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School Leadership Review – Special Issue

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Winter 2009

Peggy Gill, Editor
The University of Texas at Tyler
University of Texas System

Wesley Hickey, Editor
The University of Texas at Tyler
University of Texas System

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Call for Papers

The next issue of *School Leadership Review* will be published in Fall 2009.
The theme for the Fall 2009 issue will be online teaching.

Submission Guidelines

- Submissions should be 2000 – 3000 words in length (@ 20 pages).
- Manuscripts must use APA 5th edition.
- Manuscripts must include cover page with contact information.
- Manuscripts may be submitted at any time.
- Submit manuscripts electronically in Word to pgill@uttyler.edu and whickey@uttyler.edu.

A Scholar–Practitioner Stance: Practices of Social Justice and Democracy

Patrick M. Jenlink, Stephen F. Austin State University

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. (King, 1963, p. 77)

Crossing the threshold into a new millennium has been hallmarked by a series of defining events, which have shaped, irrevocably, society and its educational system. These events include the standards and accountability movement, the federal mandate of No Child Left Behind of 2001, the fifty-year anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* and the realization of how far we are from obtaining its promise, and the demographic shifts in population density and racial makeup nationally and particularly in urban centers, to mention a select few of the more profound historical events. Issues of diversity, both inter and intragroup, further illuminate the complex and problematic nature of education, reflecting a deeply embedded, historical concern for equity and equality. Increasingly, the attention drawn to standards and accountability in the American educational system illuminates the problems inherent in a system animated by technical standards and focused on codification of knowledge; a system that works to standardize teaching and learning, discrediting difference in the process. The implications for education, of these defining events and social issues, draws attention to the very meaning of democracy, freedom, and social justice.

A fundamental concern for social justice and democracy is a defining principle of leadership preparation that serves to prepare educational leaders for ensuring that schools are

more just and more democratic. Likewise, at the heart of scholar–practitioners’¹ work in schools is a fundamental concern for social justice. Inseparably linked with this concern is the question of whether schools are to serve and reproduce the existing society or to adopt a more critical role of challenging the dominant social order so as to develop and advance society’s democratic imperatives (Giroux, 1992a, 1992b, 1994; Kincheloe, 1999). The educational leader recognizes, as Niebuhr (1946) argued, that as a society our “capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but [our] inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary” (Niebuhr, 1946, p. xi). A more passive role lends to reproduction of the existing society, with its injustices, whereas a critical active role that challenges dominant social orders leads to transformation and the realization of a just, democratic society.

Within education, and more specifically within schools and classrooms, all too often there are hierarchies of participation ingrained; ideologically dominated forms of social control that dictate to individuals how and whether they are to participate in what constitutes learning and other activities in the educational setting. The scholar–practitioner’s work, in part, is to illuminate and interrogate injustices—such as those created by hierarchies of participation and forms of social control. The scholar–practitioner interrogates social structures and cultural practices that contribute to injustice, bringing democratic practices to bear so as to mediate cultural dominance, political ideologies and asymmetries of power that work to reproduce cultures and social structures that foster injustices and inequities in educational settings.

Importantly, the scholar–practitioner understands that s/he occupies objective positions within a variety of contexts, and that from these objective positions s/he must necessarily take a stance on differing social issues. Such distinction is informed by a realization of the interconnectedness of position and stance; acknowledging that a particular stance, critical or

otherwise, is ineffective without accounting for one's position within different social contexts. Being in a position and taking a stance—position in contrast to position-taking—from that position is concerned with recognizing one's situatedness within the social issues (Bourdieu, 1992). And at the same realizes that in order to affect justice, equity, or advance democracy, the scholar–practitioner must maintain her/his position within the educational setting in order to bring voice to social issues through one's stance on justice and democracy.

The scholar–practitioner understands that when social justice and democracy are central to the purpose of education, then schools enable the widest diffusion of teaching and learning as “a model of cultural renewal, in effect, to support something peculiarly consonant with the democratization of culture” (Scheffler, 1960, p. 57); democratization that mediates social inequities and injustices reflective of deeply entrenched social issues in society. The scholar–practitioner recognizes, as did Dewey (1916, 1927), the importance of making political and moral considerations an integral element of their practice, distinguishing between education as a function of society and society as a function of education. A scholar–practitioner stance is grounded in an understanding of theories of social justice and democracy; an awareness of the principles upon which justice and democracy are founded, and the practices through which they are lived.

In this paper, the author argues for a theoretical positioning of educational leaders as scholar–practitioners, and therein theorizes leadership as a social justice practice that must necessarily be mediated by inquiry and scholarly pursuits in and through practice, animated by concerns for equity, social justice, and democracy. The author engages in an analysis of narrative discourse related to social justice practices of school leaders. In this sense, discourses and social practices are seen as structuring mechanisms for social institutions, modes of thought and

individual subjectivities. As example, political issues that work to de-democratize social practice affect socially just practices in schools.

Scholar–Practitioner Leadership—Taking A Stance

The construct of scholar–practitioner leadership² is premised on an alternative epistemology of *inquiry as practice*, wherein the leader as scholar and her/his leadership practice are inseparable from scholarly and critically oriented inquiry. Scholar–practitioner leadership is grounded in a postmodern—post-positivist view of leadership, which seeks to blur boundaries in the knowledge-practice and inquiry-practice relationships.

Historically, the “scholar” has most often been associated with academe and the university setting, and therefore her/his practice was understood as one of formal research and the development of formal knowledge (codified knowledge). Herein the *scholar* may be viewed as having a form of power. Foucault (1980) argued that, by its analysis, the relationship of knowledge and power may be understood.

Once knowledge can be analysed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition, one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power. (p. 69)

Challenging the historical notions of “scholar,” recent efforts have been undertaken to reexamine the meaning of “scholar” within the context of educational leadership preparation and practice (Anderson & Jones, 2000; Jenlink, 2001a, 2001b; Riehl, et al., 2000).

Whereas historical notions of knowledge as “formal” or “codified” dominated the epistemological and cultural geography of educational administration preparation and practice, what have been subjugated knowledges³ with respect to leadership, i.e., “the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functional coherence or formal systemisation”

(Foucault, 1980, p. 69), are now emerging and are being recognized as legitimate and important forms of knowledge, in particular as the relationships of knowledge, inquiry, practice, and theory move to the foreground of discourses on and in educational administration and leadership.

A scholar–practitioner leader is aware of the origins, context, and patterns of the knowledge related to an issue; social problems that interpret as justice and equity issues in school and educational settings. Equally important, the scholar–practitioner leader works from a repertoire of inquiry methods to explore, create, and transform social relations and knowledge within the larger political, economic, and cultural struggles of education and society. This post-formal⁴ way of knowing creates the deep understanding and facilitates the continuous formation of questions that are the essence of scholar–practitioner leadership (Jenlink, 2001b, 2002; Kincheloe, 1999). What being critical implies is that at the same time as the questioning and researching occurs, the knowledge, values, and beliefs that are uncovered must be framed within a consideration of their implications for social justice, caring, and democracy. This framing, questioning, and researching activity is embedded within a continuous critical reflection on what is uncovered.

To accomplish his / her work, the scholar–practitioner necessarily engages in critical inquiry to disembed ideologies that work to control culture and practice. Simultaneously, he or she exhibits an epistemological curiosity necessary to understanding and examining the origin of forms of knowledge dominant in the educational setting, and what other sources and forms of knowledge are necessary to creating learning experiences that are just and equitable for students from social groups of difference.

The scholar–practitioner leader understands the complexity of social relations and in general the complex nature of political and cultural struggles in which education is engaged

within society. Pragmatically, the scholar–practitioner is consciously aware that every action has critical implications for themselves and others. S/he also realizes that reality is not something external to human consciousness that can be discovered through some scientific process. To be a scholar–practitioner leader implies that knowledge, values, and beliefs cannot be given or transmitted to others, but that these other individuals must be allowed participation in the construction of meaning, definition, knowledge, or action. Simultaneously, the scholar–practitioner understands the import of facilitating a critical literacy, for her/himself and for others. The scholar–practitioner leader embodies the values of social justice, caring, equity, self-criticality, and democracy and they understand that their role as leader is equally one of cultural worker and scholarly practitioner within the classroom, school, educational community, and in state and regional/national policy making contexts.

A Scholar–Practitioner Stance

Stance suggests an interrelatedness of both positional (position *in situ*) and orientation (position-taking) to convey physical positions of the person and the intellectual activities and perspectives carried over time and across different contexts. In this sense, stance makes visible and problematic the various perspectives through which scholar–practitioners frame their questions, illuminations, interrogations, and actions. A scholar–practitioner stance is, in part, a disposition through which the scholar–practitioner reflects upon her or his own actions and those presented by others. Rather than passively accepting information or embracing a false consciousness instructed by dominant ideologies, the scholar–practitioner takes a much more active role in leading, learning, and reflecting upon her/his relationship with her/his practice and the social context in which the practice is situated.

A scholar–practitioner stance on social justice and democracy is an ethical, moral, and political position-taking (Bourdieu, 1992) within a larger complexity of social, political and cultural contexts. Such position-taking on the part of the scholar–practitioner is concerned with Dewey’s (1916) argument that “the conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind” (1916, p. 97). If what we want is a democratic society, we must work to define that society, in part through our education systems and schools; through the social practices that animate the educational system and schools on a daily basis. A scholar–practitioner stance observes, as Maxine Greene (1986) explains, that the type of community, society, and world that

we cherish is not an endowment, . . . it must be achieved through dialectical engagements with the social and economic obstacles we find standing in our way. . . . We cannot neglect the fact of power. But we can undertake a resistance, a reaching out toward becoming persons among persons. (p. 440)

In this sense, scholar–practitioners must be *transformative intellectuals*, working within the cultural-historical contexts in which schools are situated; intellectual and cultural workers seen through the “ideological and political interests that structure the nature of discourses, classroom social relations, and values that they legitimate in their teaching” (Giroux, 1988, p. 127). This requires that the scholar–practitioner take a critical stance; a further definition of stance through concerns for social justice, equity, diversity, caring, and democracy.

A critical stance for the scholar–practitioner is undergirded by a perception of reality that considers the world and our place within it as incomplete, becoming, and subject to our own projections. It is a critical encounter in which such issues as what counts as knowledge or practice becomes subject to individuals’ own histories, ideals, practices, and perceptions (Freire,

1998, pp. 73-80). The critical stance does not simply acquiesce in or absorb new knowledge or practice but rather encounters it as a claim that exists alongside many alternative possibilities and therefore must struggle to retain its legitimacy (Curzon-Hobson, 2003). A scholar–practitioner who embraces a critical stance subjects her or his knowledge and practice to a variety of frameworks that he or she has encountered and reflects upon this practice or knowledge in social contexts characterized by tensions and conflicts.

The notion of scholar–practitioner stance is underpinned by a sense of fragility and openness in the social context, the positions one has in contrast to the position-taking one engages in gives way to the fragility and openness. Importantly, the scholar–practitioner recognizes the value that is gained within a social context that is exploited by all in order to reflect upon and imagine anew what is presented and the perceptions of our interrelationships (Freire, 1985, p. 44). The scholar–practitioner often brings to question and introduces conflict to bear on the object of inquiry through her or his practice. Freire (1972) explains this process as “epistemological encircling” in which new ideas—through dialogical inquiry—conflict with and challenge what is considered absolute and show the learner that things can be different” (p. 53).

Thus, in mediating injustices and inequities within the educational setting, the scholar–practitioner works to create a more democratic culture while fostering a sense of becoming, both in her or himself, as well as in others with whom s/he interacts. This creates a symmetry in the relationships and practices, participation and power, wherein the scholar–practitioner is working alongside others toward defining a socially just and democratic society. Defining a socially just society requires that the scholar–practitioner know what stance to take on social justice.

A Scholar–Practitioner Stance and Democracy

In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916) identified the “widening of the area of shared concerns, and the liberation of greater diversity of personal capacities” (p. 87) as hallmarks of democracy. He noted that only after “greater individualization on one hand, and a broader community of interest on the other have come into existence,” (p. 87), only could these characteristics be sustained by voluntary disposition and interest, which must be made possible by means of education. Dewey (1916) further stated that a democratic society “makes provision for participation for the good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through the interaction of the different forms of associated life” (p. 105).

