaningful categories that could be used to provide detail and descriptions to answer the research questions contributed to the case study (as suggested by Creswell, 2014). The examination of emergent themes through data collection was used (aligned with Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Validation of research involved triangulation of data to ensure multiple sources of data were used, clarification of researcher bias, and the use of an external auditor who was unfamiliar with the research and could provide an objective assessment (aligned with Creswell, 2014).

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

Limitations of this case study include a focus on one laboratory school and one campus-based educator preparation program making generalizability difficult (as in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Working as an insider researcher, challenges such as loss of

objectivity, assumptions, and balance of insider and researcher roles were examined (aligned with Unluer, 2012). Researcher bias was addressed, based on the researcher role as an insider researcher and relationship with participants, to ensure objectivity of findings (as suggested by Creswell, 2014). Validity and reliability of perceptions is limited and must be considered. The study was limited to participants at Walters University and lacked diversity.

Delimitations of this qualitative bounded case study included a focus on one laboratory school and one university-based educator preparation program. Interviews, focus groups, and surveys with stakeholders of Harriett Laboratory School and Walters University were conducted. Although surveys were used to provide extended data, this research was primarily qualitative in nature, aiming to tell a story through the perceptions of stakeholders.

As an insider researcher, the researcher gave particular consideration to ensure no undue assumptions were made concerning this qualitative case study. The first assumption was that responses received during interviews and focus groups were honest. The second assumption was that stakeholders interviewed and participating in focus groups trusted the researcher and provided accurate information.

Definition of Terms

Campus-based educator preparation program. Students are required to attend face-to-face course instruction at a university location.

Constructivism. Learning is an active process where knowledge is constructed through meaningful learning environments.

Educator preparation program. Programs at the baccalaureate or postbaccalaureate level that prepare candidates for their first license to teach (NCATE, 2008).

Laboratory school. An elementary school associated with a university for the purpose of providing teacher-candidate education through educational experimentation, research, and development.

Practicum. Practical experience may include observation, tutoring, small-group instruction, and whole-group instruction,

Stakeholders. People with an interest in an organization or operation. In this case study, stakeholders were parents, teachers, and administrators of Harriett Laboratory School, faculty, administrators, and students of Walters University.

Teacher candidate. Individuals preparing for professional-education positions (NCATE, 2008).

Significance of the Study

Importance of the Study

This case study was launched from the realization that many years of research and changes in the higher education landscape, including the closing of many laboratory schools, have not considered the perceptions of stakeholders when making decisions about laboratory schools and educator preparation programs. As educational changes occurred, laboratory-school programs continued the same operational processes or closed. In concert with educational changes, a steady 35-year decline in federal and state funding and decline in university enrollment created challenging times for universities, impacting programming and services (Barbour & McBride, 2017).

The number of university-based laboratory schools decreased markedly after 1960. Researchers described the impact of specific coursework and laboratory-school sustainability (Arnold-Grine, 2007; Blakely, 2009) but no current research is available on the impact a laboratory school has on an educatory-preparation program. This case study was significant because the contribution of research was based on stakeholder perceptions of a university-based laboratory school to a campus-based educator preparation program. The research results included real-life stories derived from interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

Scholarship

As universities strive to compete in a global marketplace, programs must maintain a high level of quality. Recent studies provided evidence that university students expect a learning environment that is relevant, engaging, interactive, individualized, data enhanced, and immediate (Barbour & McBride, 2017). This case study provides stakeholder perceptions of a laboratory school and educator preparation program through stories, experiences, and relationships that share a unique perspective of educator preparation programs.

Practice

High-quality educator preparation programs educate and produce teachers that can impact student growth (The New Teacher Project, 2012).

It bears the same relation to the work of pedagogy that a laboratory bears to biology, physics, or dentistry. Like any such laboratory, it has two main purposes (1) to exhibit, test, verify, and criticize theoretical statements and principles and

(2) to add to the sum of facts and principles in its special line of work. (Dewey, 1896, as cited in Blakely, 2009, p. 24; Goodlad, 1980, p. 58)

Educator preparation programs that work collaboratively with university-based laboratory schools could be hallmark programs recognized for research and training experiences (Barbour & McBride, 2017).

Summary

This research study contributes to closing the gap in research connecting university-based laboratory schools and campus-based educator preparation programs. Research exists on specific coursework related to laboratory schools but does not include stakeholder perceptions. Increased accountability in educator preparation programs makes laboratory-school and educator preparation program planning and implementation necessary. The correlation of laboratory schools associated with universities examines conditions that provide optimal change to promote future growth and expertise (Arnold-Grine, 2007; Blakely, 2009). Changes in education have resulted in the closing of many university-based laboratory schools. In this case study, the research question was measured based on stakeholder perspectives and the stories of program intention (Dauphinee, 2015; Peacock, 2015; Rossi et al., 2004; Weiss, 1972).

SECTION TWO: PRACTITIONER SETTING FOR THE STUDY

Higher education institutions and laboratory schools associated with universities provide learning to promote change for future growth and expertise (Arnold-Grine, 2007; Blakely, 2009). Walters University recognizes Harriett Laboratory School as a school with a distinctly child-focused curriculum and exploratory learning in a mixed-age setting. The mission of the School of Education at Walters University is to prepare effective teachers and leaders to be catalysts as professional educators who apply best practices to impact learning. The School of Education mission melds with the mission of Walters University to focus on student success with every student, every day, and identifies the values as follows:

- Student success
- Scholarship
- Intercultural competence
- Collaboration
- Respect and integrity
- Strategic thinking
- Excellence

(C. Rouner, personal communication, spring 2017)

History of Walters University

Among the rolling hills of northern Missouri, Walters University had humble beginnings as an institution funded by the Methodist Church in 1889 and referenced as a

seminary. Walters University began when the community members banded together and “took advantage of their train system to bring the State Selection Committee to town” (Archives, 2013, para 1). In 1905 the Gaunt family donated 72 acres of land that would become the new site for the Fifth District Normal School. The state legislature passed a bill in 1905 that provided the opportunity to create a teacher-training school in northern Missouri. Enrollment for the first classes at the new site in the summer of 1906 included transfer students from other state normal schools and uncertified teachers from rural areas. Summer enrollment was the largest with uncertified teachers attending school to receive certification. The normal school included a training school that provided on-site observation and practical teaching experience for prospective teachers. The first floor of the normal school was occupied by grade-school children and courses were held on the two upper floors of the building.

Normal School to State Teachers College

The normal school changed to a state teacher’s college in 1919, with continued emphasis on teacher education. In 1920, 46 public and private teachers’ colleges existed. The move from normal school to state college included the granting of credits through semester hours and granted degrees rather than certificates. General courses were introduced in 1934 with the persistence of the president to build a reputation with an accreditation process and the development of departments.

Changes after World War II included another name change from Walters Teachers College to Walters State College in 1949, reflecting the change in student population from primarily educators to an expanded student population in many fields. The change from teachers’ college to state college also increased faculty, curriculum, and

the development of a terminal-degree ranking system. The president, having held teaching and administrative positions, initiated the development of organizational structure with a handbook that outlined policies and procedures and provided a higher standard for teachers. Graduate courses were added in 1955 that continued to build a stable reputation for the college.

State Teachers College to University

The college became a university in 1972 with expanded programming and renewed vibrancy. The addition of technological improvements across the campus provided teachers and students access to 63 terminals at one time. Continued technological improvements that included computing capability in all residence halls and offices dubbed the university the “electronic campus.” The university continued to be a strong presence in educator preparation programs, although changes and updates added continued challenge. The Board of Regents, in 1978, made the decision to discontinue programming for the seventh and eighth grades of Harriett Laboratory School due to decreased enrollment. Interestingly, Harriett Laboratory School assembled a task force in 2015 to investigate the addition of seventh and eighth grades. The task force determined enrollment numbers did not provide a consistent trend to add the additional grades.

College of Education

The College of Education was a member of the AACTE. The College of Education consisted of two departments that included Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Leadership. Two departments provided resources to meet the needs of students and provide educational preparation services. The Curriculum and Instruction Department included practical classroom experiences, known as practicums, and

provided practice-teaching experiences in a supervised setting with support from faculty and classroom teachers. Walters University is currently engaged in a course redesign process that includes embedded field experiences and coursework in phases and modules. The redesign will include a 1-year student-teaching experience to replace a 1-semester student-teaching experience.

Budget cuts in 2012 prompted dramatic changes to the higher education backdrop. In a news conference on February 16, 2012, Walters University President Jask noted “the University is in the midst of defining times, and during such, challenging, yet sound, decisions must be made (Media, 2012, para 3). The realignment eliminated programs and implemented business plans and sustainability models for programs. The Departments of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Leadership merged. Tuition increased for children attending Harriett Laboratory School and the summer program was eliminated. The tuition increase resulted from an audit report stating the school should be self-sustaining. The result of the tuition increase and elimination of summer programming are still felt today as enrollment decreases created an immediate need for field-experience opportunities to go beyond the laboratory-school setting for practical experiences.

Harriett Laboratory School

Harriett Laboratory School History

Walters University made a commitment to educational programming with the addition of a university-based laboratory school for students to receive practical teaching experience. The laboratory school opened on June 13, 1906 with 64 kindergarten through third-grade children and was located on the first floor of the education building (Dykes, 1956). In 1911, special subjects included art, domestic science, manual training,

physical education, and music and the topics were chosen by faculty under the supervision of the director of the training school (Dykes, 1956). A significant change occurred in 1915 when the Board of Regents approved supervisors for grade spans and added demonstration teachers who demonstrated the experimentation of the laboratory school (Dyke, 1956). The next 50 years showed growth and the addition of nursery school, kindergarten, primary, intermediate, junior high, senior high school, and university students.

A significant change for Harriett Laboratory School was made in 1956 when children with handicaps were welcomed into classrooms (Farnan, 2016). Although no formal documentation is available, the addition of children with handicaps initiated the federal guidelines for special-education services for children with disabilities. Formal laws for special-education services were not mandated until 1975 (Buscaglia & Williams, 1979). In the early years, the laboratory school did not use a formal curriculum; instead, the school used the state standards as a guide to instructional practice (Solheim, 1990).

Changes in Programming

The connotation of laboratory school created confusion with scientific experimentation, and in 1979 the name was changed from Harriett Laboratory School to Harriett Learning Center. As the seventh- and eighth-grade student population continued to decrease, the Board of Regents discontinued those grades in 1978. In 2015, a faculty and parent task force was initiated to evaluate the possibility of adding seventh and eighth grade to the laboratory school. Extensive discussion over several parent meetings determined student enrollment did not support the restoration of the seventh and eighth

grades and the provost deemed the conversation ongoing based on future enrollment figures.

Budget reductions based on a 2012 business-plan audit prompted cuts to laboratory-school programming. Tuition increased and student attendance days decreased with the elimination of summer classes. A decrease in enrollment followed the changes and resulted in an enrollment decrease from 125 students in 2012 to 75 students in 2014. A decrease in the student population made practicum experiences unrealistic due to more university students in the classroom than elementary students. Practical field experiences were sought from rural area school districts to meet the university need. A decrease in class size provided an opportunity to implement research with multiage classrooms and, in 2015, the school combined the third and fourth grades into a multiage grouping. Fifth- and sixth-grade classes had been combined for many years with a teacher and assistant teacher. The addition of a second multiage classroom provided onsite research opportunities. Following 2 years of research, the school decided to combine the first and second grades to a multiage classroom with two teachers using a co-teaching model of instruction.

Organizational Analysis

The structure of an organization provides a hierarchy of leadership for instructional leadership and policy implementation. Bolman and Deal (2013) provided four frameworks that help organizational complexity and meaning that include the structural frame. According to Bolman and Deal organizations operate in a complicated environment that involves problem solving and creative thinking and the structural frame signifies the architecture of the organization to determine roles and responsibilities.

According to Mintzberg (1979, 2005), five parts of an organization exist to determine a division of labor that allows for strategic planning and decision making. An organizational structure includes the operating core, strategic apex, middle line, technostructure, and support staff. A brief description of each part is explained in this analysis.

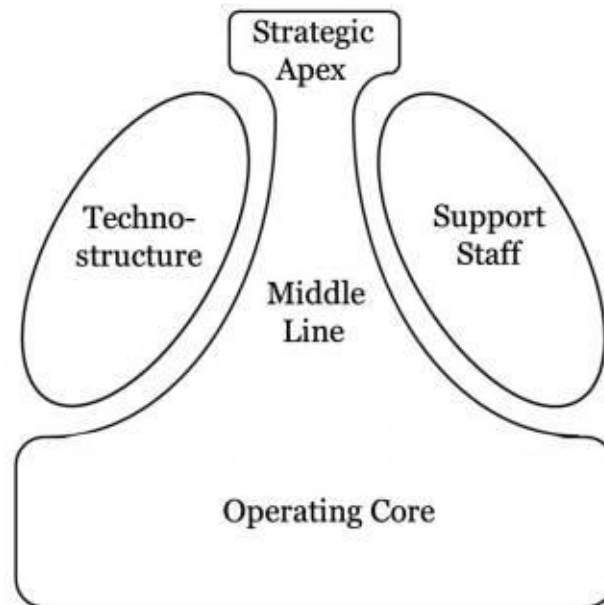


Figure 1. The five basic parts of organizations

Note. From “H. Mintzberg Model of Organizations,” by H. Mintzberg, 2005, in J. Shafritz, J. Ott, & Y. Jang (Eds.), *Reprinted classics of organizational theory*, Boston, MA: Wadsworth, p. 220. Used with permission.

The operating core of an organization performs four primary functions: secure inputs for production, transform inputs to outputs, distribute outputs, and support to ensure functions operate properly (Mintzberg, 1979, 2005). In an educational setting, the university faculty and laboratory-school faculty constitute the operating core of the university (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The strategic apex includes the management level of the organization consisting of the board of regents, president, provost, and university leadership team (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The middle line includes the deans and

directors of the university. At the university level, the technostructure level includes technology, assessment, personnel, marketing, and communication. The final part of the Mintzberg Model (1979, 2005) includes support staff and people who deliver indirect service to the organization.