The scholar–practitioner understands that democracy is not an all-or-nothing affair, but a definition of degree; societies and institutions can vary in both the extent and the intensity of their commitment to democratic practice. Therefore, there are many degrees and definitions of democracy, each marked by an idiosyncratic nature within particular cultural-political contexts. The scholar–practitioner recognizes that the “foundation of democracy is faith in the capacities of human nature; a faith in human intelligence” (Dewey, 1937, p. 458). Democracy is belief in freedom, “the basic freedom of mind and of whatever degree of freedom of action and experience is necessary to produce freedom of intelligence” (p. 459).

A scholar–practitioner stance on democracy reflects an ethical, moral, and political position-taking that ensures freedom of “expression, general diffusion of knowledge, the marketplace of ideas, and open pursuit of truth so that citizens continuously educate themselves to participate, learn, and govern beyond the limited ideas of individuals” (Glickman, 2003, p. 274). Importantly, the scholar–practitioner works to mediate the “politics of reality” for many

individuals (Scheurich, 2003); politics that marginalize and distance her/him from authentic participation and at the same time silences her/his voices from being heard in decisions that affect her/his lives.

The scholar–practitioner’s work, then, in part, is to foster a sense of freedom of mind and freedom of actions. In part, the scholar-practitioner’s work is also to invoke in others in the educational setting to retain a sense of incompleteness and becoming; democracy is never achieved, rather it is in a continuous process of becoming. Maintaining a sense of incompleteness and becoming a just and democratic society is the result of the individual’s will—teacher and student—and the scholar–practitioner’s encouragement to critically question, challenge and overcome in full recognition of the imaginative possibilities of a world beyond the human will to objectify individual lives (Curzon-Hobson, 2003).

Social Justice—Three Perspectives

In *Rethinking Social Justice in Schools: How Will We Recognize it When We see it?*, Gale (2000) articulates a plural conception of social justice by identifying three categories: distributive, redistributive, and recognitive justice. It is important to fostering a scholar–practitioner stance, that the distinctions be explored between the three categories; knowing how each works in relation to whether a stance on distributive, retributive, or recognitive justice is better aligned to fostering a more democratic educational setting. This is particularly important in relation to the scholar–practitioner’s concern for social justice and democracy as central to transforming society and creating a more democratic society based on diversity through democratic processes populated by individuals that represent diversity of culture, ethnicity, race, language, economic means, sexual orientation, etc.

Distributive justice. Distributive justice refers to the principles by which goods are distributed in society. Rawls (1972, p. 7) defined this form of justice as concerning the way in which the major social institutions distributed fundamental rights and duties, and how they determined the distribution of advantages from social cooperation. Rawls argued that social justice involves two central principles: liberty, or individual freedom; and the equal distribution of material and social goods. The exception to the principle of freedom was the extent to which an individual's freedom was compatible with the freedoms of others. The exception to equal distribution was when unequal distribution would contribute to the well-being of those who have unfavorable starting positions. This notion of social justice invokes what is often termed a 'deficit model' of social justice, based on the idea that all individuals have the same basic needs.

Relatedly, a liberal-democratic solution to an equality imbalance suggests the need to normalize disadvantaged individuals by providing them with basic material and social goods. From this perspective, the disadvantaged are those who are viewed as wanting in what society claims to be the educational, social, and cultural basics. In contrast, Walzer, (1983) has argued social justice from a 'complex equality' position, which takes the position that individuals do not have the same basic needs or the same resources at their disposal. Argued here is the need not for unequal distribution of social goods, but rather a distribution of different social goods for different people. These two opposing views of distributive justice present competing guidelines for educational practice (Gale, 2000, pp. 254-255).

Retributive justice. Retributive justice is primarily concerned with fairness in the competition for social goods (capitalist markets provide a referent example). In educational settings, academic merit is an example of "just desserts" or entitlements premised on academic performance. Here the translation may be made to students whose high performance equates to

entry to privileged positions in schooling, employment, and access to positions of status within society. This view of social justice, as Apple (1988) notes, favors ‘property rights’ over ‘person rights’, thus creating a narrow sense of liberty. In a market economy, the extent to which individuals have power in social relationships is a function of their property holdings rather than their membership in society (Gale, 2000, p. 257, Nozick, 1976). Hierarchical participation as a form of social control within schools evidences how students are positioned in relation to their cultural and social capital. Limited property rights therefore results in limited power to participate, working to silence voice and marginalize individuals and groups.

When individuals attempt to cross boundaries established by forms of social control, this may be interpreted as illegitimately infringing on the rights and freedoms of others’. When a negative influence on social justice exists, such as punishing those who infringe on the rights and freedoms of others, this translates as retribution. Retributive justice is useful in naming the implicit perspectives that legitimization of the retribution meters out to individuals. Narrow liberties of some fosters inequities and injustices, ensuring that hierarchies of participation remain and that equity in participation is distorted (Gale, 2000, p. 257).

Recognitive justice. Recognitive justice is concerned with rethinking social arrangements thought to be just, valuing a positive regard of group differences and acknowledging democratic processes based on group representation. It is a social justice premised on recognizing diversity and how social justice contributes to a recognition of difference, enabling the formation of individual and collective identities through democratic processes; processes that recognize the individual as having value. A recognitive stance on social justice necessarily requires that one rethinks what is meant by social justice in relation to acknowledging the place of social groups within the positioning of social justice in society.

Relatedly, Berlin (1969) is instructive in understanding recognitive justice, advocating three necessary conditions: 1) fostering respect for different social groups through self-identification; 2) opportunities for groups' self-formation; and 3) the participation of groups in decision making that affects their lives directly. Recognitive justice is concerned with cultural domination, being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication associated with another culture that conflicts with one's own culture. Recognitive justice is also concerned with non-recognition, being rendered invisible by means of authoritative and normative practices that distance and silence. Equally important, recognitive justice is concerned with how individual and group identity may be controlled and/or shaped through asymmetries of power and ideological dominance; scripting the identity of individuals and groups in such way as to socially position them into social categories that marginalize or otherwise disadvantage.

The distinctions. Distributive justice appears to be more concerned with individuals' material wealth; demonstrating a confinement of perspective to economic rather than cultural politics of social institutions, such as schools (Gale, 2000). Retributive is concerned with wealth defined by social and cultural attainments or perceived entitlements. However, retributive interprets as punitive, that is, punishment appears to be the basis of this form of justice rather than concern for social responsibility. Distributive and retributive perspectives of social justice share characteristics that narrow their foci, including a concern for what individual's have (assets or lack thereof) and only minimally with how such assets are reproduced. Relatedly, the emphasis on material goods extended to social goods such as opportunity, position, power, etc., limits concern for social justice in distribution of goods (Gale, 2000, 260). Finally, the impartial treatment of distributive and retributive justice at best regards all people the same, i.e., a

tendency toward equal treatment of unequal individuals, thus falling to a hegemony of dominance resulting in an assimilation of group differences (Lummis, 1996).

Recognitive justice, in contrast, is concerned with cultural politics and the participation of individuals and groups in decisions and activities that affect their lives and/or impact on their social wellbeing. Taking a recognitive stance on social justice, while concerned with a constant and ongoing application of justice, is also concerned with moral worth of all individuals. Such concern interprets as redirecting one's practice by moving from a primacy on material or social goods to a primacy on the reproducing or "doing" that creates the goods; embracing a concern for the moral worth of individuals and social groups defined by their difference. Herein social justice becomes problematic for the scholar-practitioner, as s/he struggles with identifying with a perspective and its role in the construction of one's stance; defining one's identity as a socially just leader through socially just practice.

Importantly, if the image of the society we seek is that of a democracy, then the stance on social justice, as a principle of leadership practice, must necessarily align with more democratic practices, benefiting all individuals. Here Dewey's (1908, 1909) moral theory is instructive, in that he explicitly connects the responsibility of any person with the responsibility of others to sustain and enhance future moral conduct. For Dewey, a stance on justice that concerns punishment from a retrospective view—i.e., punishing the act without concern for future responsibility—is antithetical to the responsible moral treatment of persons, in particular in the context of understanding the nature of social responsibility in a democracy. As well, a stance that only concerns distribution of wealth falls short in acknowledging the basic social responsibility of individuals in a democracy.

The scholar–practitioner understands that in contemporary society, identity formation of individuals and groups is connected to Dewey’s (1927) notions of the public, and his acknowledgement of how the small publics (schools, parent organizations, etc.) contribute to the development of a larger democratic public. Importantly, the scholar–practitioner stance recognizes a “definite ideal of the place and function of the school in the ongoing process of society, local and national” and requires a “definite point of view, firmly and courageously adhered to in practice” (Dewey, 1985, p. 68). A scholar–practitioner stance on social justice informed by a recognitive justice perspective advances the principles of democracy while engendering a concern for the identity of individuals and groups. From this stance, future responsibility, the capacity to engage in moral conduct as a scholar–practitioner is the overriding moral concern for a democratic society; this necessarily calls in question the nature of social justice that defines leadership practice.

Adopting a Poststructural Inquiry Path

Adopting a poststructural stance interprets as recognizing that research practices themselves are both part of and controlled by the discourses (Foucault, 1978; Rhedding-Jones, 1996). Examining discursive practice—the talk of educational leaders—enables the researcher to understand the power of language in shaping the spatial practices that define the place of school. As Bogotch and Roy (1997) explain, through “the power of talk, leadership emerges, in an ongoing sense, as it both reinforces existing institutional patterns and reconstructs new patterns of interacting” (p. 234). Important in the poststructural inquiry is an understanding that the researcher is situated in the discourses he or she is researching. Segall (2001) explains, as researchers we are “inherently embedded in the text we read before, throughout, and after our field-research has ended” (p. 583).

Participants

A narrative inquiry guided by poststructural considerations was conducted with 27 practicing educational leaders, including central office, building level, and teacher leaders. Participation in the study solicited through doctoral courses and an informed consent form was administered prior to data collection.

Narrative Inquiry

The intent of the inquiry was to generate discourse text that was representative of the type of social justice stance (or the lack thereof) practiced in each practitioner's school, social justice as theorized through a distributive, retributive, recognitive justice stance. An inquiry protocol was constructed that enabled participants to respond freely to each question. The narrative discourse was recorded electronically, with participants being provided an opportunity for revisiting the narratives for clarification. Specifically, the poststructural inquiry was focused on the pragmatics of social justice, which shaped the identity of the school leader as a socially just leader.

Analysis of Narrative

The practitioners were queried concerning issues of equity, social justice, and democracy. Narratives were examined for democratic justice stance patterns, thus further theorizing social justice. The leadership practices, as social just stance, formed patterns of spatial practice that shape the nature of social justice within and through social texts. The narrative texts also reflected the ethical and moral practices of each practitioner's school and district. The narratives as "social justice practice" text were analyzed, looking specifically for language and action within and across discourse, illuminating patterns and relationships.

Educational Leaders' Speak on Social Justice

The *social justice question*, that is, what is an educational leader's what is the scholar–practitioner's stance, has to do with ideals, values, and assumptions informed by experience and embedded in social contexts in which experience is takes place. This question is one of ideology: What is the purpose of schooling, what is the role of public education in a democratic society, and what historically has been the role of schooling in maintaining or changing the economic and social structure of society? In particular, this set of questions has to do with what images of American society as well as what notions of social justice do we want to define us as a society (Dewey, 1916). These questions have to do with what images are assumed in our practices; images of justice, equity, caring, community, democracy.

In exploring the social justice question, school leaders were asked: What is social justice, what is socially just practice, what do you see as the role/relationship of your work in defining what society is as a democracy, what perspective best fits who you are as an educational leader, and what perspective is better aligned to fostering a more democratic educational setting? The first three questions frame the sections that follow, respectively. The two questions provide a heuristic for analyzing responses to the first three questions.

What is Social Justice?

The answer to the question of social justice that underlies leadership practice, that is, what is your ideology, often remains unstated in the day-to-day work of school leaders. The ideals, values, and assumptions one holds concerning social justice never consciously examined or made public. An analysis of the responses to What is social justice?, renders a common set of terms that scholar–practitioners use to define this concept. Common terms include equal or equality, equity, fair or fairness, and relatedly how each of these terms works to mediate issues

associated with race, ethnicity, language, age, gender, class, sexual orientation, or faith. The discourse patterns reflect a commonality in stated beliefs, but they also reflect underlying values and assumptions concerning social justice that extends the answer to the social justice question in important ways.