Walters University

Walters University is a complex system of integrated pieces. The organizational or structural frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013) includes the design of specific areas and how rules, roles, and policies affect the overall structure when changes occur in one area. The architecture of Walters University began as a teaching college and transformed into a university that offers programs in a variety of areas. The organizational structure of Walters University and Harriett Laboratory School begins with the board of regents and the president of the university (see Figure 2). At a board of regents work session in August, 2016, the president presented the new organizational structure that transformed colleges and departments into schools at the university (C. Rouner, personal communication, spring 2017). The current structure includes the president, provost, vice-provost, dean, assistant dean, and coordinators of programs. In this structure, the president, provost, and vice-provost function as leaders of the entire university organization. The dean, assistant dean, and coordinators operate in a school. The current structure of the School of Education includes a dean, assistant dean, program coordinators, and leadership team.

The School of Education, known as the College of Education in 1980, was organized with a head, directors, and faculty. The laboratory-school director and teachers were included in the organizational structure. The operating programs included

elementary education with specializations in elementary subject areas, general elementary teaching, middle or junior high school, early childhood, special education that included elementary or secondary learning disabilities, elementary or secondary mental retardation, and graduate programs.

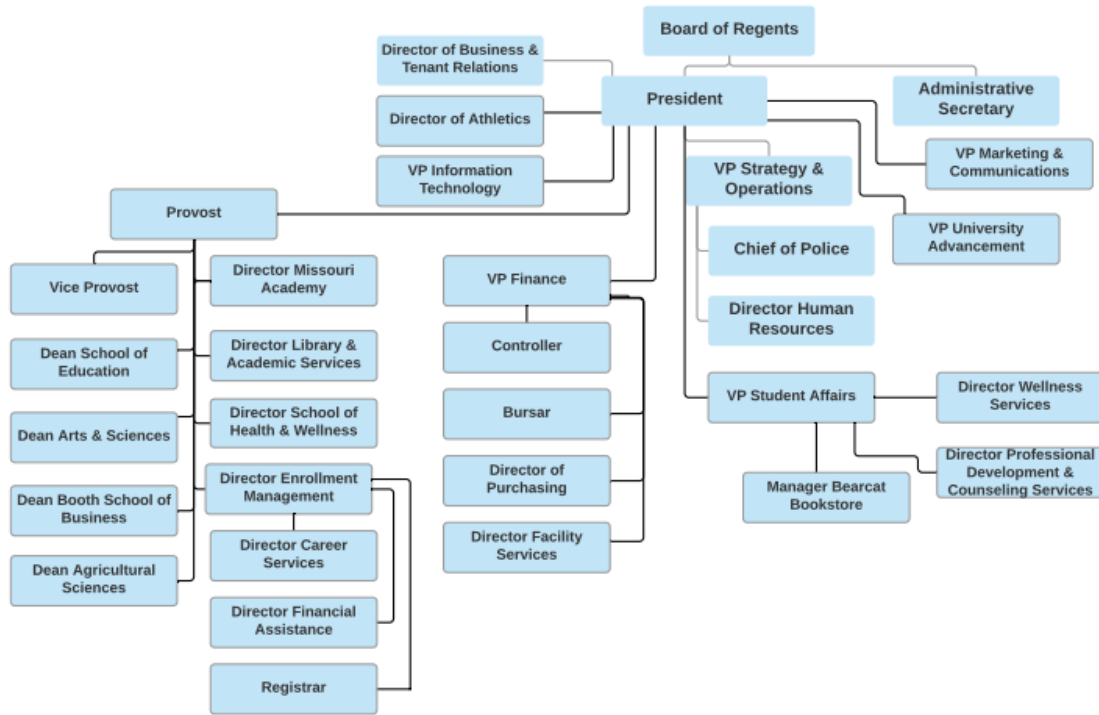


Figure 2. Walters University organizational chart.

The academic year of 1984–1985 produced structural changes that included a shift from head to dean of the College of Education with chairpersons of the Department of Administration and Guidance and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. A coordinator was named to oversee operations with early childhood, elementary, middle school, and secondary education. The special-education coordinator position was established in the 1985–1986 academic year. The organizational structure changed in 1996 to rename the College of Education as the College of Education and Human

Services. The School of Education is continually altering the organization of courses and professors to adapt to the ever-changing needs of future educators. Professors leading the change are using the structural frame (aligned with Bolman & Deal, 2013) to focus on structural elements with clear, strategic goals; directive leadership (as suggested by Northouse, 2015) ensures proactive collaboration to achieve goals and provide a higher quality program for teacher candidates.

Harriett Laboratory School

Harriett Laboratory School, as part of the Walters University School of Education, has a principal who oversees operations and reports directly to the dean of the School of Education. The role of director changed to principal in 2014 with direct report to the dean of the College of Education. Prior to 2012, Harriett Laboratory School engaged two secretaries and a part-time nurse, full-time librarian, grade-level teachers, and special-study teachers in art, music, and physical education. Financial restructuring in 2012 eliminated the full-time director, librarian, and one secretary. The current faculty include classroom teachers for kindergarten through sixth grade; part-time music, art, physical education, and resource teachers; and an assistant teacher. The mixed-age philosophy is evident in preschool through sixth grade with 3- to 5-year-old children in preschool classes, first- and second-grade students, third- and fourth-grade students, and fifth and sixth-grade students. The laboratory school provides extended graduate learning opportunities for graduate assistants in all classrooms. Student employees are evident in classrooms to assist with management and classroom tasks.

Leadership Analysis

The current president refers to change as “disruption,” stating that it can be an uncomfortable place but necessary for the advancement of the organization. Structures must change with the needs of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The College of Education became the School of Education in 2016, changing the structure of the organization. The current dean of the School of Education ensures leadership through innovation and vision, working collaboratively with fellow deans and directors. The School of Education is in a cycle of change, redesigning coursework, adding online courses, and improving instructional systems through collaboration to meet the needs of its clients. Path-goal theory (Northouse, 2015) integrates motivation to affect change by defining goals, clearing a path while removing obstacles, and providing support. Path-goal theory is evident in the School of Education as a change process is underway to improve the educational setting for teacher candidates. Professors are using conceptual frameworks to develop an organizational structure for coursework to use field experiences with coursework (Rouner, 2017).

The current leadership structure includes leadership roles and coordinators (see Figure 3). The school leader is a dean, followed by an assistant dean and program coordinators. Program coordinators oversee Field Experiences, Outreach Centers, Secondary Education, Teacher-Education Student Services, Graduate Studies, Harriett Laboratory School, and the Early Childhood Center. In 2012, the Harriett Laboratory School director position was eliminated and replaced with a principal position that includes faculty teaching.

Continued structural changes involve collaboration and problem solving that can be difficult to attain based on the foundational beliefs of academic knowledge areas (Bruffee, 1993). Changes in organizational structure provided the opportunity to redesign the leadership structure to fit the needs of the school. Program coordinators report directly to the School of Education dean and oversee changing requirements and implementation of fast growing on-line coursework.

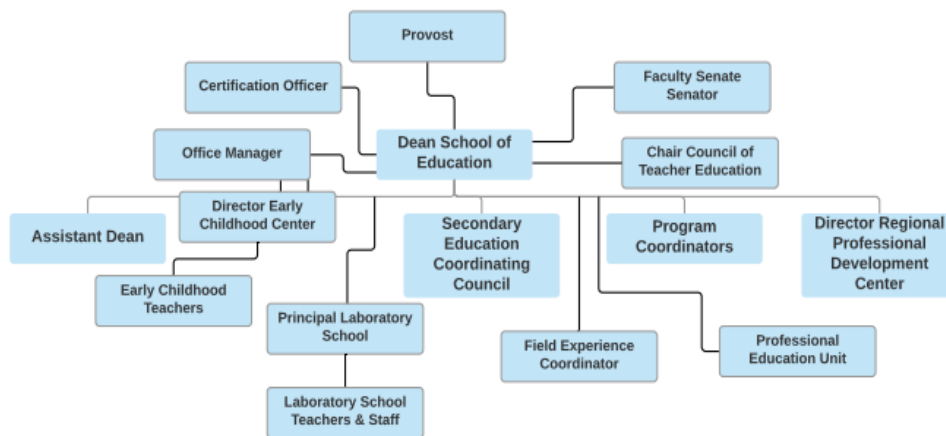


Figure 3. Professional education unit leadership chart.

Implications for Research in a Practitioner Setting

An organization must change to meet the needs of its clients and in doing so must adapt to new systems (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The future of Harriett Laboratory School, according to Harriett Laboratory School Director A. Lind in 1990, was three-fold. The school served as a model site for practicum students and area teachers. The second purpose was clinical teaching, providing an onsite learning environment for future teachers. Finally, the third purpose was research conducted by faculty (Solheim, 1990). Walters University is in the midst of extension changes with course redesign, the addition

on online courses and degrees, and collaborative efforts that will improve the educational experience for teacher candidates. The laboratory school is an integral part of an educator preparation program and provides student opportunity for observation and practice (Solheim, 1990). University faculty need to implement methods consistent with adult learning (Farnan, 2016; Reynolds, Stevens, & West, 2013). Former Secretary of Education King announced that universities must prepare teachers for a diverse workforce (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Summary

Educator preparation programs work collaboratively with laboratory schools to develop research and training experiences, providing effective programs and influencing future educator preparation development (Barbour & McBride, 2017). Walters University identified seven key values, embedded into the mission of every student every day to provide and promote impactful learning opportunities. Walters University and Harriett Laboratory School, working collaboratively, deliver a child-focused curriculum and exploratory learning in a mixed-age setting and ensure effective teaching and learning opportunities for university students.

SECTION THREE: SCHOLARLY REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The dream of the laboratory school was to ensure exceptional learning by master teachers through research and experimentation, weaving theory, instruction, and practical experiences to showcase educational insight (Van Til, 1969). Educator preparation programs must have innovative methods to deliver rich experiences and seamless transitions between classroom and coursework for teacher candidates (Kretlow & Helf, 2013). Conflicting stakeholder perceptions about innovative methods and experimentation led to the demise of many university-based laboratory schools, causing educator preparation programs to reexamine programming to meet the needs of students (Cassidy & Sanders, 2002; Van Til, 1969).

This case study examined stakeholder perceptions of the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program. To fully understand the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program, this review of literature, examined a context through the stakeholder lens. The literature addressed program theory and its relevance to university-based laboratory schools and campus-based educator preparation programs. The review revealed a lack of research related to stakeholder perceptions of university-based laboratory schools and the use of program theory to inform decision making at the university level.

Academic sources used to investigate the literature included databases and search tools. Database searches included ERIC, Academic Search Complete, and Google Scholar. Significant terms in the research investigation included “university-based laboratory school,” “educator preparation program,” “stakeholder perceptions,” “program

theory,” and “program evaluation.” The literature review, after additional limiters to narrow the search, included peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed resources, divided into sections to summarize literature and synthesize and critique relevant scholarly literature.

Theoretical Framework

Examining a problem through a theoretical framework provides researchers with a focus from which to observe and analyze data. The theoretical framework is the “body of literature, the disciplinary orientation that you draw upon to situate your study” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 86). Researchers conduct studies to add to the larger context and a theoretical framework provides the structure for this context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Program theory guided this case study as a theoretical framework contributing to overall intended outcomes measuring program effectiveness (Funnell & Rogers, 2011).

Two thousand years ago, Epictetus, Greek philosopher, wrote “first say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do” (Funnell & Rogers, 2011, Ch. 2, para 3). According to Rossi et al. (2004), program theory involves intentional action that explains how something is done, and Chen (1990) defined program theory as “a systematic configuration of stakeholders’ prescriptive assumptions” (p. 18). Sharpe (2011) included the relevance and clarity of a program through examination for improvement as part of the definition. Researchers use methods to systematically examine the effectiveness of programs and include data collection, analysis, interpretation, and communication of data (Rossi et al., 2004). Engaging stakeholders is relevant to program effectiveness (Funnell & Rogers, 2011), and the importance of stakeholder assumptions when using program theory provides clarity and relevance to a research study (Chen, 1990; Sharpe, 2011). This researcher used the theoretical

framework of program theory to gather meaning of stakeholder perceptions of the impact of a laboratory school on an educator preparation program.

Ethnographic evaluation delivers understanding of a program through the use of interviews and interactions with stakeholders to provide a “social reality” to recognize and understand the program (Rossi et al., 2004, p. 136). A theory attempts to explain how a program produces a desired effect (King et al., 1987). Interactions with stakeholders and program participants provide the researcher with relevant information about program effectiveness and performance (Leeuw, 2003). Researchers collaborate with individuals or groups who have viewpoints on a program through participatory evaluation (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). Perspectives of various groups relate to the program but have differing levels of involvement ranging from minimal experience with the program to manager or developer-level experience. Evaluation is practical to support a program or solve a problem in the program; evaluators use practical participatory evaluation in programs, policies, and organizational decision making and use stakeholder involvement to enhance the evaluation process (Garaway, 1995; Pursley, 1996). The conceptual underpinning pillars identified in this case-study research that examined the impact of a university-based laboratory school program on a campus-based educator preparation program through the program theory lens include stakeholder perceptions, university-based laboratory schools, and campus-based educator preparation programs.

Stakeholder Perceptions

The perceptions of its stakeholders and how the stakeholders communicate program effectiveness to others reflect the impact of a program. In this case study, stakeholders refers to people who have an interest or concern in the educational setting of

the laboratory school or the educator preparation program (aligned with Eden & Ackermann, 1998). When a program is well established, stakeholders may not be able to identify why the program exists and various stakeholders see different goals or views (Rossi et al., 2004). Examination of stakeholder perceptions involves identification of participant interest at various levels of responsibility. This research builds on stakeholder perception and tells the story of program intention of university-based laboratory school and campus-based educator preparation program stakeholders (as in Dauphinee, 2015; Peacock, 2015; Rossi et al., 2004; Weiss, 1972).

Stakeholders. The involvement of stakeholders augments evaluation relevance, commitment, and use. Evaluation explains observed performance, and “explanation is impossible without theory” (Mayne & Tern, 2013, as cited in Newcomer, Hatry, & Wholey, 2015, p. 69) and theory ensures evidence and clarification to eliminate gaps. The assumption of evaluation is that the program will improve the conditions, resulting in a positive impact as a result of participation in the program (Weiss, 1972). Stakeholders provide information including the identification of resources and program outcomes in the functions of program theory (Wholey, 1979).

Three characteristics of participatory involvement in program evaluation are control of the evaluation process, stakeholder selection, and depth of involvement (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998, see Figure 2). The first characteristic, control of the evaluation process, highlights researcher control related to decision making and evaluation processes. Stakeholder selection, the second characteristic, identifies stakeholder participations from select restriction of participants to include all relevant groups. The final characteristic, depth of involvement, questions participant involvement

from consultation with little or no decision making to in-depth participation that refers to participant involvement in all aspects of the evaluation.

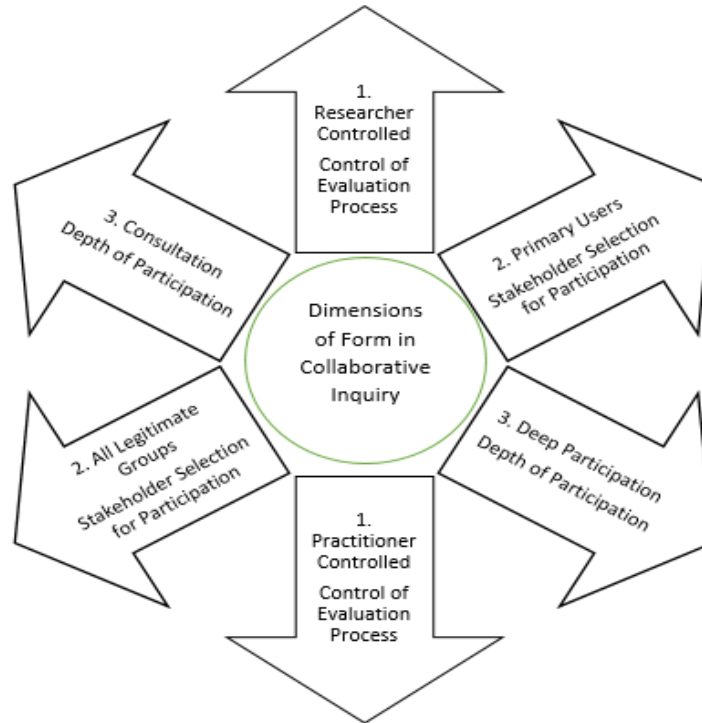


Figure 4. Dimensions of form in collaborative inquiry.

Note. Identification of participant evaluation characteristics in three-dimensional view. Adapted from “Framing Participatory Evaluation” by J. B. Cousins, and E. Whitmore, 1998, *New Directions for Evaluation*, 80, p. 93. Copyright 1998 by Wiley Subscription Services.

Characteristics can be useful as a collaborative approach and can also be independent of each other, depending on the evaluation and decision-making process. Limiting stakeholder involvement to close association with the program allows researchers to direct the research timeline. The endorsed means of data collection for stakeholder participation are focus groups—allowing for group discussion between stakeholders—and one-on-one interviewing for in-depth conversation (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; Garaway, 1995; Peacock, 2015; Pursley, 1996; Shotland & Mark, 1985).

Perception. Stakeholder perceptions identified through ethnographic research address program relevance and provide a “social reality” (Chen, 1990; Funnell & Rogers, 2011; Rossi et al., 2004; Sharpe, 2011). The social benefits determined by stakeholder perception (Rossi et al., 2004) define program theory and the manner in which the program operates. Ranks of stakeholders are present and levels of interest and power dynamics create various stages of stakeholders (Eden & Ackermann, 1998; Strober, 2011). Researchers must be knowledgeable of stakeholder interests and power dynamics to effectively evaluate a program. A subset of stakeholders, identified as key stakeholders, have a key stake in the program design and methods (Newcomer et al., 2015) and identification of key stakeholders is subjective, based on the program. Stakeholder viewpoint and perspective aids in the evaluation process of a program (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998).

Perception is a process in which understanding develops through a sense of reality and is individual to each person. Stakeholder perceptions may be contradictory but are relevant and strongly influence the effectiveness of a program (Dibella, 2007; Fontes, Rodrigues, & Craig, 2016). Stakeholder perceptions of change are more critical to successful change implementation than the nature of the change itself. Without the willing or active involvement of participants, change initiatives do not succeed or may lead to unintended or counterproductive consequences. Managing participant perceptions is a fundamental element of managing the change itself.

University-Based Laboratory School

Laboratory schools were developed with the theory that school existence rested on the ability to exhibit, assess, and verify theoretical principles to increase the

educational-knowledge base (Blakely, 2009; Helton, 2008; Stallings & Kowalski, 1990). University School of Nashville Director Durnan believed university-based laboratory schools have a firm place in education: “We’re laboratories of an idea, of an educational system that is not as mechanical as the educational system that is prevailing in many other places” (as cited in Sparks, 2015, p. 13). Laboratory schools were to pedagogy as clinical laboratories were to biology or physics: testing and verifying theoretical principles and increasing the knowledge base (Helton, 2008; Stallings & Kowalski, 1990). Beginning as model or training schools in the 1880s, laboratory schools were crucial to educator preparation programs in the United States (Buck & Krause, 1991). As facilities of learning developed pedagogy, laboratory schools aligned with institutions of higher learning that delivered onsite experiences for teacher training and generally educated the sons and daughters of college faculty (Blakely, 2009; Helton, 2008). University faculty conducted research and experimented with new ideas and methodologies and the children of faculty often attended the schools. The student population rarely resembled the socioeconomic and ethnic population (Cassidy & Sanders, 2002).

The model training schools of the 19th century were staffed by experienced teachers and the professor of pedagogy directed the learning in the educator preparation process (Buck & Miller, 1991). Model schools were necessary because public schools were routinely staffed by young and inexperienced teachers (Buck & Miller, 1991). Laboratory schools ensured “safe places where students can reflect on teaching and philosophy” (Gilbert, 1999, p. 71). Fernie and Kantor (1994) defined laboratory schools as “places of experimentation, inquiry, and research, which do not conflict with, and

indeed enhance the program agenda” (p. 164). The Normal School Act of 1858, passed by the Pennsylvania legislature, stated that before a school could receive state normal-school designation, the school must have 100 students to operate as a model school (Fritz, 1985). John Dewey, philosopher, leader of progressive education, and constructivist theorist, founded the first experimental school in the United States in 1896, located at the University of Chicago. Dewey had a vision of teachers and researchers working together to put theory into practice and develop instructional innovation (Blakely, 2009; Hein, 1991).

In 1926, the American Association of Teachers Colleges adopted a standard that mandated a teachers college would have a “training school under its own control as part of its organization for the purposes of observation, demonstration and supervised teaching on the part of students” (Buck & Miller, 1991, p. 3). Between 1969 and 1992, the number of laboratory schools declined from 212 to approximately 100 for various reasons (Bonar, 1992). Laboratory schools served a specialized population that did not resemble the general population and schools of education could not provide appropriate clinical experiences (Hayo, 1993). Research conducted by Goodlad (1980, 1990) identified five roles of laboratory schools—(a) education, (b) new ideas and innovations, (c) research, (d) teacher education, and (e) service to schools—and concluded that training could be conducted at local schools using professional-development schools. Laboratory schools had a three-part mission of research, exemplary educational facilities, and service to the professional community with training and education (Wilcox-Herzog & McLaren, 2012). Stakeholders had varying ideas of the purpose of a laboratory school, and university professors and laboratory-school teachers struggled to work together as

theorists and practitioners (Goodlad, 1980, 1990). In a laboratory-school context, early childhood professors and teachers are able to deliver significant learning opportunities (Wilcox-Herzog & McLaren, 2012). The reduction of laboratory schools resulted, in part, in university commitment of financial resources and external support (Blakely, 2009). The failure to disseminate research about innovative curriculum and teaching methods led to the demise of laboratory schools by not educating the public on the value of such schools and trying to fulfill too many goals, impinging on their ability to provide exemplary educational opportunities (Hepburn, 1995).

In 1974, Ball State University presented to the board of trustees an expectation for the Burriss Laboratory School:

A laboratory school is obliged to be different and to defend its variations from the norm. It is expected to venture beyond the usual limitations placed on public schools. Parents of children attending laboratory schools know and accept these conditions, being confident that innovation being carried out by competent professionals involves no undue risk of their children and has potential for real educational benefits. (Buck & Miller, 1991, p. 19)

The elements of professional study and scientific research are important for laboratory schools (Broudy, 1985). The incorporation of a laboratory would ensure experimentation and research opportunities for university faculty and university students. Teaching is a profession similar to medicine that requires skilled assessment, in-depth knowledge of child development, and teaching ability, and should be viewed as a clinical experience (Gresham, 2012). Growing consensus avers that practicing teachers learn by

practice rather than by preparing to practice (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005).

The function of laboratory schools changed over time from student-teaching facilities to observation and research, curriculum development, and graduate-assistant programming that led to improvements in the art and science of teaching (Buck & Krause, 1991). Laboratory schools have varying missions, depending on the university association, and include preservice-teacher observations, research, and experimentation. Some laboratory schools continue to provide student-teaching experiences (Blakely, 2009; Van Til, 1969). Laboratory schools that withstood the struggles of closure used various methods to achieve sustainability that included public acknowledgment of achievement excellence, innovative methods, financial exploration, and renewed collaboration (Gresham, 2012).

Laboratory schools bridge the gap between theory and practice, with expert teachers in classrooms to complement the theory learned in university courses (Barbour, 2003). Program theory, through the use of program evaluation, assesses a program using research methods to determine program effectiveness (Funnell & Rogers, 2011; Rossi et al., 2004). Program theory operates with the assumption that the program impact will improve program conditions, yielding a positive impact (Weiss, 1972). Organizational processes are change factors in program theory and relate to university-based laboratory-school resources, facilities, personnel, and services to create a positive impact (Chen, 2005; Rossi et al. 2004; Weiss, 1972).

Campus-Based Educator preparation Programs

Before formal teacher preparation was available, education took place in many settings from churches to homes, led by various adults—parents, preachers, and community leaders—depending on the setting, and anyone who completed a specified level of education could teach (Larabee, 2008). The common school that began in the 1830s and later changed to normal schools, prompted a process of education similar to the system in place today (Larabee, 2008; Rogers et al., 2000). In the early 1900s, 70% of normal schools were equipped with model schools that provided onsite training for teachers (Buck & Miller, 1991). In 1926, the American Association of Teachers Colleges adopted Standard VI A, which mandated the use of training schools for teacher training to conduct effective student teaching. The standard changed in 1948, indicating that student teaching in laboratory schools was “no longer feasible” (Buck & Miller, 1991, p. 5).

The Teacher College came about in the 1920s with the onset of 4-year degrees and more accountability measures (Gresham, 2012). In the early 1930s, The National Survey of the Education of Teachers noted that teaching standards were predominantly low and identified that the lowest performing teachers were located in rural areas. Only one in eight elementary teachers had completed a college-degree program (Helton, 2008). Teacher-college standards varied, leaving many to conclude the education taking place was inadequate (Gresham 2012; Helton, 2008). Teacher colleges used public schools for teacher preparation, and public school administrations wanted teaching students to teach traditional methods; schools did not want research conducted, due to possible legal action, rendering the introduction of innovative methods impossible (Keislar, 1980). The

move from teacher college to state college delivered a broadened scope of courses and increased enrollment. Education became a separate entity in the college (Helton, 2008). Education moved from application of skill to theoretical understanding of the teaching profession (Sarason, Davidson, & Blatt, 1986). Student complaints surfaced that the education received was too abstract and could not be adapted to the classroom context (Helton, 2008). In a 2010 AACTE policy brief, teaching was considered a clinical-practice profession that required specialized knowledge; 12 weeks of practice was not considered adequate for the profession (Gresham, 2012).

As researchers reviewed educator preparation programs, educational-reform movements began to take hold, increasing accountability measures (Farnan, 2016; Grisham et al., 2014). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 equipped states and districts with the number of teachers who were highly qualified and initiated changes in educator preparation models. The NCATE prompted a transformation of teacher-education programs in 2010 that challenged schools and organizations to implement innovative practices (National Center for Teacher Residencies, 2016). The U.S. Department of Education, in 2016, released educator preparation regulations that provided accountability measures for educator preparation programs. Former U.S. Secretary of Education King stated, “As a nation, there is so much more we can do to help prepare our teachers and create a diverse educator workforce” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, para 4).

Educator preparation programs educate adult learners, requiring university faculty to recognize the methods needed for adult learning (Farnan, 2016; Reynolds, Stevens & West, 2013) and involving adult learners who learn by doing, thereby ensuring

opportunities for practice and skill development that, in turn, ensure integration of knowledge with practice (Grisham et al., 2014; Hamman, Lechtenberger, Griffin-Shirley, & Zhou, 2013; Rutherford-Hemming, 2012). In addition, campus-based university teacher candidates understand the theoretical insights of teaching and learning principles more than teacher candidates completing employment-based programs (Ofsted, 2006). Teacher candidates who have emotional support and a feeling of belonging are able to embark on discussions that widen and enrich their experiences (Hagger, Burn, Mutton, & Brindley, 2008; Youn, 2000) and use reflection to study practices with practicing teachers (National Center for Teacher Residencies, 2016).

Increased interest in educator preparation programs, due to the importance of teacher influence in the classroom, marked an increase in government regulations. Ostensibly, government regulations targeted educator preparation programs through assessment measures that some states have deemed ineffective. Minimal data are available linking educator preparation-program quality to teacher graduates, and much of the existing literature focuses on alternative rather than traditional pathways (Plecki, Elfers, & Nakamura, 2012). Comparing alternative and traditional pathways yielded comparable results and vast disparities in quality between institutions. Improving teacher training can enhance productivity of teacher workforce performance and teachers continue using the same techniques learned in educator preparation programs (Plecki et al., 2012), signifying the importance of educator preparation programs. Teacher candidates have minimal opportunity to practice and apply learning before entering the field of education where they receive minimal support and feedback (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Goldhaber, Liddle, & Theobald, 2013; Scheeler, Budin, & Markelz,

2016). Teacher candidates receive little guidance when the clinical experience begins, and the connection to university work can be lost (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Teacher candidates, while working with teachers, construct their own learning; the process of negotiation begins with the exchange of information (Merriam, 2008). The learning of teacher candidates is experiential and interactive and includes reflection and inquiry. To maximize benefit, the complexity of teaching requires collaboration between university and school (Maxi, 2001; Peacock, 2015). Program theory describes how a program contributes to the overall intended outcomes and uses stakeholder assumptions to improve programming (Funnell & Rogers, 2011). To provide future teachers with effective training opportunities, the use of program theory allowed the researcher to examine stakeholder perceptions affecting laboratory-school and educator preparation programs.