Sally⁵, a White female central office administrator, extends an important consideration, noting that to “enact social justice requires more than a definition. One must possess a deep understanding of the concept in order to incorporate this practice into day-to-day interactions.” She also expresses her belief that social justice can be defined as the right thing to do for everyone regardless of ethnicity, gender, academic or socio-economic level.” Juxtaposing her thoughts to those of Sally, Iris, a White female administrator, shares that for her, “social justice is a system of equity for and acceptance of all races and creeds, which promotes the welfare of other members of the society. This is not the same as unilateral freedom from constraint, rather is tempered with protection of human rights.” Mary, a White female administrator, notes that “all people have a birthright to be treated fairly and are therefore, entitled to equal rights and responsibilities regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, sex, age, class, sexual orientation or other identifiable trait, characteristic, or position of birth.” The ideals of freedom and birthright shared by Iris and Mary reflect basic ideals and beliefs integral to a democratic society.

Grace, an African American female principal who has been in her current position 8 years, explains that social justice is the “act of re-addressing institutionalized inequality and systemic racism.” Toni, a White female director of educational renewal, furthers this discussion by noting that “social justice involves the equal treatment of all members of society, all people being regarded as individuals, all members having a fair chance, and all members enjoying social and economic benefits, even those considered to be disadvantaged.” Whereas Grace focuses

more on issues commensurate with a recognitive perspective of justice, Toni incorporates notions of distributive and recognitive justice. For Wanda, a White female principal, social justice “is an intervention against power over and the mistreatment of others because of race, gender, poverty, or because of anything that makes that individual different from others.” Clark, a White male assistant principal working in an urban center, takes the position that social justice is “equality of access to both distributional and relational justice. In other words, social justice is the ability for all members of society to have fair and equal access to the material possessions of society as well as the non-material items such as respect, dignity, and value.” The tenets of social justice introduced by Clark reflect the those found in the theoretical perspective of distributive justice, but also extends his belief that the process of acquiring social goods is important as a defining element of social justice. Deidra, an African American female principal, reflects that in her school, populated with Hispanic and African American students, she social justice means “being fair and equal to all ethnic groups, promoting democracy, so that all races have a fair and equal opportunity to succeed.” She explicitly states her belief that social justice is connected to democracy.

In reflection, the common threads of equity, equality, and fairness run through the scholar–practitioner’s understanding of social justice. Defining elements of the ideological statements reflect implicit and explicit concern for democracy, and the distribution of material goods as well as social goods against a backdrop of difference. What appears to surface in this discourse is a gravitation of the discourse towards distributive and recognitive justice perspectives, with the latter more pronounced in answer to the ideology question and in relation to defining a social justice stance for the scholar–practitioner.

What is Socially Just Practice?

Extending the examination of ideology into the defining socially just practice, brings into relief how scholar–practitioners understand social justice that is interpreted through their practice. Reading across the responses to what is socially just practice, common terms emerge that define the nature of or characterize the doing of socially just practice. Included is equity in treatment, interaction with others, ethnic groups, concern for well-being, being sensitive to culture, recognizing and eliminating prejudice, increasing awareness, facilitating change, and to building inclusive communities. Carrie, a White female high school principal, who states that a socially just practice “involves all individuals in the education of students, staff and community”, exemplifies what distinguishes the scholar–practitioner perspectives on socially just practice. She then deconstructs the “doing of” socially just practice by explaining that you “first step in, providing a socially just environment to parents and students is to recognize the culture they bring to your school.” Her explanation that “failure to recognize this fact means” that parents and students “are not important.” Importantly, Carrie notes that the “language used in this process is an integral step in the formation of a just practice.” She then explains that the “second step is what you do with specific programs to meet the needs of the learning community. Identifying the needs of specific students and providing instruction to meet those needs is providing a positive environment to learn.” Following, Carrie shares that the “third step is to empower the individuals within the learning community.” Explaining that “empowerment comes with the acquisition of knowledge and then using that knowledge to educate self or others and have a voice in the processes of schools True learning occurs in socially just environments.” Carrie’s discussion of socially just practice reflects a pragmatic perspective, one concerned with recognition of others.

Joanna, an African American female principal in a large urban school, explains, from her experience, that socially just practice requires “looking at all situations through an adjustable lens.” There is no one best perspective. She explains that, “one is socially just when prejudices are put aside so that the most appropriate solution is derived based upon individual differences and needs.” In contrast, Joanna explains that one “is not socially just when he/she has not taken the time nor made an effort to deal with people and the situations they face any differently than mainstream problems.” Wanda, a White female principal in an urban school, explains that for her, socially just practice means “ensuring that all individuals and groups voices are heard. It is being a democratic leader. When practicing social justice, you will not always be the most popular individual.” For Wanda, as a scholar–practitioner, she believes one knows when one is engaged in socially just practice “when you begin to question why we allow injustices to take place and then begin to do something about it.” As she further explains, “you do not just stand by watching injustices take place, but look to see how to inform others and end the injustices taking place.” Both Joanna and Wanda bring relief the importance of seeing the world and questioning actions in relation to socially just practices. Focusing on the work of democratic leader, Wanda acknowledges the often difficult nature of leading a school through socially just practice. The language used by both principals suggests a recognitive justice stance, in part.

Donna, a White female high school principal, notes that in educational settings, “socially just practice implies that the policies of the school and the actions of educational leaders promote and foster a climate of justice and ethicality. Socially just practice promotes equal opportunity, democratic governance in a forum where all participants have a voice.” Toni (White female director of Educational Renewal), contributes to this discussion of the leaders actions by noting, “socially just practice is an on-going action that involves the general safeguarding of all

individual rights, as well as the personal examination of each action and any self-correction needed in light of inequitable deeds.” As she explains, actions “should not be left to a select group of individuals elected to serve in some political office; but is a personal responsibility of all citizens.” Kelley, a White female principal in an urban school, adds a new dimension to the discussion by noting that practice is socially “in which respect is given to each individual, every voice is heard and advocacy for a democratic society is evident represents a socially just practice.” As she further explains, “one knows that they are socially just when change begins to take place, people become aware of their biases through their own reflection and acknowledgement in attitudes of superiority and the prejudices towards others are eliminated.” In contrast, Kelley notes that, “one is not socially just when they continue to accept the status quo, silence the voices of minorities and disadvantaged and do not speak up when others exhibit socially unjust attitudes.” Here we find Donna, Toni and Kelley sharing beliefs and values of democracy and leadership, accentuated by the importance of “voice” and the need for all participants to be involved. Characteristics of a recognitive justice perspective emerge in the analysis of participant’s responses and the discussion concerning socially just practice.

Extending the discussion, Iris (White female administrator) explains that socially just practice requires “putting action with philosophy: acting on a philosophy of equity and democracy. Speaking out about inequity, instituting policies of social justice,” then taking action. Iris notes the importance of continuing “to utilize a lens of criticality in all thoughts and actions, continually overturning layer upon layer of judgment and bias.” Sharing a similar belief concerning criticality, Sally (White female central office administrator) explains that to “know one is being socially just requires evaluating situations and one’s placement in the situation; as well as knowledge and understanding of the core precepts of social justice.” The scholar–

practitioner, Sally adds, who has the ability “to peruse a situation, synthesize the setting and the implication of action will be able to act/react in a socially just manner.” Iris and Sally both denote the importance of a critical lens, and implicitly recognize the need for inquiry to examine the nature of injustices and inequities.

In reflection, the poststructural analysis suggests that common threads of democracy, community, voice, participation, criticality, and difference connect the discussions of socially just practice. The scholar–practitioner perspectives shared suggest a strong affiliation with a recognitive stance on social justice, tempered by a sense of distributive justice that is concerned with fostering processes that distribute access to social goods.

What Do You See as the Role/Relationship of Your Work in Defining What Society is as a Democracy?

When the ideological question is extended to the larger project of democracy, the scholar–practitioner perspectives reflect values, beliefs and assumptions about the function of education in a democratic society. As well, the perspectives reflect the practitioners’ beliefs about the positionality in the process of making schools democratic through socially just practices. Positionality interprets as leader identity as defined by the scholar–practitioner’s work. This question concerns the stance on social justice one takes in relation to moving the democratic project forward in society. Analyzing the discourses shared, what emerges as common elements of language include, democracy, diversity of individuals, working together, dialogue, tools of democracy, politics of difference, caring, equity, learning as a scholar–practitioner, educate students, teachers, parents about democracy, self-criticality, and research practices. What seems to extend the theorizing of a scholar–practitioner stance on social justice is the importance of realizing that democracy is an unfinished project, and therein the scholar–practitioner must be

continuously at work to understand her/himself in relation to fostering change, guided by practice that is socially just.

Kelly (White female principal) explains that her “first responsibility as a leader is to critically reflect” on her own practice as a leader, “especially in relation to social justice, equity and democracy. It is important that I am critically aware of my own biases. As a leader one of the most important ways to have an impact with others is to lead by example.” She goes on to note that another responsibility in relation to democracy and social justice, as a leader, “is to create an environment that respects each person as an individual and advocates moving beyond the status quo toward change and renewal. Communicating to staff that injustices will not be tolerated and that it is vital that we strive toward a social justice school environment and society and the benefits that it will provide to students is another responsibility as a leader.” Clark (White male assistant principal) further explores the responsibility of reflection, explaining that for him, “constant reflection of my own practices as well as critical inquiry into the policies of the school, district, state, and nation” are important. He explains that with a “heightened sense of ‘critical consciousness,’ I will act once I perceive social oppression.” He also believes that “formal educational leaders should create policies/practices that eliminate social injustices and hone teachers’ abilities to incorporate socially just practices within their classrooms” as part of fostering democratic citizenship.

Grace (African American female principal) sees her role as that of “an advocate for change and growth.” She explains further, noting that “Education shapes America. How America looks in the future will depend on how educators advocate for social justice and democracy.’ For Grace, her work responsibility is to “impact of education in her community and school, contributing to the larger project of a democratic society. Carrie (White female principal), in

concert with Grace, sees her role as being “more along the lines of the educational system in a democratic society.” She explains, “I am still not sure we are living in a democratic society. I think that democracy is a construct that we are continually striving to achieve. At this point and time I see some tremendous power structures that are not working toward democracy and equity.” Carrie has deconstructed the nature of America’s democratic society, recognizing that democracy is never complete. She further shares, “the idea that students can walk into our campus and see and feel the democracy in action is always a goal.” However, she knows understands that she will have help students understand “that when they walk out of school they will not always” experience “equity, justice and ethics of care. The key is teaching them that they can make a difference in that society.”

Expressing a slightly different perspective, Janet (White female principal) explains that as scholar–practitioner, she “must be aware of social inequities, and must remain educated about these issues.” With respect to the project of democracy, Janet reflects, “we know the shortcomings of a democratic society where injustices exist, and we know the opportunities democracy can provide for people.” In this sense, Janet sees the educational system as a tool, “it is perhaps the most profound and important tool for students to use. It is the catalyst that can propel them to success, but it can also doom them to failure if not utilized correctly.” Janet understands education’s function in society, explaining that for her, education “is powerful, and the scholar–practitioner must educate others to maintain the importance of education in our society.” Wanda (White female principal in an urban school) also understands that democracy is an ongoing project, sharing “I believe that although we say that we live in a democratic society, this is not always true in education. Educators, often times, silence students and do not listen to their individual voices.” This requires, as Wanda explains, that as “scholar–practitioners, we

must educate others and ensure that voices are heard. We must encourage others to also become scholar–practitioners by our example. If we become more democratic in our own leadership, this will extend down to others.” In concert with Janet and Wanda, Mary (White female administrator) furthers the discussion by stating that the “scholar–practitioner has the obligation to formulate their own understanding of democracy and to be true to their belief and convictions that guide their decisions and personal actions.” Concerning responsibility, Mary notes that it “is important that the scholar–practitioner continue to grow as a scholar and to refine their beliefs and conviction and to have the courage to challenge injustice and undemocratic societal conditions when they are encountered.”