Future Research

This research study used program theory to identify stakeholder perceptions of program existence to inform future decisions and to provide research for the international field of education; specifically universities with laboratory schools. The use of stakeholder perceptions to determine the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program ensures a qualitative examination of relationship-identifying contributions, outcomes, and impacts. The questions asked stakeholders identified outcomes and impacts influencing future decision making.

Summary

Higher education, including laboratory schools, have been scrutinized in an age of accountability where test scores determine funding and programming. Laboratory

schools associated with higher education institutions have predominantly been exempt from the demands of state and federal regulation, due to experimentation and innovation in curriculum, personnel, and resources (Blakely, 2009; Buck & Miller, 1991; Gresham, 2012). Qualitative researchers found a place in laboratory schools for the observation of students, interactions, and researcher compilation of variables about a complex setting to tell a story of learning, innovation, and experimentation (Arnold-Grine, 2007). Visibility and recognition of laboratory-school initiatives and programs are instrumental in continuing the work of laboratory schools located on the campuses of higher education institutions (Blakely, 2009).

Stakeholder perceptions, university laboratory schools, and campus-based university educator preparation programs form the three pillars of this case study, promoting the need for continued research in preparing future teachers with effective training opportunities. Stakeholders, as the name conveys, are involved in programs. Through the use of stakeholder perceptions, clarity emerged to ascertain if goals and objectives were relevant and reasonable. Weih and Ensworth (2006) suggested laboratory schools and educator preparation programs deliver teacher training in laboratory-school classrooms to incorporate the theoretical teaching of the course with the practical application of the classroom, providing authentic experiences for preservice teachers. The inclusion of various stakeholders provided multiple perspectives on key issues to address different viewpoints (aligned with Newcomer et al., 2015). The researcher used program theory as an evaluation framework to analyze the process of inputs and outputs by comparing stakeholder perceptions of one program to another (Chen, 1990; Funnell & Rogers, 2011; Jarvelin, 2011; Pawson, 2006; Rossi et al., 2004).

Ethnographic research allowed a systematic examination and determination of program effectiveness through the eyes of stakeholders, creating a “social reality” to the theory (as in Rossi et al., 2004). The theory of program development is that changes will occur based on evidence to improve the program (Wilder Research, 2009). The development of a program theory ensures a systematic format to determine program success or failure (Rogers et al., 2000; Sharpe, 2011).

SECTION FOUR: CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE

Plan for Dissemination of Practitioner Contribution

The researcher plans submission of a presentation proposal to the International Association of Laboratory Schools International Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in May 2018. The sessions consists of 60 minutes of interactive presentations and time allotment for questions. Participants include school directors, college and university faculty, master teachers, scholars, and researchers involved in early childhood, elementary, secondary, and higher education.

Type of Document

Presenters prepare slideshows that provide an overview of the work, research and data-collection details, and discussion with participants. Slideshow specifications will be delivered upon acceptance of the presentation. The conference proposal should include the conference topic, abstract, a brief description of the presentation, data-collection procedures and results, relevance for conference participants, and future implications.

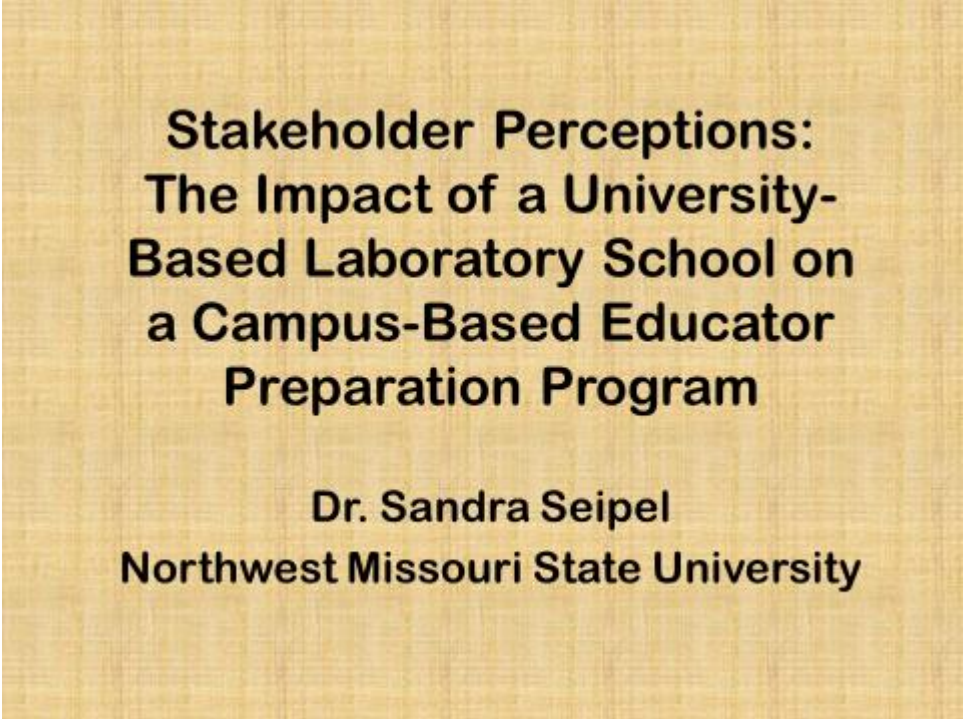
Rationale for Contribution

The International Association of Laboratory Schools comprises laboratory-school directors, college and university faculty members, and researchers dedicated to experiential learning that prepares teacher candidates for a successful career in education. Laboratory schools are governed differently by states and nations. Laboratory-school leaders continually search for and participate in research to determine the effectiveness of programs.

Outline of Proposed Content

1. Title and Author
2. Outcomes
3. Purpose of the Study
4. Background and Theoretical Framework
5. Study Method and Materials
6. Results
7. Conclusions
8. Implications of Research
9. References

Practitioner Document



Stakeholder Perceptions: The Impact of a University- Based Laboratory School on a Campus-Based Educator Preparation Program

**Dr. Sandra Seipel
Northwest Missouri State University**

A presentation planned for the 2018 International Association of Laboratory Schools Conference in Pittsburg, PA May 2-3, 2018. This presentation could easily be modified for presentation at various conferences.

Preparing teacher candidates to be effective and successful teachers has evolved from having no formal preparation of teachers in one-room schoolhouses to formal, assessed programming. Effective programs provide students with practice and experimentation in a collaborative environment that includes educator preparation programs and university-based laboratory schools (Barbour & McBride, 2017).

The U.S. Department of Education highlighted that teachers performing in the top 20% of performance can generate 5 to 6 months of student growth compared to teachers who are low-performing (The New Teacher Project, 2012).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine stakeholder perceptions of the impact of one university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program.

The research identified stakeholder perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of one laboratory school and one educator-preparation program to advance research in the field of educator preparation.

The researcher conducted an investigation to explore stakeholder perceptions, working to extend research and inform future decision-making by laboratory schools and educator preparation programs.

Research Question

How do stakeholders view the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program at one Midwest university?

As an insider researcher (Drake & Heath, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Unluer, 2012), one who conducts research in an organization, the researcher, must be aware of biases and take steps to conduct error-free research (Aguilar, 1981) and frame research beyond friendships with colleagues (Drake & Heath, 2011) to report accurate data to inform research.

Three advantages of insider researcher include understanding of culture, natural flow of social interaction, and established rapport to determine truth from untruth (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002).

Program Theory

**The development of program theory generally represents an intended outcome and discrepancies will occurred especially from stakeholders farther removed from the program.
(Rossi, et al., 2004)**

Two thousand years ago, Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus wrote, “first say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do” (Funnell & Rogers, 2011, Ch. 2, para 3). Intentional action, according to Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004), is “a particular conception or view of something to be done or of the method of doing it,” (p. 93) that defines program theory, and Chen (1990) defined program theory as “a systematic configuration of stakeholders’ prescriptive assumptions” (p. 18).

In the 1980s, Chen (1990), Rossi et al. (2004), Bickman (1987), and Weiss (1972) became leading researchers of program theory and contributed substantial evidence to the field of research. A program theory explains the process of change through implementation and evaluation. Through the lens of stakeholders, the researcher used program theory to guide this qualitative study and examine in a meaningful way, assumptions and expectations of stakeholders.

Methods

75 Participants:

**University faculty, administration, and students
Laboratory School faculty, administration, and
parents**

**Interviews, focus groups, analysis of narratives,
and surveys were used to gather data**

**(Field, 2013; Krueger & Casey, 2015; Merriam &
Tisdell, 2016; Seidman, 2013).**

Interviews provide participants the opportunity to “symbolize their experience through language” and provide context to their actions (Seidman, 2013, p. 8). Face-to-face and online synchronously semistructured interviews were conducted with open-ended questions (as suggested by Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). “Every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness” (Vygotsky, 1987, as cited in Seidman, 2013, p. 7).

Qualitative studies use the researcher as the primary data-collection instrument and in doing so can create bias. Proper procedures must be identified and in place to preserve the quality of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As a member of Harriett Laboratory School, the researcher is embedded in the study setting as an insider researcher, defined as one who conducts research in a social group or organization (Drake & Heath, 2011; Greene, 2014; Smyth & Holiam, 2008). Insider researchers can struggle with role duality to balance the insider perspective and that of researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Unluer, 2012). Insider researchers must be aware of biases and take steps to conduct error-free research, but remain aware that insider bias can also be a source of insight (Aguilar, 1981).

Interviews were conducted with ten stakeholders. 40 stakeholders completed the online survey. The same questions were used for interviews, focus groups, and survey questions.

1. Think about when you first became involved with the laboratory school or teacher preparation program. What were your first impressions?
2. From your perspective, what is the main purpose of the laboratory school?

3. From your perspective, what is the main purpose of the teacher preparation program?
4. In what ways has the laboratory school met your expectations and/or needs?
5. In what ways has the laboratory school failed to meet your expectations and/or needs?
6. In what ways has the teacher preparation program met your expectations and/or needs?
7. In what ways has the teacher preparation program failed to meet your expectations and/or needs?
8. In your opinion, how effective do you think the laboratory school has been with the following: scale of least effective 1-5 most effective
 - a. Creating a safe environment for teacher candidate learning and support
 - b. Providing knowledge, skills, and practice to prepare teacher candidates for student teaching
 - c. Encouraging teacher candidates to engage in higher-order thinking
 - d. Creating a safe environment for research and experimentation
 - e. Providing laboratory school students with a rigorous and challenging curriculum
 - f. Providing a project based learning environment

The Laboratory school demographic has changed significantly over the past twenty years and many laboratory schools have closed their doors. (Barbour & McBride, 2017).

In concert with educational changes, a steady 35-year decline in federal and state funding and a decline in university enrollment created challenging times for universities impacting programming and services. University School of Nashville Director Durnan believed university-based laboratory schools have a firm place in education: “We’re laboratories of an idea, of an educational system that is not as mechanical as the educational system that is prevailing in many other place.” Between 1969 and 1992, the number of laboratory schools declined from 212 to approximately 100 for various reasons (Bonar, 1992). Laboratory schools served a specialized population that did not resemble the general population and schools of education could not provide appropriate clinical experiences (Hayo, 1993). Research conducted by Goodlad (1980, 1990) identified five roles of laboratory schools—(a) education, (b) new ideas and innovations, (c) research, (d) teacher education, and (e) service to schools—and concluded that training could be conducted at local schools using professional-development schools.

Findings

1. Experimentation
2. Early practice to bridge theory to practice
3. Expertise of faculty and instructors
4. Safety and support of environment to practice new learning

(Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016)

According to an AACTE (2013) report, programs that provide actual practice opportunities for teacher candidates produce higher quality teachers. Beginning as model or training schools in the 1880s, laboratory schools were crucial to educator preparation programs in the United States (Buck & Krause, 1991). As facilities of learning developed pedagogy, laboratory schools aligned with institutions of higher learning that delivered onsite experiences for teacher training and generally educated the sons and daughters of college faculty (Blakely, 2009; Helton, 2008).

Themes developed based on categories. The categories of each theme are listed and provide insight into participant thinking. These themes provide further documentation on the impact of a lab school.

Higher education, including laboratory schools, have been scrutinized in an age of accountability where test scores determine funding and programming. Laboratory schools associated with higher education institutions have predominantly been exempt from the demands of state and federal regulation, due to experimentation and innovation in curriculum, personnel, and resources (Blakely, 2009; Buck & Miller, 1991; Gresham, 2012). Qualitative researchers found a place in laboratory schools for the observation of students, interactions, and researcher compilation of variables about a complex setting to tell a story of learning, innovation, and experimentation (Arnold-Grine, 2007). Visibility and recognition of laboratory-school initiatives and programs are instrumental in continuing the work of laboratory schools located on the campuses of higher education institutions (Blakely, 2009).



Experimentation

- Trying new and different instructional practices
- Innovative learning
- “Things you cannot do in other places”
- Ability to see what happens when a new strategy is applied
- Project-based learning
- Staying current on research
- Being able to implement new research
- Seeing learning with a fresh perspective

Research evidence supports that every child learns differently, but federal and state standards and mandates restricts the level of experimentation that occurs in the classroom for fear of assessment repercussions (Norton, 2016), which further substantiates the need for experimentation

Norton (2016) noted that the evolution of education from a revolutionary management concept was a supervisory role by teachers instead of instructional teaching. Normal schools provided educator candidates with instructional learning techniques to influence the interactions in the classroom (Norton, 2016), substantiating the need for hands-on learning for educator preparation students.

Early Practice & Ability to Bridge Theory to Practice



- “In our lab school, theory to practice is seamless. It’s not even negotiable, it’s something that just occurs fluidly.”
- Experiences starting as freshman were highlighted as making a large impact on learning.
- Early interactions with children through observations and field experiences provided a better understanding and awareness of learning.

Participants identified a seamless implementation from theory to practice and articulated the importance of laying a strong foundation for learning that provides a paradigm shift. A knowledge-based shift that involves actual interaction with children takes learning to the next level and provides immediate learning and feedback from faculty members. One survey response stated that “to allow college students to implement current research-based practices in real settings with real children as they learn the content through coursework is what the laboratory school provides.”