Toni (White female director of Educational Renewal) carries the discussion forward, explaining the challenges aligned with connecting the work of a scholar–practitioner and that of defining the educational system in a democratic society. She further explains, “I believe that successful schooling is impossible without social justice; and without an adequate educational experience, our country hinges on extinction.” She sees as necessary the work ahead as a scholar–practitioner, “to develop and grow young minds . . . encourage them to question and entertain ideas, to seek out new knowledge and to look at existing problems with a fresh lens.” Toni brings the focus direct on the challenge of the scholar–practitioner, “If our country is to strengthen its conceptualization of democracy, the foundation must be strong and solid, and be representative of all races and cultures that comprise it.”

Importantly, the discourse provided by the scholar–practitioners directs us to the importance of continuing to grow with respect to understanding one’s work as a scholar–practitioner, and in particular with respect to engaging in forms of inquiry that shape their practice and equally important, that shapes the work of creating a more democratic society

through education. Implicitly, the underpinnings of distributive justice surface in the discussions, however, explicitly, the underpinnings of recognitive justice define the practice of the scholar–practitioner. Interestingly, the underpinnings of retributive justice seem removed from the larger discourse.

Conclusions

The notion of scholar–practitioner leadership as taking a social justice stance offers a positioning of leadership practice that illuminates, in varying degrees of definition, the politically and culturally bound nature of leadership and education. More specifically, it illuminates how theories of distributive and retributive social justice, while important to furthering democratic cultures in schools, are not sufficient to the social justice agenda. The theorizing resulted in illuminating values and beliefs of recognitive justice, which is concerned with rethinking social arrangements thought to be just, valuing a positive regard of group differences and acknowledging democratic processes based on group representation. That is, the educational leaders who participated in the study noted that to offset the de-democratizing affects of existing cultural practices, they must engage in forms of social justice practices that work to recognize individual and social group and meditate politics of identity. In particular, they point to politics that have historically produced marginalization, oppression, and limit opportunities for sub-group identity self-formation.

A theorizing of leadership as social justice practices makes public, importantly, issues of power and control. Making public such issues is necessary to a working democracy. Importantly, such theorizing recognizes that many discourses shape and are shaped by the political and cultural affiliation and historical reasoning that instruct social practices within the school. Making the school a democratically practiced place requires practices animated by concern for

social justice and equity. As reported in this paper, theorizing and understanding scholar–practitioner leadership, through a poststructural positioning, acknowledges the intersections of language and social actions that shape the social justice stance of educational leadership. Importantly, as the participants acknowledged in this study, we necessarily need new positionings of educational leadership that enable us to take a stance on social justice that reflects democratic beliefs that mediate racial, ethnic, cultural, and social boundaries, thus leading to a democratic society.

Final Reflections

A scholar–practitioner stance impels the scholar–practitioner to search for new and alternative possibilities, working to imagine and create socially just, democratic educational settings. The scholar–practitioner stance is a position taking on what we believe ought to be—not merely where moral frameworks are concerned, but in material arrangements for people in all spheres of society. The educational leader as scholar–practitioner, who is concerned for social justice as a principle of democracy, necessarily engages in practices for the sake of arousing the kinds of reflective, authentic, experiential responses that might move individuals—teachers and students—to come together in serious efforts to understand what social justice actually means and what it might demand and to explore how social justice works in relationship to democracy.

The scholar–practitioner stance embodies a concern for conditions that affect just and democratic practices, which fosters conditions necessary to self-identity and self-respect, self-development and self-expression, and self-determination and self-democratization. This means the scholar–practitioner’s work is that of arousing a consciousness of democratic membership, a consciousness of socially just membership that recognizes all individuals as valued and contributing members of society.

END NOTES:

¹ The scholar–practitioner construct, as used throughout this paper, is based on the author’s work, conjoined with colleagues, over eight years in developing and implementing a doctoral program in educational leadership. Scholar-practitioner connotes a professional practitioner who moves beyond the casual consumer level of research, scholarship, and knowledge (inquiry and knowledge for practice) to practitioner level of inquiry, scholarship, and knowledge (inquiry and knowledge of practice) are integral to the leader’s practice, concerned with creating just, equitable, caring, democratic schools (including the administrator and the teacher-as-leader) on a day-to-day basis. For a comprehensive examination of scholar-practitioner leadership see Jenlink (1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2003a, 2003b), Horn and Jenlink, (Forthcoming).

² Leadership has been variously researched and written about for decades and therefore will not be explored within this paper in that such an activity in and of itself would fill volumes. However, for purposes of this paper, leadership as used throughout will connote the practices and activities of individuals at all levels of the school and educational system that, through their actions, demonstrate an understanding of purpose and moral imperatives that guide and facilitate the practices and activities of others. Leadership, as used in this paper, is premised on making permeable traditional role boundaries often associated with the authoritarian figure of the person in leadership roles in the school or educational setting. As well, leadership as used herein is understood as transcending the differentiation of traditional roles/responsibilities that set hierarchical structures in schools and define leadership identity, such as principal and teacher. As used in concert with scholar-practitioner, leadership denotes the processes and actions of any person (teacher, principal, parent, or student) who seeks cultural and social change through social critique and praxis. Leadership also connotes symmetry with respect to distribution and use of power and acknowledges that teachers as well as principals and parents are responsible for leadership within the school and educational systems.

³ Knowledge domains that fall outside of the codified or formal knowledge accepted by positivistic and traditional orientations to administration and leadership preparation and practice, such as cross-disciplinary (Kincheloe, 2001), indigenous, and practitioner-based inquiry as discussed by Anderson and Herr (1999).

⁴ Post-formalism takes a “middle ground that attempts to hold onto the progressive and democratic features of modernism while drawing upon the insights postmodernism provides concerning the failure of reason, the tyranny of grand narratives, the limitations of science, and the repositioning of relationships between dominant and subordinate cultural groups” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1999, p. 55). Post-formal inquiry, as a recent theoretical current in the post-modern stream, helps to “to mediate between the modern and postmodern” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p. 283), acknowledging the antecedental roots of inquiry in post-formal thought while also acknowledging the importance of “the inclusion of an understanding of the postmodern context of current human activity” (p. 283). Applying a post-formal lens of criticality provides the scholar-practitioner the ability to engage in ideological disembedding, which is the act of recognizing and critiquing the values that are buried (embedded) in all of our social constructions (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1999). The post-formal task is to unmask and understand how power is manifested in the socially constructed experiences being researched; the social phenomenon.

⁵ Pseudonyms are used for all participants and educational settings.

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None of Us Are as Smart as All of Us: Site Based Decision Making

Peggy B. Gill, The University of Texas at Tyler
Ross B. Sherman, The University of Texas at Tyler
Timothy B. Jones, Sam Houston State University

The old Japanese Proverb states, "None of us are as smart as all of us." In recent years, the educational system in the United States has been evolving from a largely centralized decision-making structure to a more decentralized one. This shift to school-based management requires fundamental changes to the organizational structure of the district as well as the roles within the organization. From administrators to parents, school based management demands a change in the "status quo" (Cotton, 1991). It involves shifting decision making from the central office administrators to that of local schools (Henkin, Cistone and Dee, 1999).

School based management is referred to in the literature by a variety of terms such as decentralization, restructuring, site-based management, school-based management, participatory decision-making, and school-based autonomy. Irrespective of the term used the school takes center stage (Cotton, 1991). Numerous benefits have been identified with school based management including: improving student achievement (Mojkowski and Fleming, 1998), creating new leadership (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1992), improving, changing or modifying the curriculum (David, 1989), and redirecting resources to support goals developed by the local school community (Myers and Stonehill, 1993).

The problem attributed to centralized educational systems is that they do not produce the desired outcomes because they tend to be impersonal and slow moving. Centralized systems often result in inertia, pessimism, inefficiency, cynicism, and long delays in decisions making. In addition, centralized structures often fail to inspire in school personnel the prerequisite attitudes and behaviors for bringing about educational improvements (Cotton, 1992).

Cotton (1992) identified the following reasons for implementing school-based management:

1. The school is the primary unit of change.
2. Those who work directly with students have the most informed and credible opinions as to what educational arrangements will be most beneficial to those students.
3. The local schools are in the best position to sustain improvement efforts over time.
4. The school principal is a key figure in school improvement.
5. The participation by staff and community in project planning and implementation facilitates significant change.
6. A system of school-based management supports the professionalization of the teaching field and vice versa, which can lead to more desirable schooling outcomes.
7. The structures of school based management keep the focus of schooling where it belongs-on achievement and other student outcomes.
8. The alignment between budgets and instructional priorities improves under school-based management. (p.4)

School based management has almost as many variants as there are places claiming to be "site-based." Schools' plans often differ on every important aspect: who initiates it, who is involved, what they control, and whether they are accountable to an outside authority. In addition to the overwhelming number of variants, the composition of site based decision-making committees also varies tremendously. Teachers, parents, and the principal are often joined by classified staff, community members, students, and business representatives.

The implementation of school-based management has resulted in significant changes in the roles and responsibilities of the principal. No longer is the principal the sole authority on the campus and the arbiter of every decision. Principals who utilize school-based management have found that to be successful in this environment they need to work with others and be able to

delegate decisions. Furthermore, principals need to possess strong interpersonal and human relation skills and continuously reflect on their own performance as it relates to the new roles and responsibilities in school-based management (Cranston, 2002). Principals with the aforementioned characteristics lead by sharing information, providing expertise, promoting a sense of security, and by facilitating the transition toward collective action of accomplishing common goals for the students of the school. These changes bring about a more effective leader, which translates into a more successful learning environment and improved student achievement.

Methodology

This descriptive research study surveyed teachers and administrators in 40 public schools serving students in grades PK-12. Survey research is an appropriate method to collect information that cannot be directly observed (Babbie, 1990). The survey was designed to examine the perception of site-based decision making as experienced by classroom teacher (both members and nonmembers of committees), community members who serve on site based committees, and campus administrators in 35 public schools in northeast Texas.

Instrumentation. Three surveys were designed to elicit feedback on the perceptions of various stakeholders on site-based decision-making. The first survey addressed the issue of site-based decision making from the perspective of the administrator. The second survey addressed the issue of site-based decision making from the perception of site-based committee members. The final survey addressed the issue of site-based decision making from the point of view of teachers on the campuses who were not members of the site-based committee. Each survey was aligned with state requirements for implementation of site-based committees, however each survey also included questions that were specific to the perception of the identified respondents.

Questions on all surveys used five categories for answer responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, No Opinion, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.

Surveys were validated using a peer review process that addressed both face validity and content validity. Three former school administrators independently reviewed each survey. Suggested revisions were incorporated in the final survey. Convenience sampling was used, however the 35 participating schools included elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools from each of the state rating categories of exemplary, recognized, academically acceptable, and academically unacceptable.

Procedures and response rate: All surveys were distributed during the first month of the spring semester. Eight hundred surveys were distributed to all administrators, faculty, and site-based committee members on the 35 campuses surveyed. Six hundred fifty-five surveys were returned. This return rate of 81% is considered adequate for this type of research (Portney & Watkins, 2000). Surveys were reviewed by the research team and analyzed using SPSS software.

Findings

The following findings were determined through data analysis and are presented by research question explored.

Research Question 1. Is there alignment between statutory requirements for site-based committees and the implementation of these requirements at the campus level as perceived by campus administrators, faculty, and site-based committee members?

This question was addressed through the surveys distributed to campus administrators and current site-based committee members. Fifty-three campus administrators and 163 current members of a site-based committee responded. The survey addressed four areas related to statutory requirements: Policies and Procedures, Committee Representation, Campus

Improvement Plan (CIP) and Role in Decision-Making. The policies and procedures and the CIP are specific documents required by state statute. The committee representation and the role in decision making are also addressed in state statute but do not have documentation required. Thus, the policies and procedures along with the Campus Improvement plan may be viewed as evidence the school is following the letter of the law while the committee representation and role in decision-making reflect the school's commitment to the spirit of the law.

Table 1 examines the existence of policy pertaining to site-based decision making in the surveyed schools.

Table 1

Policy and Procedure

Question	Percentage who Agree or Strongly Agree
Current policies and procedures are maintained for effective SBDM	94.3%
District has policies and procedures that establish campus-level SBDM committees	94.3%

Table 2 summarizes the data collected on the level of participation that the site-based decision-making team has on the Campus Improvement Plan.