A knowledge-based shift that involves actual interaction with children takes learning to the next level according to study participants, and provides immediate learning and feedback from faculty members. Bowman and Herrelko (2014) share the dilemma of education students resorting to intuitive teaching resulting in teaching how they were taught instead of what was learned in coursework

Theory to Practice

Kara, focus group participant shared, “we’re able to provide our teacher candidates with an experience that mirrors what they’re reading in their textbooks and to say it is possible. We also understand whenever you go into schools that are not this way that is not going to happen. Here, you see that it is attainable.”

Expertise of Faculty & Teachers



- A willingness to work with and prepare the best teacher candidates
- High expectations
- collaboration & data teams,
- School of Education redesign
- Highly qualified teachers with continued learning
- High level of engagement with university students

Parents of laboratory school students addressed the expertise and number of qualified teachers working with elementary students as making a large impact on the decision to have children at the laboratory school.

The incorporation of a laboratory would ensure experimentation and research opportunities for university faculty and university students. Teaching is a profession similar to medicine that requires skilled assessment, in-depth knowledge of child development, and teaching ability, and should be viewed as a clinical experience (Gresham, 2012).

**Ann, parent of laboratory
school child:**

*“I liked that my child would experience a
wide array of experiences from pre-
service teachers to content specialists
to master teachers all in a single
classroom.”*

Safety & Support of Environment to Practice New Learning



- Opportunity to practice
- Safe environment with feedback
- Time to figure out how to do something with expert help
- Build relationships with experts

The majority of participants shared that a safe environment allowed teachers and students to fail forward with support and guidance. A safe environment, by study participants, means the environment is a safe place to “figure out how to do something,” is supportive and allows for practice and failure. University students are allowed time to build relationships with students in order to provide learning that meets the needs of the whole child and are assisted by many adults to provide a successful learning experience.

John, Practicum student

“The lab school provided me the opportunity to see what works best for my students and not worry about whether I will get in trouble...”

According to O'Malley, et al., (2015), relationships in the academic setting provide connectedness and a sense of belonging that contributes to the overall climate of instruction and learning.

Complex System



- Always under a camera
- Deeper meaning of the lab school
- Hard to explain the system
- Unique perspective
- One wouldn't exist without the other

A fifth theme emerged that is worthy of notice and that is complexity of the organization. Stakeholders from all areas of the organization mentioned complexity

Complexity included a feeling of always being under a camera and the overwhelming feeling of a fast paced environment with constant change and many people

involved in the process. Participants noted that the system can be overwhelming until you become accustomed to the operations.

Sue, laboratory school teacher

“It is one of the hardest jobs to explain to someone, you are working with little ones, but you are also working with university students, and how you are able to balance all of it. It’s really hard to explain that to people.”

Bill, School of Education Faculty

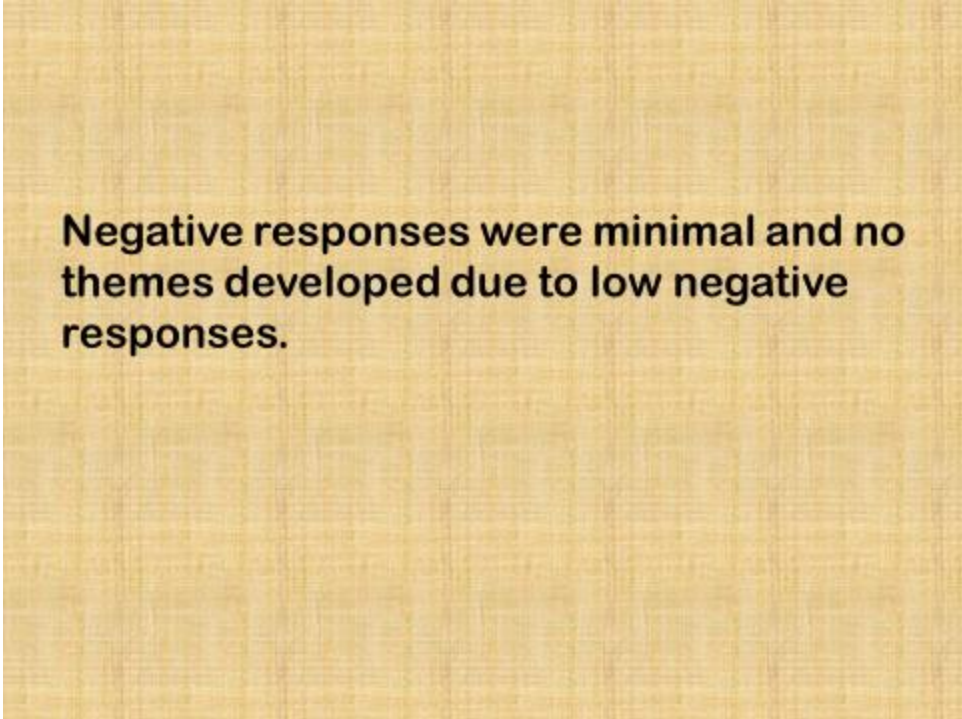
“If you remove the lab school from our educator preparation program, you would thereby change our definition of educator preparation programming.”

Implications for Future Research

How do stakeholders view the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program at one Midwest university?

Overwhelmingly supportive response across all stakeholder groups (university administration, faculty, students; laboratory school instructors, parents, and administration)

Parents commented on the strong relationships and meeting the needs of their children as strong elements of the laboratory school. A faculty member stated that education graduates are quickly hired, and schools call the university wanting “our” students.



Negative responses were minimal and no themes developed due to low negative responses.

Overwhelmingly, participant comments were positive. When asked how the laboratory school failed to meet expectations two participants stated that although it is not a negative they were concerned with limited resources and budget cuts. Another survey participant stated that more research was needed. Another participant was concerned with the lack of diversity in the laboratory school setting.

Recommendation 1

Promoting relevancy of laboratory schools in the current educational and political environment through publication of research. The current educational environment is changing (Barbour & McBride, 2017), and higher education must examine the relevancy of research. Research studies provide relevancy to laboratory school programs while promoting the importance of laboratory schools within a university educator preparation setting.

Recommendations were determined based on participant responses correlated with literature. Promoting relevancy through research ensures that the laboratory school is a vital part of the educational system. Generally, educators do not promote themselves or advocate for the teaching profession as other segments of the population might do. This may require professional development for laboratory school instructors on how to promote, how to research, and how to publish works. When these steps are taken, the laboratory school becomes known to others and encourages discussion and visits from other schools and organizations.

Recommendation 2

Provide educational value of the laboratory school through community outreach professional development to the schools in the university geographic region. Not only must a laboratory school promote relevancy to the larger educational system, but it must also promote relevancy in the community through professional development opportunities. Study participants recognized the expertise of faculty and instructors in preparing educator preparation students for future success. This expertise should be shared with area school educators to promote a higher level of learning for all students.

Community outreach provides area schools with professional development through research conducted at the laboratory school. Instructors working together to improve the instructional setting for students creates a collaborative atmosphere and opens the doors for the university to create partnerships and extend learning.

Recommendation 2 continued

Study participants recognized the expertise of faculty and instructors in preparing educator preparation students for future success. This expertise should be shared with area school educators to promote a higher level of learning for all students.

Participants confirmed the expertise of faculty and instructors. Community outreach enables the expertise of faculty and instructors to be extended beyond the university walls. The complexity of the organization creates a challenge to community outreach. As said by participants the level of involvement from the instructor of children to the instructor of university students leaves little time for extended opportunities. This requires strategic scheduling and a level of priority given to community outreach.

Recommendation 3

External partnerships with organizations and businesses to develop research initiatives. As the educational landscape continues to change, laboratory schools must define their role in higher education. External partnerships provide focus on areas of impact and changes in education, and may provide additional resources and funding.

Partnerships are not just for financial reasons, although in the current educational setting, financial assistance is helpful. Partnerships include organizations and programs to focus on high quality learning opportunities for university students, ways to help students become better prepared educators.

Implications

- **This study contains implications for educator preparation programs, campus-based laboratory schools, teacher candidates, and school districts.**
- **As universities strive to provide high quality educator preparation programs, stakeholders of this study expressed the importance of early teacher candidate practice and expert support.**

In the current lens of higher education with budget cuts and restrictions, the impact of an onsite laboratory school provides support of and evidence of impact. Stakeholder perceptions provide a lens that shows the importance of onsite practice with highly qualified professors and laboratory school teachers. The students that attend the educator preparation program and practice in the lab school see themselves as better prepared and confident in their abilities.

Conclusions

A 35 year decline in federal and state funding for higher education institutions creates challenging times for universities

(Barbour & McBride, 2017)

High quality educator preparation programs educate and produce educators that can impact student growth.

(The New Teacher Project, 2012)

Laboratory schools continually face struggles and increased scrutiny as the educational landscape continues to change. Findings from this study suggest that stakeholders view the impact of a laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program as positive and shared stories related to successes and struggles.

Conclusions

The views of stakeholders were positive regarding the impact of a laboratory school to an educator preparation program. The findings showed stakeholders view the laboratory school as a vital component of the educator preparation program, providing early experience and experimentation for teacher candidates.

Considering the context of stakeholder perceptions of experimentation, early practice and ability to bridge theory to practice, expertise of faculty and teachers, and safety and support of environment to practice new learning, laboratory schools should consider a greater emphasis on promoting research, extending professional development, and cultivating external partnerships (Gresham, 2012; Barbour & McBride, 2017; O'Malley, et al., 2015).

**Visibility and recognition of laboratory school initiatives and programs is instrumental in continuing the work of laboratory schools located on the campuses of higher education institutions.
(Blakely, 2009)**

**“I think the main purpose of a laboratory school is to create opportunities for education majors and also create opportunities for children to have the best education they can with innovative, top-notch technology skills, curriculum methods, so it is a beautiful dichotomy.”
Faculty Member**

Stakeholders substantiated this research study through comments made. The faculty member refers to the dichotomy that is a contrast between two things are represented as being different.

“Having a lab school provides that space for us to be able to see what happens when we apply a specific strategy or specific theory in the classroom.”

Educator Preparation Student

“With a lab school, theory to practice is seamless. It’s not even negotiable, it’s something that just occurs fluidly.”

Lab School Instructor

The comments from an education student and lab school instructor provide emphasis on the importance of theory to practice. Students in the focus groups and surveys stressed the importance of having an opportunity to practice theory and have faculty members and instructors to help them with the process.

**“The laboratory school is a treasure, but
I wish it wasn’t a hidden gem.”**

University Administrator

The response from stakeholders was overwhelmingly positive. As the administrator states a laboratory school is a treasure. To continue to provide high quality programs the laboratory school cannot be a hidden gem. Through promotion of research, professional development, and external partnerships, laboratory schools have the potential to flourish.

Acknowledgements

My committee chairs and members, Dr. Edmonds, Dr. Wall, Dr. Alexander, and Dr. Ingraham. Your expertise, encouragement, and continued feedback was greatly appreciated. Thank you to all participants of the study. Your views, which were shared openly and honestly, impacted this study.

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SECTION FIVE: CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOLARSHIP

Target Journal

The target journal for publication is the *International Association of Laboratory Schools Journal*, which is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal.

Rationale for this Target

The journal offers perspectives on educational trends and encourages academic discourse on topics relevant to laboratory- and university-based schools. Articles are grounded in evidence-based practices, research, and theoretically based quantitative and qualitative scholarship. The journal prefers articles that appeal to a worldwide audience that includes practitioners and researchers.

Outline of Proposed Contents

A 10–15 page journal submission must be reviewed and accepted by the peer-review committee based on research and relevance to the International Association of Laboratory Schools members. The article includes an executive overview with main points included in the body of the paper with subheadings.

1. Title and Author

Plan for Submission

Who: *International Association of Laboratory Schools Journal*

When: August 2018 to be included in the 2019 journal

How: electronic submission to Dr. Christopher Keyes at cskeyes@ship.edu

Submission-Ready Journal Article

STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS: IMPACT OF A UNIVERSITY-BASED LABORATORY-SCHOOL ON A CAMPUS-BASED EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM

Sandra H. Seipel. Principal of Horace Mann Laboratory School at Northwest Missouri State University

“I think the main purpose of a laboratory school is to create opportunities for education majors and also create opportunities for children to have the best education they can with innovative, top-notch technology skills, curriculum methods, so it is a beautiful dichotomy,” School of Education faculty member.

“I think as teachers in a laboratory school, you have to follow the latest research and trends, and talk as a team where you’re going and expose university students to the best educational experiences,” laboratory school instructor.

“A laboratory school uses best practices to teach university students so they know what is best for children,” parent of laboratory school student.

These statements came from instructors, professors, and parents at one university and laboratory school when asked the purpose of a laboratory school. Laboratory-school demographics have changed significantly over the past 20 years. Many laboratory schools have closed their doors. In concert with educational changes, a steady 35-year decline in federal and state funding and a decline in university enrollment created challenging times for universities impacting programming and services (Barbour & McBride, 2017). Former U.S. Secretary of Education King expressed “as an educator, I know that one of the strongest in-school influences on students is the teacher in front of

the classroom” ((U.S. Department of Education, 2016, para 4). The words of King resonate with educator preparation programs that involve practice for teacher candidates to hone skills to be effective educators in an ever-changing world. The perceptions of its stakeholders and how stakeholders are key factors in establishing program effectiveness reflects impacts of a program (Aksoydan & Mizikaci, 2015; Eden & Ackermann, 1998).

This qualitative case study examined stakeholder perceptions on the impact of one university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program. A decrease in the number of university-based laboratory schools requires current laboratory-school programs to evaluate strengths and weaknesses to provide quality evaluative data to ensure continued viability. According to an AACTE (2013) report, programs that provide actual practice opportunities for teacher candidates produce higher quality teachers.

Pressures on higher education educator preparation programs, coupled with reductions in funding, raise financial questions about the sustainability of all institutional programming, and particularly funding associated with educator preparation in laboratory schools (Buck & Miller, 1991; Gresham, 2012). This study was launched from the realization that many years of research and changes in the higher education landscape, including the closing of many laboratory schools, have not taken into account the perceptions of stakeholders when making decisions about laboratory schools and educator preparation programs (Barbour & McBride, 2017). In this qualitative case study, the researcher conducted an investigation to view stakeholder perceptions, working to extend research and inform future decision making by laboratory schools and educator preparation programs. The idea of public institutions specifically designed for

elementary school educator preparation began with Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, with a constructivist tenet, who started educator preparation institutions and believed children should guide their own learning, rather than educators imposing learning on children (Coble et al., 2004; Helton, 2008). In the 1800s, another constructivist theorist, John Dewey, philosopher and progressive education leader, founded the first laboratory school in 1896 at the University of Chicago to provide clinical experience for educator candidates in a school setting, influencing the educational landscape for years to come (Blakely, 2009; Gresham, 2012; Weih & Ensworth, 2006). As valuable components of educator preparation programs, laboratory schools supported model teaching practices to extend curriculum development and research (Gresham, 2012; Barbour & McBride, 2017). Many factors contributed to the demise of laboratory schools over many years (Gresham, 2012; Barbour & McBride, 2017), and these factors continue to cause laboratory schools to examine mission, purpose, and sustainability.

Research Question

The overarching research question that guided this study was, how do stakeholders view the impact of a university-based laboratory school on a campus-based educator-preparation program at one midwest university?

Methods

Stakeholder research is lacking in the context of the impact of a laboratory school on an educator preparation program. Participants in this study were laboratory-school and university stakeholders who provided varying perspectives about the impact of a university-based laboratory school and a campus-based educator preparation program. Stakeholders included educator preparation faculty, students, and administrators and

laboratory-school teachers and parents. Interviews, focus groups, analysis of narratives, and on-line surveys, and were used to gather data on the perceptions of a laboratory school on an educator preparation program. There were 75 participants that provided the necessary qualitative data (Field, 2013; Krueger & Casey, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Seidman, 2013). As an insider researcher (Drake & Heath, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Unluer, 2012), one who conducts research in an organization, the researcher, must be aware of biases and take steps to conduct error-free research (Aguilar, 1981) and frame research beyond friendships with colleagues (Drake & Heath, 2011) to report accurate data to inform research.

Findings

Participants across stakeholder groups overwhelmingly supported the importance of a laboratory school that should be continued given the perceived benefits for students in the educator preparation program. Four main themes surfaced that connected the impact of the laboratory school to the educator preparation program: experimentation; importance of early practice and the ability to bridge theory to practice; expertise of faculty and laboratory school teachers; and safety of environment to practice new learning. Through interviews, focus groups, artifact collection, and surveys with faculty, administrators, laboratory-school teachers and parents, and university students, the researcher was able to collect relevant data to share the story of impact of one university-based laboratory school on one campus-based educator preparation program. Emergent themes were coded and the researcher examined themes and referred literature in support of themes (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Experimentation

Participants recognized experimentation as a major impact of a laboratory school that separates the educator preparation program from other programs. As one laboratory school instructor commented, it is a place where you can do “things you cannot do in other places.” Study participants described experimentation as trying new and different instructional practices, innovative learning and the ability to see what happens when applying a new strategy. Other participants described experimentation as project-based learning, staying current on research, being able to implement new research, and seeing learning from a fresh perspective. Research evidence supports that every child learns differently, but federal and state standards and mandates restricts the level of experimentation that occurs in the classroom for fear of assessment repercussions (Norton, 2016), which further substantiates the need for experimentation. Emily, educator preparation student, stated that the laboratory school “provides a space for us to be able to see what happens when we apply a specific strategy or a specific theory in the classroom.” Albert, School of Education faculty member offered “the basic assumption is that we can teach children better if we learn from them. That’s a significant difference between a lab school and a different setting” (see Table 1). Norton (2016) noted that the evolution of education from a revolutionary management concept was a supervisory role by teachers instead of instructional teaching. Normal schools provided educator candidates with instructional learning techniques to influence the interactions in the classroom (Norton, 2016), substantiating the need for hands-on learning for educator preparation students.

Early Practice and Ability to Bridge Theory to Practice

Experiences starting as freshman were highlighted as making a large impact on learning. “In our lab school, theory to practice is seamless. It’s not even negotiable, it’s something that just occurs fluidly.” Early interactions with children through observations and field experiences provided a better understanding and awareness of learning. Milli, focus group participant confirmed the importance of early interaction when commenting,

We’re able to provide our teacher candidates with an experience that mirrors what they’re reading in their textbooks and to say it is possible. We also understand whenever you go into schools that are not this way that is not going to happen. Here, you see that it is attainable.

Many educator preparation students enter their final year of college believing they are well prepared for the classroom setting (Bowman & Harrelko, 2014), only to find they are not prepared when they enter into a first teaching position. The struggle of educator preparation programs is how to provide practice to education students that allows for implementation of theory to practice (Bowman & Harrelko, 2014). Study participants identified a seamless implementation from theory to practice and articulated the importance of laying a strong foundation of early hands-on practice in the lab school for learning that provides a paradigm shift.

Table 1

Stakeholder Perception Themes Of The Impact of One University-Based Laboratory

School on One Educator preparation Program

Theme	Response frequency	Categories included
Experimentation	51	Innovation Unique experiences Model practices Fresh perspective Learn new things Difference between lab and other schools Different experiences Research
Early practice and ability to bridge theory to practice	39	Early practice Practice as freshman Early opportunities Awareness early in program Learn to teach children Work with actual children Child development from children not books Attainable learning Knowledge-based shift Paradigm shift
Expertise of faculty and teachers	25	High expectations Collaboration of faculty and teacher Willingness to help students Prepare best qualified candidates Prepare students Produce superior educator
Safety and support of environment to practice new learning	18	Opportunity to practice Safe environment with feedback Time to figure it out with help

A knowledge-based shift that involves actual interaction with children takes learning to the next level according to study participants, and provides immediate learning and feedback from faculty members. Bowman and Herrelko (2014) share the dilemma of education students resorting to intuitive teaching resulting in teaching how they were taught instead of what was learned in coursework. One survey participant highlighted this when stating, “to allow college students to implement current research-

based practices in real settings with real children as they learn the content through coursework is what the laboratory school provides.”

Expertise of Faculty and Teachers

Stakeholders addressed the expertise of faculty and teachers in terms of knowledge, skill, and willingness to work with and prepare the best teacher candidates in a laboratory school. Participants discussed high expectations, collaboration, data teams, School of Education course redesign efforts, highly qualified teachers in all classrooms, and a high level of engagement with university students as key factors in the expertise of faculty. Several laboratory-school parents addressed the expertise and number of qualified instructors working with elementary students as making a large impact on the decision to have children in the laboratory school; the quality of the instructor is a significant variable that influences student success (William, 2014). According to Danielson (1996) students taught by a high rated instructor will learn 30 percent more than students taught by a low rated instructor. One survey participant offered “I liked that my child would experience a wide array of experiences from pre-service teachers to content specialists to master teachers all in a single classroom.”

Safety and Support of Environment to Practice New Learning

The majority of participants opined that a safe environment allowed instructors and students to fail forward with support and guidance. A safe environment according to Kara, educator preparation student, means the environment is a safe place to “figure out how to do something,” is supportive, and allows for practice and failure. University students are allowed time to build relationships with students in laboratory school classrooms and thus to provide learning that meets the needs of the whole child, assisted

by many adults to provide a successful learning experience. As one survey participant stated, “the lab school provided me the opportunity to see what works best for my students and not worry about whether I will get in trouble for not sticking to a mandated schedule.” Thomas, educator preparation student resonated this sentiment, “the lab school helped me to learn more about myself as a person and it has also helped me to become a more patient person.” According to O’Malley, Voight, and Renshaw, (2014), relationships in the academic setting provide connectedness and a sense of belonging that contributes to the overall climate of instruction and learning.

Complex System

One overarching theme that was evident across all stakeholder groups was the complexity of the organization in relation to the laboratory school and educator preparation system. Nan, laboratory school instructor expressed the complexity, “it is one of the hardest jobs to explain to someone, you are working with little ones, but you are also working with university students, and how you are able to balance all of it.” When asked to explain the complexity, Tim, faculty member, stated that “it is hard to even explain until you are immersed in the environment that it is fast paced, always changing, and very rewarding to work with children and university students.” Carl, educator preparation student, confirmed that “it is a lot more complex than anyone realizes and you feel like you are under a camera all the time. As seen through multiple comments, teachers must prepare and instruct the children in their classrooms while also preparing and instructing university level students. The laboratory school teacher provides feedback to the students and helps them prepare lessons and activities to ensure they are meeting the needs of all children. A laboratory school instructor described the

complexity as, “the laboratory school and educator preparation program is a different world kind of experience and one wouldn’t exist without the other.”

Implications

Based on 75 responses from ten interviews, five focus groups, and survey participants, the researcher found that there are clear associations between perceived impacts of a laboratory school to an educator preparation program. Existing literature is weak in the area of stakeholder perception pertaining to laboratory schools and suggests more research is needed (Gresham, 2012; Helton, 2008). Barbour and McBride (2017) provide relevant research pertaining to the purpose and function of laboratory schools. In times of dramatic budget cuts and program realignment, higher education institutions must share the work being done in laboratory schools with educators around the world.

Despite the limitations of the research being conducted at only one laboratory school and one university educator preparation program, the findings have general implications for further research. Participant responses were overwhelmingly positive. Analysis of narratives and survey results regarding negative responses were minimal, and as a result no themes developed from stakeholder responses. The overwhelmingly supportive response across all stakeholder groups (university administration, faculty, students; laboratory school instructors, parents, and administration), offers recommendations in the following areas:

1. Promoting relevancy of laboratory schools in the current educational and political environment through publication of research. The current educational environment is changing (Barbour & McBride, 2017), and higher education must examine the relevancy of research. Research studies provide

relevancy to laboratory school programs while promoting the importance of laboratory schools within a university educator preparation setting.

2. Provide educational value of the laboratory school through community outreach professional development to the schools in the university geographic region. Not only must a laboratory school promote relevancy to the larger educational system, but it must also promote relevancy in the community through professional development opportunities. Study participants recognized the expertise of faculty and instructors in preparing educator preparation students for future success. This expertise should be shared with area school educators to promote a higher level of learning for all students.
3. Develop external partnerships with organizations and businesses to advance research initiatives. As the educational landscape continues to change, laboratory schools must define their role in higher education. External partnerships provide focus on areas of impact and changes in education, and may provide additional resources and funding.

Conclusion

Laboratory schools continually face struggles and increased scrutiny as the educational landscape continues to change. Findings from this study suggest that stakeholders view the impact of a laboratory school on a campus-based educator preparation program as positive and shared stories related to successes and struggles. Considering the context of stakeholder perceptions of experimentation, early practice and ability to bridge theory to practice, expertise of faculty and teachers, and safety and support of environment to practice new learning, laboratory schools should consider a

greater emphasis on promoting research, extending professional development, and cultivating external partnerships (Gresham, 2012; Barbour & McBride, 2017; O'Malley, et al., 2015). Evie, School of Education faculty member stated, "The lab school is the singular foundation of our entire profession-based learning program, that without it, we wouldn't have the institution that we have." Study participants shared great knowledge and insight about the experiences university students gain in a hands-on environment, where it is acceptable to have difficult conversations about curriculum and instructional strategies and learn from mistakes, all while preparing to be an effective instructor. Visibility and recognition of laboratory-school initiatives and programs is instrumental in continuing the work of laboratory schools located on the campuses of higher education institutions (Blakely, 2009). A university administrator stressing the importance of the laboratory school stated, "The laboratory school is a treasure, but I wish it wasn't a hidden gem."

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AUTHOR BIO

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SECTION SIX: SCHOLARLY PRACTITIONER REFLECTION

Section six is a synthesis of my own practices as an educational leader and how the doctoral and dissertation process influenced my educational leadership practices. The dissertation process provided growth through extensive content knowledge and educational leadership experiences. Continued content knowledge and growth is evident with scholarly publication and content for learning and leading. The doctoral process tested my commitment and confidence in my abilities as I learning through reading, analyzing, and reflecting on my own practices. The doctoral and dissertation process surpassed my initial goals and challenged me to approach learning and practice in different ways.

Dissertation Influencing Education Leadership

Psychodynamic theory originating from Sigmund Freud, focusing on unconscious processing, has changed over time, but the relevancy of unconscious thought is found in many other theories (Colarusso & Nemiroff, 1975). “Starting in childhood, innovators tend to be introverts, stimulated by thoughts and ideas rather than people and things” (Northouse, 2016, p. 17). An introvert may spend more time listening and processing information than one that is more of an extrovert. Leadership is complex, takes on many forms, and the effectiveness of leadership is dependent on the person, situation, and organization. During the summer of 2015, doctoral candidates completed an instrument that determined the five most dominant strengths of the candidate. One of my dominant themes identified with the StrengthsFinder was achiever. Achiever is described as having “an internal fire burning inside you” and “achieve something tangible in order to feel good about yourself” (Clifton, Anderson, & Schreiner, 2006, p. 26). Task oriented work

challenged the teamwork of my summer 2015 group as we determined what needed to be done and the best way to complete with confidence. Kofman and Senge (1995) ask why we learners approach learning with fear instead of challenge and opportunity. As an achiever and learner, I approach learning with awe and challenge, and want to learn and develop new theories of practice. Through extensive collaborative experiences I was able to synthesize and analyze my strengths to utilize my strengths in the best way. Levi (2014) informed me of my own and others' assumptions and biases.

Leadership Theory and Practice

Leadership is a process where one individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2015). Individual experience and discourse are at the core of change and challenge learning that takes place, causing critical examination of previous assumptions and beliefs (Merriam & Bierema, 2014; Taylor, 2009). Early leadership theories recognized leadership as having innate qualities that only great people possess (Northouse, 2016). One of the first studies of leadership included trait theory, which identified a combination of characteristics that were common in leaders. Path-goal theory identifies the leader as the one who motivates and clears a path, sets goals, and directs others in what needs to occur to reach goal success. This theory identifies four distinct types of leadership and depends on the leader for organizational success (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008; Northouse, 2016).

Four curricular themes guide the organization of this leadership-development reflection: leadership theory and practice, organizational analysis, policy analysis, and content and context for learning. Each theme contains an overview, professional practice, ethics and diversity, and reflection sections. The experiences I have been

afforded provided a strong knowledge base for a leadership style that encourages and influences others to share in the decision-making process. Leaders must be open to new perspectives, personnel alignment, and awareness of communities of thought to purposefully guide learners into unknown areas (Bruffee, 1993; Kotter, 2011; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009).