Table 2

Campus Improvement Plan

Question	Percentage of Committee Members who Agree or Strongly Agree
SBDM provides advice and input in revising the campus improvement plan	84.5%
SBDM provides annual input in annually evaluating the campus performance	77.3%
SBDM is involved in decisions regarding campus performance objectives	79.4%
SBDM is involved in decisions regarding the development of performance objectives	79.4%

Table 3 provides information on the actual make-up of the site-based decision-making team in each of the participant schools.

Table 3

Committee Representation

Question	Percentage of Committee Members who Agree or Strongly Agree
SBDM includes adequate parent representation	79.1%
SBDM includes adequate community representation	77.3%
SBDM includes adequate business representation	67.5%
SBDM includes adequate student representation	17.5%
SBDM includes adequate classroom teacher representation	94.4%
SBDM members are reflective of the community's diversity	58.9%

Table 4 provides data into the decision-making role that each site-based decision-making team played in the school.

Table 4

Role in Decision Making

Question	Percentage of Committee Members who Agree or Strongly Agree
SBDM is involved in decisions regarding the development of the campus budget	47.1%
SBDM is involved in decisions regarding the development of the campus curriculum	62.3%
SBDM is involved in decisions regarding the development of the campus staffing patterns	47.7%
SBDM is involved in decisions regarding the development of the campus staff development	60.6%
SBDM is involved in decisions regarding the review and revision of the campus organizational structure	52.3%

Administrators and campus leaders who participated in this study indicate the site-based committee has clear policies and procedures in place, works to develop a campus improvement plan and has representation from teachers, parents and the community. However, when asked about the committee's involvement in decisions that directly relate to the campus, only about half

the administrators and school leaders felt the committee was involved. Thus, in areas that are mandated by the state, developing the campus improvement plan, the committee is involved, but in decisions that impact the teaching/learning process the committee is much less likely to provide input. These essential decisions of how we distribute resources (campus budget), what we teach (curriculum), the culture within which we teach, (staff development) and how we organize are directly related to student outcomes.

Research Question 2. Do teachers assigned to exemplary or recognized campus have a more positive perception of SBDM than teachers on campuses rated academically acceptable or academically unacceptable? (See Appendix A for explanation of campus ratings).

The second research question was addressed through the surveys distributed to teachers who were not currently members of a site-based committee. The survey questions addressed the teachers' knowledge about the committee and their perception of the effectiveness of the committee. If as Hess (1995) suggests, shared decision-making is fundamental to school reform; it would seem to follow that teachers on the campus must be knowledgeable about the committee and its function and must also view the committee as both valuable and effective.

In the first table for this question (Table 5), the perception of teachers concerning site-based decision-making team decisions being used in the formulation of the campus improvement plan are presented by campus rating.

Table 5

The SBDM Decisions Are Used To Formulate the Goals Of The Campus Improvement Plan

Campus Rating	Percentage of Teachers Who Agree or Strongly Agree
Exemplary	87%
Recognized	75%
Academically Acceptable	68%
Academically Unacceptable	20%

Table 6 characterized the perception of teachers, not currently serving on a site-based decision-making team, concerning the effectiveness of site-based decision-making by campus rating.

Table 6

The SBDM Committee Is Effective and Working On My Campus

Campus Rating	Percentage of Teachers Who Agree or Strongly Agree
Exemplary	71%
Recognized	45%
Academically Acceptable	37%
Academically Unacceptable	40%

The final table (Table 7) presents the perception of teachers, not serving on a site-based decision-making team, thoughts on the existence of the site-based decision-making team by campus rating.

Table 7

The SBDM Committee Exists Because The Law Requires It, But Does Not Serve A Useful Campus Function.

Campus Rating	Percentage of Teachers Who Agree or Strongly Agree
Exemplary	13%
Recognized	25%
Academically Acceptable	37%
Academically Unacceptable	40%

This data suggests that learner outcomes and effective site-based decision-making may be related. Teachers in schools with an exemplary rating under the state rating system were more likely to feel the committee was working to formulate campus goals, work effectively and serve a useful function. More importantly, there was a pattern in that the higher the campus rating, the more likely teachers were to see value in the committee.

Implementation of Site-based Decision Making

The data presents a compelling argument that schools that are committed to utilizing site-based decision making tend to produce higher student achievement. However, just meeting the legal requirement of the law does not ensure increased academic success. According to David (1996) site based decision making committees that truly flourish in the school community tend to have a number of characteristics in common, most notably the following:

1. A well designed committee structure. In a well-structured system of site-based decision-making, there is a match between the types of decisions to be made and the most appropriate people to debate and resolve those issues.

2. An enabling leadership. Strong site based decision making committees are usually led, though not always chaired, by strong principals (and sometimes teachers) who exercise leadership by mobilizing others.
3. A focus on student learning. Strong site based decision making committees consciously connect non-instructional decisions with conditions that maximize learning opportunities.
4. A focus on adult learning. Site based decision-making committee members need new skills, assistance, and practice in asking hard questions and gathering evidence about what is and is not working. In addition, site based decision making committees need to appreciate that their constituencies-parents and educators-require access to new knowledge and skills, both to be active decision makers and to change their teaching and learning practices and beliefs.
6. A school-wide perspective. Site based decision-making committees focus on the collective interests of the parties, devoting their energy to school goals and direction, coordination and communication, and allocation of resources and equity. (p. 6-8)

Conclusion

Site-based committees are present in most schools surveyed in this study. In almost all of the schools, the "letter of the law" is being followed. Schools have policies and procedures in place, include teachers, parents and community members on the committee and have some level of involvement in the development of a campus improvement plan. However, almost half the schools in the study are not meeting the "spirit of the law" to create site-based teams that make essential decisions on the campus. However, when an effective committee is in place, schools were more likely to be rated exemplary or recognized. This trend may indicate a relationship

between effective campus decision-making and student achievement.

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Appendix A

Table 6: Requirements for Each Rating Category

	Academically Acceptable	Recognized	Exemplary
Base Indicators			
TAKS (2006-07) • All students <i>and each student group meeting minimum size:</i> • African American • Hispanic • White • Econ. Disadv.	meets each standard: • Reading/ELA ... 65% • Writing 65% • Social Studies.. 65% • Mathematics 45% • Science 40% OR meets Required Improvement	meets 75% standard for each subject OR meets 70% floor and Required Improvement	meets 90% standard for each subject
SDAA II (2007) All students (if meets minimum size criteria)	Meets 50% standard (<i>Met ARD Expectations</i>) OR meets Required Improvement	Meets 70% standard (<i>Met ARD Expectations</i>) OR meets 65% floor and Required Improvement	Meets 90% standard (<i>Met ARD Expectations</i>)
Completion Rate I (class of 2006) • All students <i>and each student group meeting minimum size:</i> • African American • Hispanic • White • Econ. Disadv.	meets 75.0% standard OR meets Required Improvement	meets 85.0% standard OR meets 80.0% floor and Required Improvement	meets 95.0% standard
Annual Dropout Rate (2005-06) • All students <i>and each student group meeting minimum size:</i> • African American • Hispanic • White • Econ. Disadv.	meets 1.0% standard	meets 0.7% standard	meets 0.2% standard
Additional Provisions			
Exceptions	Applied if district/campus would be <i>AU</i> due to not meeting <i>AA</i> criteria. (See <i>detailed explanation.</i>)	Exceptions cannot be used to move to a rating of <i>Recognized</i> .	Exceptions cannot be used to move to a rating of <i>Exemplary</i> .
Check for Academically Unacceptable Campuses (District only)	Does not apply to <i>Academically Acceptable</i> districts.	A district with a campus rated <i>Academically Unacceptable</i> cannot be rated <i>Recognized</i> .	A district with a campus rated <i>Academically Unacceptable</i> cannot be rated <i>Exemplary</i> .
Underreported Students (District only)	Does not apply to <i>Academically Acceptable</i> districts.	A district that underreports more than 200 students or more than 5.0% of its prior year students cannot be rated <i>Recognized</i> .	A district that underreports more than 200 students or more than 5.0% of its prior year students cannot be rated <i>Exemplary</i> .
School Leaver Provision for 2007	A campus or district annual dropout rate, completion rate and/or underreported student measures cannot be the cause for a lowered rating.		

The Changing Face of the Elementary School Principal

Julie P. Combs, Sam Houston State University
Stacey L. Edmonson, Sam Houston State University

Principals in today's schools have more experience, have more education, and are of a more advanced age than ever before (National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP], 2006). Women elementary principals in the nation have increased from 41% to 56%. Likewise, the age of principals at all levels has increased, as did the percentage of principals who had more than 20 years of experience before entering the position (NAESP, 2006). In addition, the number of elementary principals has increased by 7,000 over the past 10 years (NAESP, 2004, 2005); this number grew to 61,000 in 2003-2004 from 54,000 in 1993-1994. Of these 61,000 principals, approximately 14,000 served schools in rural areas, 17,000 served schools in urban areas, and 31,000 served schools in suburban areas. Thus, more than half of the elementary principals in this country currently serve schools that are classified as suburban. In addition, the number of principals of all levels increased during the same 10-year span from 104,600 to 115,000 and more than half of all principals in the United States work at elementary schools (NAESP, 2005). Therefore, an understanding of the largest group of principals and their characteristics is important for many reasons.

Recruiting and retaining qualified school principals is one of the greatest challenges facing district leaders today (Pounder & Young, 1996; Whitaker, 2003). In fact, low retention rates among current principals coupled with challenges in filling open principal positions has led some researchers to suggest there is a shortage of effective school leaders (Cooley & Shen, 2000; Portin, 2000). As many as 50% of school districts nationwide have reported difficulty finding quality applicants to fill principal vacancies, a problem that was found consistently among school levels (elementary, middle, high school) as well as types of schools (urban, suburban, rural). This

problem is even more pronounced in urban school districts (Education Research Association, 1998; Whitaker, 2003). Some state superintendents indicate principal shortages are a problem in as many as 90% of their school districts, and the shortages are expected to become only more critical with time (Whitaker, 2001). National data suggest that more than 50% of principal positions were vacant in the 1990s, with 40% more expected to be open by the year 2010. Specifically, Texas was noted as one of the states with critical needs due to a shrinking pool of qualified applicants for principal positions (Whitaker, 2001, 2003).

Future projections concerning retirement and job vacancies are often based on current demographic information. An examination of the demographics and characteristics of principals is critical to understanding and addressing challenges or recruitment and retention. Significant changes have been noted with the elementary principal position, particularly in “society’s attitudes toward public schools and in the related demands it has placed on principals” (Doud & Keller, 1999, p. ix). Trends can be identified and used to inform preparation programs and hiring practices. Therefore, this study examines the demographic trends of the elementary principalship in Texas over a three-decade span, the 1980s, the 1990s, and the first decade of the 21st century.

Principal Profile Studies

At the national level, approximately every decade since the 1920s, the National Association of Elementary School Principals has surveyed elementary principals to understand the position. Doud (1989) noted that these profile studies can provide educators with “both a running account of the factors that affect the status of the K-8 principal and a perspective of societal changes that have shaped American education” (p. xiii). In addition to national studies, research has been conducted in various states concerning the characteristics of elementary

principals and the conditions of their employment (e.g., Combs, 1994; Duffey, 1991; Field, 1992; Gousha, 1986; Nelson, 1983; Sweeney & Vittengl, 1986).

An examination of the elementary principals of the 1980s showed that he was a white man, age 46 (Doud, 1989). He had 22 years experience in education and was appointed to his first position at age 34. He held at least a master's degree and certification for his position. His school had an enrollment of 472 and he worked at least 9 hours per day, 51 hours per week. Over one third of his time was invested in instructional leadership tasks. Similar to the national profile, the Texas elementary principal in the 1980s was a white man around the age of 46 (Nelson, 1983). He had experience as an elementary teacher and received his first position at age 32. He, too, held at least a master's degree and the mid-management certification. His school had an enrollment of 478 and he worked at least 10 hours per day. Over one half of his time was consumed by administrative duties but he desired to spend more time on instructional supervision.

In the 1990s, an updated national profile described the principal as a 50-year old white man, an educator for 25 years, and a principal for 11 years (Doud & Keller, 1999). He expressed concern about fragmentation of his time and student achievement. In contrast, the Texas elementary school principal was a white woman between the ages of 45 and 54 (Combs, 1994). The principal had prior experience as an elementary teacher and held the mid-management certificate. Her school had a student population of 400-699. She devoted most of her time to duties related to instructional supervision or administrative tasks although excessive paperwork and the lack of assistant principals prevented her from devoting more time to instruction. She noted increased responsibility in the areas of site-based decision-making, personnel evaluation, and campus staff development.

In the 21st century, the elementary principals' characteristics continue to change. Although an updated profile study at the national level is not yet available, Combs and Jackson (2006) continued the profile studies in Texas. In 2005, the elementary principal in Texas was a White woman in her 50s. She had prior experience as an assistant principal and elementary teacher, working in education for 23 years. Her first appointment to the principal position was at age 40. She worked approximately 57 hours a week with the help of an assistant principal in a school serving 520 students.

These studies can help district leaders, preparation programs, and researchers understand the changes in the roles and expectations of principals. A comparison of these studies can help to identify trends and provide focus for the future. Thus, the purpose of this study was to describe the changes and identify trends in the characteristics of elementary principals over the past three decades. Specific research questions for the study examined the changes in demographics, teaching backgrounds, and mobility characteristics of elementary principals in Texas. By examining trends in demographics, teaching backgrounds, and mobility characteristics, greater understanding related to job placement and future vacancies may be reached.

Method

Participants

Findings from three statewide profile studies were examined (Combs, 1994; Combs & Jackson, 2006; Nelson, 1983). All three studies used the same research design, instrument, and procedures; however, different principals were selected to participate in the three studies as each study was conducted in a different decade (i.e., 1980s, 1990s, 2000s). In all studies, principals were randomly selected from the population of public elementary school principals in Texas who were included in a list obtained from the state agency (Texas Education Agency [TEA], n.d.).

Approximately 600-800 principals were randomly selected to receive a mailed questionnaire. In all three studies, the researchers used a second round of duplicate mailings to improve response rates, which resulted in response rates of 38% to 45%. Target populations for each study included 4,206 elementary principals in 2005, 3,305 in 1994, and 2,976 in 1983. In each study, sample sizes were deemed adequate for statistical purposes (Dillman, 2007; Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The 2005 study used Dillman's criteria, who recommended a sample size of 232 to represent a population of 4,000 with +/- 5% sampling error at the 95% confidence level. The 1994 and 1983 studies used Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) criteria of having at least 340 participants to represent populations of 3,000.

Instrument

The same instrument was used in each study and included approximately 50 items grouped into sections of demographics, responsibilities, resources, and challenges relating to the work of principals. Items included forced response questions, Likert-format items, and open-ended items. In each study, researchers used measures to improve validity and reliability of data. For example, subject matter experts were used to improve the question wording. A pilot test was conducted in 2005 with 30 principals. Although the researchers improved wording of some questions in subsequent studies following 1983, only questions utilizing the same wording were compared in this trend study.

Procedures

Data sets from each study were obtained from the researchers and variables of interest in this study were isolated. Demographic variables included gender, ethnicity, and age. Previous work experience included questions about teaching experiences and previous positions held by

principals. Mobility variables included age at time of first appointment, years in current position, and years in current district.

Results

Demographics

In 1983, the majority of principals were men (87.8%) as shown in Table 1. In 2005, the majority of principals were women (64.1%). In the 20-year span examined in this study, there was a 52% increase in women elementary principals. From 1983 to 1994, a 43.4% increase in women elementary principals occurred and from 1994 to 2005, an 8.5% increase was noted.

Most of the elementary principals in Texas were and remain White, although the percentages declined 17% from 1983 to 2005. Hispanic principals showed the largest increase of 11%, representing 18.5% of all principals in 2005 as compared to 10.4% in 1994 and 7.5% in 1983. Black principals increased by 1.3% and accounted for 6.1% of the sample in 2005, as compared to 4.8% in 1983.

Table 1

<i>Gender and Ethnicity of Texas Elementary School Principals</i>			
	2005	1994	1983
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	28.1%	44.4%	87.8%
Female	64.1%	55.6%	12.2%
No response	7.8%	0	0
<u>Ethnicity</u>			
Black	6.1%	5.2%	4.8%
White	68.0%	80.5%	85.2%
Hispanic	18.5%	10.4%	7.5%
Asian	0.4%	0.5%	0
Pacific Islander	1.3%	1.6%	0
Other	0.4%	1.6%	0
No Response	5.3%	0.2%	2.5%

2005 ($n = 228$), 1994 ($n = 385$), 1983 ($n = 335$)

As shown in Table 2, a majority of the principals in all studies were in their 40s and 50s. In 2005, elementary principals were older than those practicing in 1994 and 1983. The percentage of principals in their 50s has increased 11.9% from 1983 to 2005. Those in their 30s held constant at approximately 15%. Because the principals appear to be aging in the position, further analyses were conducted. For example, principals in their 40s in 1983 were compared to principals in their 50s in 1994 (approximately 10 years later) and these percentages were nearly the same (32.3%, 33% respectively). As such, it is possible that principals in this age category

remained in the position from 1983 to 1994. Similar findings were present for principals in their 40s in 1994 (41.6%) and in their 50s in 2005 (41.7%). This pattern is not present when comparing age categories of 30s to 40s or 50s to 60s.

Table 2

Ages of Texas Elementary School Principals

Age	2005	1994	1983
20s	0	0.2%	3.3%
30s	15.8%	15.6%	16.5%
40s	32.5%	41.6%	33.0%
50s	41.7%	32.2%	29.8%
60s	8.4%	10.4%	2.7%
70s	0	0	0
No response	1.6%	0	14.7%

2005 ($n = 228$), 1994 ($n = 385$), 1983 ($n = 335$)

Previous Teaching Experience

As shown in Table 3, in each of the three decades studied, at least 60% or more of the sample reported experience as elementary teachers prior to becoming elementary principals. There was a 15.5% increase in principals having elementary teaching experience in 1994 (76.4%) as compared to 1983 (60.9%). Conversely, the percentage of principals having secondary teaching experience declined by 9.5% from 1983 to 2005. In 2005, about one third of the sample reported experiences as secondary teachers.

Table 3

Teaching Experience of Elementary Principals

	2005	1994	1983
<u>Elementary Teaching Experience</u>			
Yes	69.7%	76.4%	60.9%
No	30.3%	23.6%	39.1%
<u>Secondary Teaching Experience</u>			
Yes	33.8%	36.1%	43.3%
No	66.2%	63.9%	56.7%

2005 ($n = 228$), 1994 ($n = 385$), 1983 ($n = 335$)

Mobility

As shown in Table 4, more principals in 2005 had less tenure in their current positions as compared to those from prior decades. Over the past 20 years, there has been a 20.6% decrease in the number of principals with 10 or more years experience in the same position. In fact, almost half of the principals in 2005 had few years experience (1 to 3 years) in their current positions. The number of principals with 1 to 3 years experience increased by 28% from 1983 to 2005. Consistent across all studies was that approximately 40% of the principals reported 4 to 9 years in current positions. The biggest changes occurred in the increase in the least experienced category and a decrease in the most experienced (10 or more years) category. In general, the principals were less experienced in 2005 than in previous decades examined.

Table 4

Years Held in Current Elementary Principal Position

Years	2005	1994	1983
1 to 3	45.6%	34.8%	17.6%
4 to 9	40.8%	42.9%	46.9%
10 to 19	10.1%	14.3%	29.3%
20 to 29	2.2%	4.4%	3.6%
30 to 39	0	0.3%	0
No Response	1.3%	3.3%	2.6%

2005 ($n = 228$), 1994 ($n = 385$), 1983 ($n = 335$)

In addition to experience levels, the principals' ages at the time of their first appointments were examined. As shown in Table 5, principals in 2005 were generally older at the time of their first appointments as compared to those in 1983. In 1983, 38% of the principals were 35 or younger at the time of their first appointments compared to only 20% in 2005. Similarly, more principals (17%) received their first appointments at ages 45-49 as compared to only 8% in 1983. In all three studies, approximately one half of the principals received their first appointments between the ages of 35 to 44. Interestingly, in 2005, 9% more principals received their first appointments in their 50s or 60s as compared to 1983. In addition, 12.3% of the principals in 2005 were first appointed at age 50 or older as compared to 4% in 1994 and 3% in 1983. In 2005, principals were older and may have had more experiences as teachers or assistant principals as compared to those from previous years.

Table 5

Age at Time of First Appointment as an Elementary School Principal

Age	2005	1994	1983
Under 35	20.2%	31.2%	38.2%
35-39	25.0%	28.3%	24.5%
40-44	25.0%	22.1%	21.8%
45-49	17.1%	14.0%	8.1%
50-54	8.8%	3.6%	2.1%
55 or older	3.5%	0.5%	1.2%
No response	0.4%	0.3%	4.1%

2005 ($n = 228$), 1994 ($n = 385$), 1983 ($n = 335$)

A similar analysis was conducted to compare the number of districts in which principals had worked. The majority of principals (78-88%) have worked in only one school district as principal over the past three decades. In 1983, most principals (88.1%) worked in only one district. This number decreased by 10% from 1983 to 2005, indicating some mobility from district to district. About 10% more principals in 2005 worked in two school districts as compared to those in 1983. Relatively few principals (less than 3%) have served in more than two districts in the three decades studied.

Summary of Findings

As a result of the analyses, the following trends were noted:

1. There was a 52% increase in women elementary principals over the past 20 years and almost two thirds were women in 2005.

2. Although almost two thirds of elementary principals were White in 2005, Hispanic principals increased by 11% over the 20-year span, representing 18.5% of all principals in 2005.

3. Most principals in all studies were in their 40s and 50s; however, principals were older in 2005 as compared to previous years. In fact, there was an 11.9% increase of principals in their 50s over the past 20 years.

4. Most elementary principals had elementary teaching experience, and this increased by about 15.5% from the 1980s to the 1990s. About one third had secondary experience in 2005, showing a decrease of 9.5% over the 20 years.

5. Principals have fewer years experience in their current positions and this phenomenon of less tenure has increased by 28% over the past 20 years.

6. Over the past 20 years, principals were older at the time of their first appointments as principals and 9% more principals received their first appointments in their 50s or 60s.

7. Most principals have worked in only one district; however, more principals worked in two or more districts in 2005 as compared to 1983.

Discussion

The elementary principalship has experienced change in gender and ethnic representation over the past 20 years. Specifically, opportunities for women administrators have received much attention in the research literature as have barriers for women desiring administrative positions in schools (Loder & Spillane, 2005; Shakeshaft, 1989; Tyack & Hansot, 1982; Young & McLeod, 2001). Some of the barriers are related to the historically domestic role of women, who were thought to be best suited for teaching positions (Shakeshaft, 1999). As such, the majority of elementary principal positions have been held by men up until the 1990s, even though the majority of elementary teachers have been women (Choy, Henke, Alt, Medrich, & Bobbitt, 1993;

Matthews & Crow, 2003). As reflected in previous literature, findings in this study indicated that a majority of principals are women. In addition, the gender representation of elementary principals is moving closer to the percentages of women teachers. For example, in Texas in 2006-2007, 88.26% of the teachers were women (TEA, 2006) and in 2005, 64% of the elementary principals were women (Combs & Jackson, 2006).

Moreover, it appears that principal ethnicity representation is also more closely aligning with teacher ethnicities. For example, in Texas during the 2006-2007 school year, 66.7% of teachers were White (TEA, 2006) as compared to 68% of principals (Combs & Jackson, 2006). More principals are Hispanic than in previous years; this trend is hopeful as the Hispanic student population is the fastest growing in the state (Murdock, 2007) and is predicted to be the majority by 2026. Although the ethnic representativeness of principals does not match the diversity of their students, it does appear that the need for increased diversity is being noted.

Many believe that elementary teaching experience is an important career path for elementary principals so that principals can support instructional improvement and the work of teachers and students. In fact, Crow and Glascock (1995) suggested that women leaders were more concerned with instruction and needs of students than were men. A comparison of the three-decade studies indicated that most principals had elementary teaching experience and fewer had experience as secondary teachers. These findings could be a function of the changes in gender representation as the majority of elementary teachers are women. It could also be that elementary teaching experience is viewed as an essential prerequisite for the position.