Eloquently stated by Bersin (2012) “leadership, if developed in a comprehensive way, endures” (para. 1). The works of Kouzes and Posner (2012) and Covey (1990) have been instrumental in my leadership development. Kouzes and Posner (2012) developed five leadership traits and Covey (1990) developed seven habits that can provide a foundation for transformational leadership. The study of traits and habits provided me with knowledge of prioritization, skill development, and self-care. Effectively leading a learning organization requires a leader to actively work with team members, engage in intellectual conversation, and initiate change through problem solving and inquiry for the betterment of the organization.

Professional Practice

Performing in the role of an administrator for 12 years provided experiences and learning opportunities that have strengthened my resolve as a leader and provided many opportunities to develop “thicker skin.” Learning to take criticism, removing an ego, and being objective diminish the opportunity for recoil and strengthen an inner voice to develop strong leadership skills (Kotter, 2011). In my earliest administrative years, I allowed an environment to change my leadership. I had to examine my own beliefs and values to develop strong relationships and collaborations.

Leadership opportunities presented themselves informally in the early years of teaching through committee work such as hiring committees, professional-development committees, advisory boards, teacher-organization roles, and state-level committees. In my first administrative role I was challenged to develop trust and build relationships. Trust is “the least understood, most neglected, and most underestimated possibility of our time” (Covey, 2008, p. 3). New administrators want to make changes and have not taken time to view the overall system from the balcony. To view from the balcony provides a broader context while operating in the midst of day-to-day decision making. Leaders who view from the balcony are able to see a different view that enables them to distinguish how to do business (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). Trust must be present before change initiatives can be successful and leaders must be able to adapt to change.

The urgency to implement change has been strong in my administrative roles, and I learned in my first administrative role that change often meets resistance and skepticism. Attention to personnel beliefs, values, assumptions, and habits guided me during challenging times and continue to be critical aspects of my leadership development as a principal. The willingness to listen to and understand varying perspectives has gained the respect and trust of colleagues in my organizations (aligned with Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). In addition, Asking what is right for the enterprise is the first practice to give a leader knowledge of the organization (Drucker, 2004). A leader must observe and reflect on practices before implementation can begin. Soon after becoming principal at a laboratory school, I wanted to implement the seven leadership habits for children (Covey, 2008). The university had a student-leadership program in place that was supported by research and could be adapted to meet the needs at an

elementary school. I realized that what I wanted and what was right for the organization were not the same, and the right decision should be based on the needs of the organization; not the individual.

Leaders must challenge colleagues to create new ideas, move away from conventional thinking, and use the negotiation process as members of an organization working on shared projects (Gray, 1989; Senge, 2006). Cooperation requires an agreement between people. In contrast, collaboration involves working closely to share responsibility for the action or goal, and collaboration can raise power issues and lead to difficult challenges that impact the group goal (Amey, Eddy, & Ozaki, 2007; Austin & Baldwin, 1991; Boyer, 1990; Lester & Evens, 2009).

Ethics and Diversity

Shifting focus from doing things right as managers to doing the right thing will remove barriers and work toward continuous improvement (Bennis, 1989). As a leader, I find it imperative that the decisions made are morally good and take the well-being of others into account to influence the broader good of not only the organization, but individuals as well.

Working in education presents challenge and opportunity for learning and growth to better understand diversity and cultural awareness. As an educational leader, I believe it is our responsibility to provide opportunities for development and growth. Through study and experience, one can work to become aware of unconscious mental functions but cannot eliminate all biases. We all have hidden biases that influence our behavior toward others (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013), and the key is recognizing that bias exists and work to understand and change behaviors. Every decision is significant and requires

evaluation as to whether one achieved the proper results. Educational decisions promote professional-development schedules that provide organizational training in diversity, equity, and inclusion and address three attributes critical to reflection: open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000). Open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness require a leader to listen to all sides of an issue and listen to alternative views while actively searching for truth (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000). Individuals are able to make meaningful change and evaluate themselves and others without fear. Understanding comes from theory, experiential knowledge, and ongoing practice (Pratte & Rury, 1991). Organizational vision and strategic planning contribute to organizational success and provide an environment of openness and trust.

Reflection of Practice

The building of trust in an organization is critical to the success of the organization. Lencioni (2002) stated that critical reflection is a “commitment to questioning assumptions and taken-for-granted embodied in the theory and professional practice” (p. 538). Reflection provides an individual with the opportunity to think about and find understanding in personal experiences and practices to influence future decision making and relationship building (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985). Reflection provides me, as a leader, the opportunity to process decisions and events. Four frames help leaders conceptualize varying approaches to issues: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2013). These frames were significant to my leadership development and exemplified the need for continued education to better assess situations and understand the best approach to issues for maximum resolve.

Action logic allows a leader to interpret behaviors and maintains and maneuvers power and threats (Rooke & Tobert, 2005). I view my leadership as an achiever with characteristics that include teamwork, excellent managerial skill, and strategic goal development. I view myself an “outside of the box thinker,” able to view from high levels and also inside the workings of the organization. My leadership style is collaborative, timely, and able to generate personal and organizational change (aligned with Clifton et al., 2006). The combination of achiever and strategist provide a strong leadership base that can influence change.

Organizational Analysis

Organization

Trust is the most important of five key team needs with other needs being fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results (Lencioni, 2002). “Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it no organizational learning occurs” (Senge, 2006, p. 14). Systems thinking includes three characteristics that are fundamental to leadership: commitment to real learning, challenging personal mental models, and triangulation to identify varying viewpoints (Senge, 2006).

Organizational needs warrant an awareness and understanding of four organizational frames (Bolman & Deal, 2013). A leader who is familiar with the frames is better able to identify organizational challenges and devise action plans for successful initiatives. Two of the four frames—structural and human resource—consume a great deal of time of an administrator, and development of confidence and application of the principles of all four

frames broadened my ability to work more efficiently and develop organizational culture for growth and resiliency.

Power relationships that exist between the leader and the followers contribute to effective or ineffective leadership and create social issues that can impact leadership and organizational success (French & Raven, 1957). How a leader interacts with others is evident in the daily workings of an organization and can be seen quickly as one enters the organization. Two kinds of power—positional and personal—influence the capacity of a leader. Positional power derives from a status position that I experienced early in my leadership career. I expected colleagues to provide honest answers when I asked questions, only to realize that, as their “boss,” they provided the answers they thought I wanted to hear. Personal power is how others perceive the leader as likeable and trustworthy. Competent, considerate, trustworthy leaders gain followers and are considered role models by their peers (French & Raven, 1957; Northouse, 2015).

Lencioni (2006) appealed to leaders to “tear down silos and go beyond behaviors and contextual issues at the heart of departmental separation and politics” (para 1). Lencioni suggested that healthy organizations build and maintain cohesive leadership teams, create clarity, over-communicate, and reinforce clarity. Experience has provided me the opportunity to understand the importance of communication and clarity. It is imperative for leaders to communicate not only expectations, but also goals and planning strategies. Problems are inevitable for all organizations. The difference in a healthy organization is planning and effective communication of organizational vision and mission.

Professional Practice

As a first-year administrator, I immediately found silos (as in Lencioni, 2006) and worked with collaborative teams to build trust and develop the organization. People wounded by mistrust and deception were slow to trust for fear of failure and the absence of trust in an organization creates an environment that does not allow vulnerability among team members (Lencioni, 2002). It is essential that a leader show vulnerability to provide team members a protective environment for growth and failure (Goffee & Jones, 2000). Familiarization four frames (Bolman & Deal, 2013) provided significant organizational success. I was able to challenge team members to view situations from various frames to understand how the organization operates. Understanding the operations of an organization allows team members to view the organization differently. Leaders must be open to new perspectives, align people so they can contribute to the process, and be aware of communities of thought to purposefully guide learners into unknown areas (Bruffee, 1993; Kotter, 2011; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). Alignment and purposeful leadership not only build the organization, but build trust and workplace continuity. The first 2 years of my leadership experience provided great challenge and opportunity for growth and learning about trust, organizational power, and collaboration. Personal mastery of leadership skills helped develop patience, and enabled me to engage with individuals to move the organization forward. Individual learning combined with organizational learning provides expertise and knowledge (Lencioni, 2002; Senge, 2006).

Leaders provide expertise and knowledge for the development of the team and development includes questioning and allowance for personality. “We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change. And the most

pressing task is to teach people how to learn” (Drucker, 2010). Interactions with others allow team members to understand and navigate the thinking process and provide guidance for organizations to develop newer, more efficient, and effective models. As a member of a professional-learning community and the leader of the building, it was my duty to guide and support teachers through learning cycles and provide support and feedback. A specific instance of teambuilding to develop organizational values included teachers challenging values and redefining the mission of the organization. This process can be frustrating to members and growth could easily become derailed, but with continued conversation and encouragement, team members are able to collaborate and develop a strong working relationship.

Ethics and Diversity

The development of team through questioning, discussion, conflict resolution, and problem solving creates organizational viability (Senge, 2006). To challenge policies and refusal to accept the status quo will result in greater transparency and a stronger organization in which to work. As an educational leader in a global economy, it is imperative to understand skills and behaviors to effectively relate to individuals of varying cultures and backgrounds. Participation in a social-justice institute provided a safe environment to share concerns and assumptions and learn from others. Leadership that provides a safe environment for teachers to challenge topics broadens the scope of learning. Whether a discussion about the appropriateness of Christmas decorations or the inclusion of all family formations, educators must converse and share values and assumptions and gain new insights to understand various cultures and backgrounds. The best advice given to me was to listen to others; simply listen, with no intent to respond.

When you open your mind to listen, you feel what is being said, not as words but as feelings of accomplishment, pain, relief, or passion.

Reflection of Practice

The political frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013) continues to be the most difficult frame as I try to embrace the importance of politics in daily organizational structure. I have said many times that, “I just want to do my job and do it well”; therefore to understand the political frame becomes critical to my job performance. I understand that now. The levels and types of power that exist in an organization (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009) contribute to the forces of decision making. Members of a collaborative group learn from each other, engage in reflective practice, must see the rationale in the work, make arrangements for sustainability, and see the work as collaborative rather than competitive (Amey et al., 2007; Austin & Baldwin, 1991; Dutton & Dukerich, 2006). To identify issues in an organization and find solutions to issues will eliminate the ability of negative factors to flourish and will encourage new ideas and approaches to problems (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Heffron, 1989). As an educational leader, I have learned to identify issues and provide collaborative time for reflection and open dialogue that has allowed me to be a better leader and helped others grow in their leadership abilities.

Policy Analysis

Policy analysis is multifaceted and includes many levels of exchange to shape and transform the education setting. According to market theory (Stone, 2012), market exchanges require fully informed individuals. Society determines public activity and great consideration is needed to determine legitimate need based on cultural considerations. Dependence can create an environment of safety but an inability to take

risks. A leader must promote self-sufficiency through policy creation that allows for risks, choices, and attainability. Fullan (2004) described educational change as change in practice that takes on many levels and requires goal setting and determination. Change in practice includes alteration of pedagogical assumptions and transparency for the betterment of the organization, which can lead to political discussions and tough decisions for an organization.

Symbolic representation is important when determining how to solve problems in the political realm. Stone (2012) identified four aspects of symbolic representation that are relevant to policymakers: stories, synecdoches, metaphors, and ambiguity. As a leader, understanding the use of these symbolic aspects can provide awareness and understanding. Synecdoche is a figure of speech that uses part of a whole to explain a larger problem; I find this to be extremely useful in my current role. In education, we use the classroom as the symbolic representation of the entire education system and real-world examples tend to focus on extremes to garner attention and support.

Personal Practice

The current tone of education and the nature of global accountability necessitates data collection that is valid and reliable. Systematic evaluation and analysis should subject all policies to thorough scrutiny. No Child Left Behind was developed with good intentions but became a burdensome endeavor for organizations trying to meet federal and state goals. I believe leaders must filter information to provide enough to build trust and operate a successful organization, but not so much that it overwhelms team members. Leaders like to use metaphors to imply a comparison between two items and the power of

metaphor became evident to me when Horace Mann fifth- and sixth-grade students used synectics with social-justice issues. What a powerful voice students can have.

In addition, Stone (2012) identified stories as a way to influence others and Bardach and Patashnik (2016) shared the importance of logical narrative flow when telling a story. I was amazed that 11- and 12-year-old children understood synectics and identified deeply with social-justice issues. Bolman and Deal (2013) discussed how leaders use political approaches to facilitate change by building power bases, building networks and coalitions, and analyzing the realities that exist in in and outside the organization. In my personal practice, the political arena has been the most difficult to navigate. In previous positions, I have viewed my role as teacher or principal with a list of duties to complete that did not include coalition building. Coalition building (Bolman & Deal, 2013) had great implications for leaders in all arenas and scarce resources can make power a critical factor. No time in my career has the political frame been more evident or critically important than in my current role as principal of a laboratory school on a university campus. Organizational life is interdependent and power relationships exist and drive the workings of the organization through negotiation and bargaining. I continue to negotiate the political arena of an overbounded system (Bolman & Deal, 2013) and struggle to find direction in the midst of political challenge.

Covey (1990) uses seven habits of effective leadership and Kouzes and Posner (2014) shared leadership development through a five-trait process. The two suggestions are similar and focus on clarity and vision to develop leaders in organizations. Leadership development requires practice and Covey (1990) and Kouzes and Posner (2012) posited that practice differentiates a leader from others, which includes motivation

and a desire to learn, reflection and critical critique, and the ability to invite coaching and feedback from others.

Ethics and Diversity

Mobilizing others to make a difference through symbolism can create a strong coalition of supporters for an organization. Symbolism as the fourth organizational frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013) provides the story behind the organization. Stories speak to human experience with trials and tribulations that build the culture of an organization, creating pride among organizational members. Trust in an organization allows for culture and human experience to resonate among colleagues and provides opportunity for personal stories and shared experiences (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Covey, 1990; Lencioni, 2002). Diverse belief systems and reflection on one's own bias are required to develop organizational viability.