Mobility was studied by examining the variables of age, years experience in current positions, and employment by multiple school districts. Principals were slightly more mobile from district to district and reported less tenure in their current positions as compared to previous

years. This may be due to the personnel changes that result when district administrators remove principals that have not improved student performance in a one to two year period (Pierce, 2000). These principals may be reassigned to other principal positions in a district, removed from the position, or terminated.

Principals are older and are being appointed to their first positions at older ages than in previous decades. In fact, more principals received their first appointment in their 50s in 2005 than in prior years. This may be because the route to the position has been lengthened with the addition of assistant principals (Combs, 2007). In addition, the position may be less desirable than in past years. As such, researchers reported that fewer teachers were willing to seek administrative positions than in past years as teachers identified several disincentives related to the position (Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005). Even though principals are older, most appear to be exiting in their 50s or 60s.

Implications

There are several implications as a result of this study. By examining trends in the demographics, teaching backgrounds, and mobility characteristics of elementary principals, conclusions can be drawn related to job placement and future vacancies. Those persons desiring elementary principal positions may want to consider having elementary teaching experience and understanding that positions may take time and experience to acquire. Greater opportunities exist for women, those of various ethnicities, and older candidates than in years past. These findings may provide encouragement and direction for those seeking positions.

Another implication is that principals appear to be more mobile than in past years. More principals reported fewer years tenure in current positions. These findings might suggest that principals are moving in and out of various positions within and between school districts at

higher rates. Such movement could affect stability in school programs and long-term achievement outcomes. Although further research is needed, such mobility may begin to mirror the trend found among school district superintendents who report relatively brief tenures (Cooper, Fusarelli, Jackson, & Poster, 2002; Kowalski, 2003). In addition, over one half of the principals were in their 50s and 60s in 2005. Many of these candidates will be exiting the profession in the next 5 to 10 years (Whitaker, 2003; Young & McLeod, 2001). With these predicted vacancies and increased mobility, district administrators will likely be concerned about recruitment and retention of elementary principals. Further research is needed to understand the decreasing tenure rates in the elementary principal position. Studies that identify challenges and barriers may be helpful in understanding the perception of the position by principals themselves and potential candidates. Although several trends were identified in this study, more research is needed to shed light on why these conditions may be changing.

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Building Capacity for Quality Leadership with English Language Learners

John Leonard, Stephen F. Austin State University
Betty Alford, Stephen F. Austin State University
Neill Armstrong, Stephen F. Austin State University

One finger cannot lift a pebble.
- Hopi Saying

Waxman, Téllez, and Walberg (2004) advocated that school leaders must assist staff developers in providing English language learner (ELLs)-related professional development that includes “demonstration of theories of language, sustained coaching, and evaluation programs measuring teacher implementation and impact” (p 2-3). These professional development goals are central to the leader’s purposeful expansion of teachers’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions concerning the unique needs of ELLs and communicating the importance of the effective curricular integration of well-planned and embedded strategies designed to meet the needs of the often marginalized ELL population. School leaders must be willing to provide a systematic program of professional development that concentrates on teachers’ attitudes toward change; an understanding of the campus’s vision for the success of all students and its focus on student learning; the nurturing of an environment of trust, collaboration, and the critical importance of the campus as a learning as a professional community.

School improvement initiatives are not always undertaken in a culture conducive to the promotion of student academic success and equity. According to the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL, 2008),

Often schools and districts adopt multiple, and sometimes conflicting, improvement programs to tackle the job of increasing student achievement. Even worse, these improvement programs are often “quick-fix” approaches. The results are a patchwork or

piecemeal approach to improvement and curriculum that result in inconsistencies in teaching and learning within schools and across the district. Most disappointingly, this approach yields “very few gains in student achievement.” (p. 2)

In order to positively impact the success of ELLs in today’s classrooms and meet the challenges facing 21st century school leaders, school district and university partnerships must be forged that will address the professional development of both pre-service and in-service teachers and strengthen a school culture conducive to students’ academic success.

Forces Impacting Change Initiatives for ELLS

Certainly many forces, both internal and external, impact the change initiatives needed to address the needs of English language learners. External forces presenting pressure to schools like No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002), Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), and high-stakes testing, coupled with dramatic demographic changes in Texas, forces P-16 educators to look for viable solutions that are evidence based. One approach undertaken by Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU), together with the partnership districts of Lufkin Independent School District (LISD) and Nacogdoches Independent School District (NISD), provides research-based professional development to both teacher candidates and to teachers, coaches and school leaders from selected partner campuses. Supported by grant funding provided by the United States Department of Education, *Project English Language Acquisition Center for Excellence* (ENLACE), is aligned with the tenets of the Professional Development Schools (PDS) model and affords embedded professional development to both pre-service teacher candidates and to practicing teachers through a systematic coaching process performed by well-trained instructional coaches. The Project ENLACE partnership is designed to promote learning for

these participants through high-quality, research-based professional development congruent with national staff development standards.

This paper will identify the need for professional development and address critical changes in teacher preparation to meet the needs of ELLs coupled with a discussion of the professional development school model as a framework for the delivery of high-quality professional development. Additionally, issues related to needed reforms to teacher education for equipping novice teachers to meet the needs of ELLS will then be shared, including a discussion of a project designed to meet this challenge through a professional development schools (PDS) model consisting of a peer coaching component. Recommendations will then be presented based on data reviewed after the initial year of the ENLACE project's implementation.

Influence of No Child Left Behind

With the passage of the NCLB Act in 2001, the federal government leveraged significant pressure on state and local school districts to improve the educational systems of the nation. Impacting schools within the NCLB legislation was the requirement that all students must make Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), and those schools failing this student learning standard for five consecutive years would face mandatory restructuring. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) specifically mandates the assessment and reporting of the progress of their ELL population. The implementation of this Act provided little flexibility in the identification and testing requirements for ELLS to migrate from their native language to English. Gitomer, Andal and Davison (2005) explicated these requirements stating, "For the first three years of schooling in the United States, students who are classified as LEP [Limited English Proficient] can be tested in their native language. After that, they are tested in English only" (p. 3). Additionally, one of the key purposes of Title III of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2002) is "to help ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth,

attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet,” (Title III, Part A, Section 3102, ¶1). As a direct result, districts are seeking support in meeting the needs of this demographic group.

School districts in Texas are intimately aware of the NCLB requirements and processes for using data gleaned from state assessments to determine strengths and weaknesses in ELL instruction. This awareness flowed from the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation that holds school districts accountable for assuring that, “limited English proficient children meet the same challenging state academic and content and student academic achievements standards as all students are expected to meet” (NCLB, Title III, Part A, Subpart 1). Goals have been set by the state to monitor annually yearly progress for limited English proficient (LEP) students. The fear of not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP) has heightened the concerns of school districts concerning the performance of LEP students on state mandated tests. Barton (2006) emphasized, “Consequently, an ELL student who does poorly can potentially affect a school’s adequate yearly progress standing in as many as three categories: Limited English Proficiency, low income, and racial/ethnic” (p. 40). Due to NCLB, school districts have stepped up their efforts to improve the academic success for LEP students in order to successfully meet AYP. The influence of NCLB has understandably garnered administrators’ consideration of the importance for tracking the academic performance of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. However, in order to meet the academic target of 100 percent of LEP students demonstrating proficiency on expected standards by 2014, school leaders should also take a close look at the instructional strategies used by teachers who are directly responsible for the academic instruction of ELLs (Goodwin, 2002). In line with these expected targets, teachers need to have a clear understanding of the best approaches for teaching English language learners (Sobel & Taylor, 2005).

The Changing Demographic Landscape

Although school leaders have seen demographic shifts evolving for decades, they have failed to adequately prepare teachers for the associated instructional issues they would face in 21st century schools. As an example, The Condition of Education (2005) reported,

Forty-two percent of public school students were considered to be part of a racial or ethnic group in 2003, an increase from 22 percent in 1972. In comparison, the percentage of public school students who were White decreased from 78 to 58 percent. The minority increase was largely due to the growth in the proportion of the students who were Hispanic. (p 33)

With regards to teachers, the significant shift in student demographics is impacted by the faculty's own diversity as well as their being "unprepared for conditions of working with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations..." (Télliez & Waxman, 2005, p. 2). One of the most pressing issues facing school leaders today is the need to prepare teachers to not only differentiate instruction for students from diverse backgrounds, but also to lead a diverse professional community reflective of collegial learning centered on success and equity for *all* students.

Teacher demographic change. Although the majority of teachers are White and female, teachers on campuses today represent a spectrum of diversity by race, gender, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, religious belief, ability, linguistic groupings, and age (Tellez & Waxman, 2005). This diverse group is frequently segregated and segmented in our schools. Often, school leaders tend to focus on the diversity of their students yet fail to understand the importance of recognizing and overcoming the cultural barriers that serve to neutralize effective collaboration among faculty and delivery of quality instruction to all students.

A contributing factor to the lack of understanding related to diversity issues on public school campuses and the specific needs of ELLs is the continuance of a predominately White and female teacher workforce. Snyder and Hoffman (1994) found that in 1990-91, 9.2 percent of public elementary and secondary teachers were Black/African American, 3.1 percent were Hispanic, and 1 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander. In Feistritzer (1996) reinforced this homogenate structure stating that 9 out of 10 public school teachers were White. At a time when minority student enrollments are trending dramatically upward, the number of minority teachers is in decline. Sharon Robinson, Educational Testing Service's Executive Vice-President, in remarks to the National Education Association, indicates that this demographic is not likely to change in the near future (Melley, 2001).

Recent data on teachers in the United States reaffirms that the majority of elementary and secondary school teachers are female and White. In 2005, the teacher population was approximately 83.7 percent White (National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 2005). At the same time, nearly 39.3 percent of students in classrooms were minorities: 60.3 percent White, 17.7 percent Black/African American, 17.7 percent Hispanic, 3.9 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.3 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native teachers (NCES, 2005).

Statistics of the teacher workforce in public education for the last decade indicate a disturbing discrepancy in the percentages of minority teachers as compared with student demographic changes. Today, over 53 million students are enrolled in the elementary and secondary schools of the United States with 40 percent from ethnic or racial minority groups. This trend will continue during the 21st century with minority groups rapidly becoming the majority in American schools by 2050 (Futrell, Gomez, & Bedden, 2003).

However, diversity issues center around more than just issues of ethnicity. Schools have never been culturally “neutral” and teachers are charged with providing the cultural identity foundations needed for excellence and equity (Broekuizen & Dougherty, 1999). National organizations have continued to stress the importance of having a diverse teacher workforce to provide appropriate role models for both minority and majority students (Lewis, 1996). Clearly, the need for pluralism has taken on an expanded definition in our schools and is reflective of our nation’s becoming one of the most diverse in the world.

The changing student demographic landscape. Preparing for demographic shifts among the teaching force pales in comparison to the dramatic changes in the Texas school aged population, both in terms of numerical increases and in diversity. As the population in the United States changed in recent decades, the definition of "diversity" itself has undergone a transformation with the minority population growing significantly. Students on campuses today are reflective of our nation’s spectrum of diversity by race, sex, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, religious belief, ability, linguistic groupings, and age. In a U.S. Census comparison study, the data magnified these trends as Hobbs and Stoops (2002) found, “when all people of races other than white were aggregated the minority population increased by 88 percent between 1980 and 2000, while the white and non-Hispanic population for the same period grew by only 7.9 percent” (p. 71). The U.S. Census Bureau found in the year 2000 that in Texas over 6,010,753 or 31.2 percent of the student population spoke a language other than English in the home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). This percentage of non-English speakers far exceeds the national average of 17.9 percent.