Reflections on Practice

The four organizational frames have been the most relevant reading relating to organizational understanding in my learning journey. Bolman and Deal (2013) related the four frames to common events such as jungles or carnivals. Effective leadership requires the understanding of diverse belief systems, power and competition, and the realities of organizational life that can be innovative or toxic (Kotter, 2011; Levi, 2014; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). In my professional practice, I have experienced a toxic environment and am currently experiencing innovation and culture; these experiences have provided learning prospects to broaden my leadership abilities.

Challenges early in my administrative career, provided extensive practice that tested my beliefs and strengthen my confidence and ability to develop and organization.

Being a leader in a school district means professionally addressing administrative issues and developing trust among employees to develop a strong organization. As an inexperienced administrator, decisions rested on what was best for children and trying to please everyone. Self reflection allowed me to examine values and assumptions, and develop a stronger conviction in doing what is best for children. While working in challenging situations, a professional mentor provided support and emotional assistance. The challenge of defending my values and commitments provided strength and confidence to become the leader I am today.

The move from a challenging leadership position to one of trust and capacity building shaped me and continues to guide me in my leadership abilities today. Continued leadership positions allowed me to practice leadership with integrity and determination. As a member of a well-defined administrative team, a strong learning community was developed and implementation of a 4-day school week was initiated. Change was achieved through transparency and trust in the school district, which was another crucible experience with very different circumstances and outcomes. Great pride comes from knowing challenges were overcome and success was achieved.

Content and Context for Learning

Goffee and Jones (2000, p. 79) provide four qualities of an inspirational leader and asked an important question: “Why would anyone want to be led by you?” The qualities are understandable and also disturbing because they expose vulnerability. As a leader, knowing when and how much to share can be difficult to determine. As a leader, it is important to “get on the balcony” and consider the role of leadership with an

understanding that, as a leader, you must be part of the action but also view from the balcony to make good decisions (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997, p. 60).

Individual experience and discourse challenge the learning that takes place and causes critical examination of previous assumptions and beliefs (Taylor, 2009).

Individual learning leads to organizational learning and one cannot change an organization without learning as an individual (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Reflective thought and internalized conversation provide learning that develops knowledge communities in which adults are able to participate in normal discourse and nonstandard discourse challenges communities of learners to expand thinking and translate conversation to social learning and organizational learning (Bruffee, 1993; Gill, 2010; Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

Four of my colleagues completed the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (Northouse, 2016) in 2015. The highest rated traits were self-confidence, self-assuredness, trustworthiness, and diligence, and the results correlated to Strengths Quest findings (Clifton et al., 2006). Leadership-trait theory (Northouse, 2016) focuses on the traits of the leader and supports the image of leaders in our society; this theory has a strong research base. Taylor (2009) posited that a greater life experience allows one to gain experiences that provide opportunity for dialogue and reflection. As a learner and organizational leader, the learning that occurred through the years has influenced what I do and how I do it. Reflection is critical to understanding why something did not work and what could have been done differently. Each member of a team responds differently to learning and, as a leader, respect for the individual journey of each person; support builds trust in the workplace and provides opportunity for growth.

Personal Practice

Building relationships and understanding the needs of each learner requires understanding of experiences, beliefs, and assumptions that frame the individual-learning experience (Taylor, 2009) and set the stage for organizational learning. Transformational learning (Clark, 1993) shapes how we view experiences and forever changes our approach to learning and organizational interaction. Change can be extremely difficult and begins with an individual at the core of the process, followed by social transformation (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Reflection of assumptions and beliefs of leadership (Preskill & Brookfield, 2012) led me to change the way I viewed leadership. I experienced three very different principal roles in my administrative career. Each role provided learning opportunities that, through critical thinking (Merriam & Bierema, 2014), allowed me to critique my actions and connect actions to greater social interactions and events.

Ethics and Diversity

Social transformation begins with the individual and requires understanding and trust. Cranton (2012) provided a three-part framework that includes reflection and examination of one's assumptions and beliefs; social change requires examination of ideologies to change social inequities. Change agents must seek to change inequitable social and organizational systems through recognition of varying ideologies (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). "Blind acceptance of the status quo" (p. 217) requires individuals to doubt and reject processes that are unacceptable in the workplace. As a leader, entering collaboration with an open mind and as a member of the team, not the leader, can be

difficult but necessary, and requires the leader to be receptive to the contributions of everyone to create open dialogue and safe spaces (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009).

Reflection of Practice

As an early learner, I was intrigued by new ideas and adventures, and the wonder of learning has continued into adulthood. Critical thinking can force us “to stop and reevaluate our beliefs” (Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 212) and is central to adult learning, providing a foundation to view varying perspectives and build a community of learners. Many times, leaders approach new learning with fear instead of wonder and are satisfied with the status quo instead of challenging it (Bennis, 1989; Kofman & Senge, 1995). I continually approach new learning with wonder and, regardless of the frustration level, understand that to provide a trusting and effective workplace environment, continuous learning must take place.

Conclusion

Reflection on approaches used and decisions made molded me into the leader I am today. Peters (1994, p. 30) synthesizes my belief about leaders: “Leaders don’t create followers, they create more leaders.” My greatest professional accomplishment is watching the success of previous leadership-team members continue their learning, accept new challenges, and continue to communicate successes with me. I am not satisfied with the status quo and continue to learn and understand, especially the political frame, to embrace change and impact the educational system. The process of learning intrigues me as I continuously look for ways to improve and inspire others. As a leader of learners, I want to ensure learners understand the larger ideas that frame their work and

help learners work through conflict and resolution to serve the needs of the children
(aligned with Garvin & Roberto, 2001/2013; Kofman & Senge, 1995).

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS: IMPACT OF A UNIVERSITY BASED LABORATORY SCHOOL ON A CAMPUS BASED TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The research conducted in this case study is to investigate stakeholder perceptions of a laboratory school on a teacher preparation program. Participation in a research study affords you the right to be informed about study procedures and consent of participation. This form provides specific information about the research study. If you do not understand or need clarification please ask the researcher to explain the information to you.

You have the right to know what is being asked of you and your **participation is voluntary**. You do not have to participate and can refuse without obligation.

WHY IS THIS CASE STUDY BEING CONDUCTED?

The purpose of this research is to investigate the perceptions of stakeholders of the impact of a University-based laboratory school on a campus based teacher preparation program.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE IN THE STUDY?

Approximately 90-100 people including laboratory school parents, teachers, and administrators, and university faculty, administration and students from Northwest Missouri State University and Horace Mann Laboratory School.

WHAT AM I BEING ASKED TO DO?

You will be asked to participate in an interview, focus group or survey lasting no longer than 45 minutes.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE STUDY?

This case study will take approximately six months to complete. You can stop participating at any time without penalty.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING IN THE STUDY?

As a doctoral study, there is no direct benefit to you as a participant, however, the results of the study will provide research on stakeholder perceptions of impact of a laboratory school that may influence leaders, institutions, policymakers, teacher preparation programs, teacher candidates, laboratory schools, and teachers. The study will help fill a gap in literature as provide a basis for future research.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS IN THE STUDY?

There are no risks involved in this case study except the commitment of 45 minutes of your time. No experimental procedures are conducted in this research study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information provided by you is confidential and no one has access to the information except the investigator. Your name and identifying characteristics will not be disclosed at any time. Information provided by this case study will be locked in a secure location known only by the investigator. The code key connecting your name to specific information about you will be kept in a separate, secure location. Information contained in your records may not be given to anyone unaffiliated with the study except as required by law.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT?

Your participation in this case study is voluntary. You do not have to participate and can exit the study at any time.

WHOM DO I CALL IF I HAVE A QUESTION OR PROBLEM?

Any questions or problems as a study participant will be directed to the University of Missouri Campus Institutional Review Board at 573.882.9585 or umcresearchirb@missouri.edu.

You may contact Sandy Seipel at 660.254.1409 or sseipel@nwmissouri.edu at any time with questions or concerns relating to the study. University of Missouri EdD Advisor contact information: Dr. Carole Edmonds 660.562.1239 or edmondsc@missouri.edu

Or contact Northwest Missouri State University Internal Review Board: Email: irbnwms@nwmissouri.edu; phone: 660.562.1196

A copy of the informed consent form will be given to you prior to your participation in the research.

AUTHORIZATION

I have read and understand the contents of the consent form and I volunteer to participate in the research study. I understand that I will receive a copy of the form. I voluntarily choose to participate. I understand that this consent form is intended for participation in the research study and does not take away any legal rights or applicable Federal, state or local laws.

Printed Name _____ Date _____

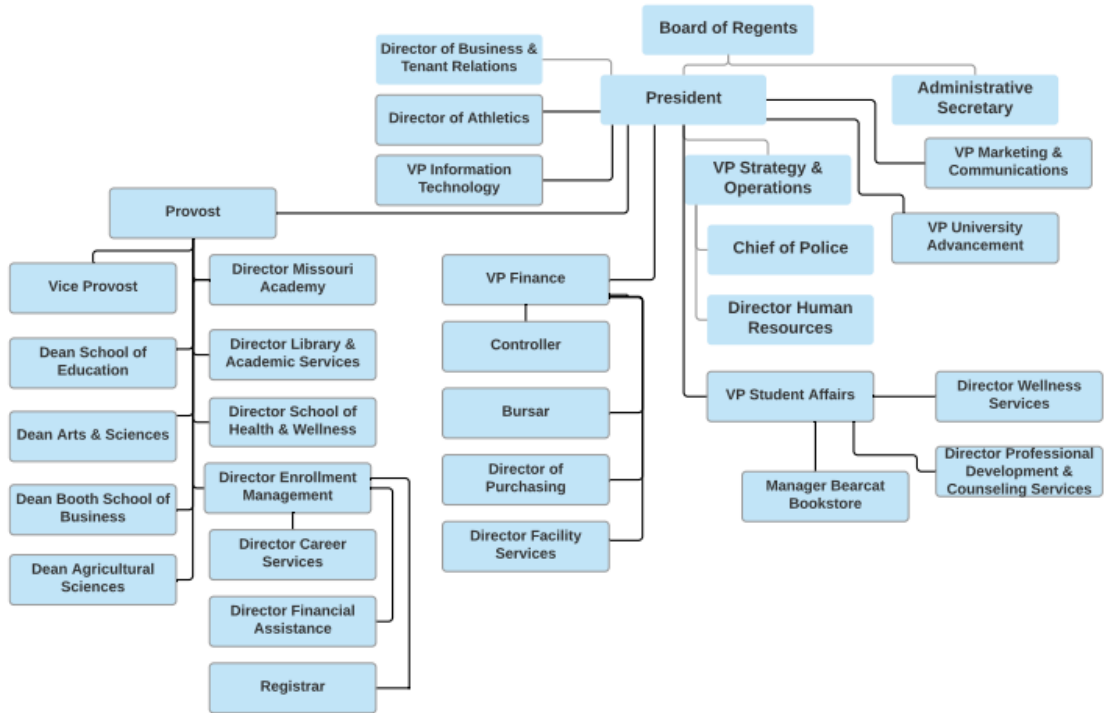
Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher Name _____ Date _____

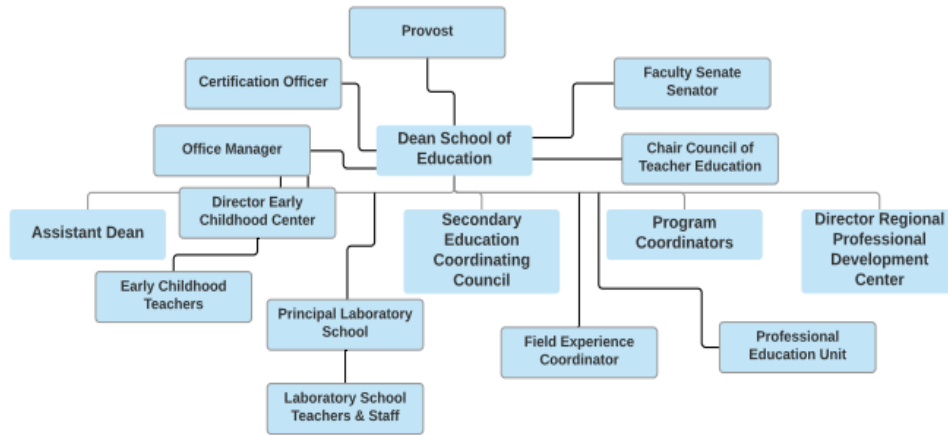
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW, FOCUS GROUP, SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Think about when you first became involved with the laboratory school or teacher preparation program. What were your first impressions?
2. From your perspective, what is the main purpose of the laboratory school?
3. From your perspective, what is the main purpose of teacher preparation?
4. In what ways has the laboratory school met your expectations and/or needs?
5. In what ways has the laboratory school failed to meet your expectations and/or needs?
6. In what ways has the teacher preparation program met your expectations and/or needs?
7. In what ways has the teacher preparation program failed to meet your expectations and/or needs?
8. In your opinion, how effective do you think the laboratory school has been with the following: scale of least effective 1-5 most effective
 - a. Creating a safe environment for teacher candidate learning and support
 - b. Providing knowledge, skills, and practice to prepare teacher candidates for student teaching
 - c. Encouraging teacher candidates to engage in higher-order thinking
 - d. Creating a safe environment for research and experimentation
 - e. Providing laboratory school students with a rigorous and challenging curriculum
 - f. Providing a project based learning environment
9. Are there any other comments you would like to provide?

APPENDIX C: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



APPENDIX D: LEADERSHIP CHART



APPENDIX E: THEMES ABOUT LABORATORY SCHOOL IMPACT

Table E1
Themes about Impact of University-Based Laboratory School on Campus-Based Educator Preparation Program

Theme	Response frequency	Categories included
Experimentation	51	Innovation Unique experiences Model practices Fresh perspective Learn new things Difference between lab and other schools Different experiences Research
Early practice and ability to bridge theory to practice	39	Early practice Practice as freshman Early opportunities Awareness early in program Learn to teach children Work with actual children Child development from children not books Attainable learning Knowledge-based shift Paradigm shift
Expertise of faculty and teachers	25	High expectations Collaboration of faculty and teacher Willingness to help students Prepare best qualified candidates Prepare students Produce superior educator
Safety and support of environment to practice new learning	18	Opportunity to practice Safe environment with feedback Time to figure it out with help

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VITA

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