Compounding these data are recent evidence in Texas indicating the performance of English language learners (ELLs) falling far below the average passing rate for all students. The

Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2006) in its 2007-2011 Strategic Plan recognized the achievement gap as one of the four major challenges facing Texas public schools stating,

The demographic composition of the state and student population is changing such that demographic groups that are traditionally least represented in educational attainment (i.e., Hispanic, limited proficiency in English, and economically disadvantaged students) comprise increasingly larger proportions of the total student population. Demographers predict that these demographic changes will continue for some time. TEA must meet the unique needs of these groups, promoting not only high school completion, but the preparedness, desire and opportunity for postsecondary success. (p. 3)

According to TEA's Teaching Diversity and Recruitment publication (2008), "In 1992-93, almost 52 percent of Texas students were minorities. Population projections indicated that ethnic and racial minorities, especially Hispanics, will make up the majority of the Texas population by 2015. By 2025, two of every three school children will be minorities. These population dynamics can already be seen in many schools. More than half of the students in 255 of the 1,048 Texas school districts are minorities; 489 districts are more than 30 percent minority" (p. 5). 2004-05 data reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (2005) comparing the 100 largest school districts in the United States found that Texas districts on the list had an average 21.26 percent of their student population served in ELL programs:

Table 1

Students Served in ELL Programs

Name of reporting district	Number of students served in ELL programs	Percentage of students served in ELL programs
Houston Independent School District	59,483	28.5
Dallas Independent School District	48,334	30.6
Austin Independent School District	18,169	22.7
Fort Worth Independent School District	21,427	26.9
Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District	10,823	13.6
Northside Independent School District	4,653	6.2
El Paso Independent School District	19,445	30.8
Fort Bend Independent School District	6,528	10.4
Arlington Independent School District	10,578	17.0
North East Independent School District	9,789	5.0
San Antonio Independent School District	9,531	16.7
Garland Independent School District	12,400	22.0
Plano Independent School District	5,995	11.4
Pasadena Independent School District	12,259	25.8
Brownsville Independent School District	24,052	51.3
Totals	273,466	21.26

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, Table A-12

Clearly, the rapidly changing demographic landscape continues to impact the delivery of a high-quality education to every student in Texas.

Teacher Preparation and Licensure

Most states with licensing requirements, including Texas, require a teaching certificate and bilingual education or English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement. Yet, a shortage of certified ESL teachers continues to be a problem in Texas. Waxman, Téllez, and Walberg (2004) echoed this distress in reporting results of a National Center for Educational Statistics study that found “most teachers who taught ELLs or other culturally diverse students did not feel that they were well prepared to meet the needs of their students” (p. 1). Additionally these authors found, “Nearly half of the teachers assigned to teach ELLs have not received any preparation in methods to teach them” (p 1). Research detailing the preparation of teachers for classrooms with ELLs continues to find a shortage of qualified teachers. University teacher preparation programs have only recently addressed the critical need for training candidates to work with ELLs. A report by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (n.d.) found that Texas was among 15 states not requiring teacher training for ELLs.

P-16 Standards-Based Partnership: Project ENLACE Professional Development

The influence of standards on P-16 education, together with a cognizance of the dramatic shifts in racial diversity in the United States, necessitates a new direction in professional development. At its core, student learning and equity must be focused on the engagement of all stakeholders toward improving the delivery of instruction to ELLs. NCLB and state standards delineate what students should know and be able to do in core content areas as they progress to graduation. As the standards bar is raised, educational leaders must position classroom teachers

for success by planning, implementing, and evaluating high quality professional development. Professional development research conducted over decades by Joyce and Showers (2003) strongly suggested, "... the design of the training needs to be closely related to the outcomes" (p. 5). The federal government's Goals 2000 (U.S. Congress, 1994a) set in place the principles of high-quality professional development for preparing pre-service and inservice educators to high levels of student learning and development. Goals 2000 established and added credence to the need for high quality professional development. Among their recommendations were professional development opportunities that,

- focus on teachers as central to student learning, yet includes all other members of the school community;
- focus on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement;
- reflect best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership;
- enable teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards;
- require substantial time and other resources;
- is driven by a coherent long-term plan;
- is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning; and this assessment guides subsequent professional development efforts.

(Building Bridges, p. 5)

The research on effective professional development is consistent across many studies.

Researchers Hawley and Valli (Westchester Institute for Human Services Research, n.d.) found in a meta-analysis of professional development research that successful programs have the following characteristics:

- they are integrated with district goals to improve education;
- they are guided by a coherent long-term plan;
- they are driven by disaggregated data on student outcomes;
- they are designed according to teacher-identified needs;
- they are primarily school-based;
- they provide a strong foundation in subject content and methods of teaching;
- they are informed by research on teaching and learning;
- they are designed around collaborative problem-solving;
- they enable teachers to work with colleagues, in and beyond their school building;
- they are continuous and ongoing, providing follow-up support for further learning;
- they incorporate principles of adult learning;
- they provide sufficient time and other resources;
- they are evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning. (p. 9)

As aptly stated by Peters and Austin (1985) in their book entitled *A Passion for Excellence*, that professional development with these attributes is most successful should be a “blinding flash of the obvious” for those involved with the preparation of pre-service and in-service teachers (p. 3). The expectations for the development and ongoing professional development of a teacher’s knowledge, skills, and dispositions must be congruent with nationally recognized standards and be focused on each student’s academic success. Snow-Renner and Lauer (2005), in an analysis of professional development research, concluded that successful teachers in standards-based schools “... need opportunities to learn how to use reform-oriented strategies, practice those strategies in the classroom, and observe their effects on student

learning. Therefore, standards-based professional development is the cornerstone of a successful standards-based system” (p. 3).

Killion (2002) suggested a “backmapping model” to provide a efficient program of standards-based professional development focused on instructional impact and results. This five-step cyclical model involves professional development planners to:

- 1) analyze student performance data and identify student learning needs; 2) identify target(s) for educator learning and development; 3) identify results based on staff development interventions aligned with target area(s); design and implement staff development intervention(s) and evaluation; and, 5) provide ongoing support for learning and implementation of new knowledge, skills, and processes. (p. 31)

Snow-Renner and Lauer (2005), based on their synthesis of professional development research, codified professional development that would positively affect the teaching-learning process as being:

- 1) of considerable length; 2) focused on specific content and/or instructional strategies rather than general; 3) characterized by collaborative participation of educators (in the form of grade-level or school-level teams; 4) coherent; and, 5) infused with active learning, rather than a stand-and-deliver model. (p. 6)

Clearly, well designed and systematic standards-based professional development will serve to positively impact teacher practice and student learning outcomes.

Professional Development Schools Model

Embedded in the standards developed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the research-based Professional Development Schools (PDS) model. The PDS model concepts are aligned with the standards for professional development

endorsed by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (2001). Systematic professional development replaces the much misaligned “one shot” staff development opportunities and replaces this myopic focus with a community of learners.

Professional Development Schools (PDS) are partnerships that are developed and nurtured between university professional education programs and Pre-K-12 schools to prepare new teachers, foster growth of practitioners in the partner schools, foster inquiry to improve practice, and improve K-12 student achievement (Teital, 2003). The PDS model is advanced by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2008) and provides a standards-driven support system for the professional preparation and development of future teachers. Berlin (2007) instructed, “In the context of standards-based education reform, high-quality professional development for principals and teachers is arguably more important than ever” (p. xiii). These standards, when effectively integrated into a well designed program of professional development in a PDS model, will provide reasoned benchmarks for the evaluation of trainings for teachers.

The PDS model serves as a solid framework for meeting both the needs of preservice teacher candidates as well as advancing the professional learning of those already contributing to the profession. The professional development structure of the PDS model can provide a solid blueprint for success in the context of ELL instruction. On the university preparation side, candidates are exposed to a well-defined curriculum of integrated ELL designed to raise their awareness of these learners in their classrooms and build on this base as they progress through their preparation program. On the partnership school side, participating school leaders, coaches, and classroom teachers are learning in the context of practice as members of a learning

community that serves all students. Taken together, a rich value-added partnership is forged to provide professional development in sound, democratic ELL pedagogy and praxis.

Building Leadership Capacity through Coaching

It follows that, with the pressures of NCLB, high-stakes testing and increasingly diverse classrooms, effective teacher-leadership is essential. The significance of leadership is supported by numerous school leadership studies like the one conducted at Stanford University by Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) who stated, "... second only to the influences of classroom instruction, school leadership strongly affects student learning" (p. 3). With accountability for the success of all students, including the properly-placed demand for schools to address the untenable low performance of ELLs, already stressed principals are seeking best practices for meeting the learning needs of all students.

One viable approach is to re-examine the potential for a more decentralized and differentiated model of instructional leadership that can support the implementation of research-based practice in classrooms. School leaders must understand that the traditional view of teacher leadership has changed from the "...traditional roles such as department heads, textbook adoption committee chairpersons, and union representatives" to one that includes their support of the goals of the instructional program through, among other things, coaching (Méndez-Morse, n.d., p. 8). In addition to being restricted to these three areas, "... traditional leadership opportunities for teachers are extremely limited and generally serve an efficiency function rather than a leadership function" (Wasley, 1991, p. 4). Wasley continued by positing that one of the problematical issues surrounding a change toward real teacher leadership is that, "... few school districts have the leadership and/or the instructional capacity to understand the needs of ELLs" (p. 10). The leadership capacity issue is at the center of a renewed consideration of reorganized leadership

and the important contribution teacher leadership can make in the school improvement process in serving as instructional coaches.

Teacher Leaders as ELL Instructional Coaches

School improvement imperatives, standards, and high stakes testing have placed extraordinary demands on schools to improve student outcomes. These stressors negatively impact the ability of the positional leader in a school to adequately focus on their primary role for guiding the teaching-learning process. This leadership vacuum has resulted in the recognition of roles teachers can, and should, play in the improvement of practice. The acknowledgment of teacher leadership has given way to teachers serving as department heads, lead teachers, mentors for novice teachers, and instructional coaches. Danielson (2007) stated, "...effective teacher leaders exhibit important skills, values, and dispositions. Teacher leaders call others to action and energize them with the aim of improving teaching and learning" (p. 4). These attributes are very important in working as an instructional coach with teachers exploring ELL best practices.

Successful coaching has proven especially successful for improving the quality of the teaching-learning process with peer coaching improving the quality of teaching for both the coach and mentee and, ultimately, benefiting all stakeholders (Boreen & Niday, 2003). As an example, when schools make a commitment to the effective professional development of teachers, all participants' profit from the experience with students gaining the most from the collaboration. Boreen and Niday described mentoring "... as more than a relationship, it should also provide a vast array of life and professional learning experiences that enhance their ability ... to interact with their colleagues in a collegial manner" (p. 1). Peer coaching is a process of advising, coaching, and nurturing that is focused on developing an open relationship that

enhances an individual's career, personal, and professional growth and development (Young & Wright, 2001).

Collaboration requires both a respectful coaching relationship and a productive process if it is to yield the desired instructional improvement for ELLs (Donaldson & Sanderson, 1996). Killion (2002) maintained that in order to significantly change educator practice there are seven essential components,

... clear expectations about the implementation of the new learning; desire to implement the new learning; opportunities to apply the knowledge and practice the new skills with feedback; belief that the practices are valuable; ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of the new educator practices by examining student work and reflecting on and refining instructional practice, consistent application of the practices; and, systematic support for continuous improvement? (p. 19)

This supports the need for a collaborative professional learning environment, such as Killion put forward, to enhance and expand leadership capacity and also to better meet the needs of all students.

Example of a Project Designed to Meet the Needs of ELLs through a Professional Development School Model with Coaching

NCLB requires that schools provide teachers with professional development that is “designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments” (Title IX, 2002, p. 107). Project English Language Acquisition Center for Excellence (ENLACE), a partnership grant between Stephen F. Austin State University and the

Lufkin Independent School District and the Nacogdoches Independent School District funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is designed to deliver high quality ELL professional development for teachers. Utilizing a two-pronged coaching approach involving a coach-of-coaches coupled with campus-based teacher-leader coaches, this model of professional development is designed to provide high quality support for teachers as they implement research-based ELL strategies in their classrooms.

This promising practice has a sound evaluation component intended to provide Project ENLACE grant administrators and stakeholders with feedback on the efficacy of its professional development activities. Evaluation is an essential component for demonstrating that a program is making timely progress towards its goals. In addition, ongoing formative evaluation will provide evidence of the successful integration of research-based ELL strategies at the campus level. Grant administrators and stakeholders can then best determine mid-program changes that need to take place in strategy or activities. In addition, ongoing formative evaluation of the embedded professional development can help schools consider any evidence that mid-program changes are needed.

Aligned with state and national standards, the professional development of Project ENLACE partner schools has been purposeful and research driven. Professional development activities are structured based on the identified needs of ELLs and their teachers. The principles of high quality professional development identified by Goals 2000 (U.S. Congress, 1994) serve as a marker for determining program and grant success. These sources of formative evaluation provided grant administrators and policymakers with data for making informed decisions concerning appropriate professional development and integration of best practices into the classrooms of partner schools. Data from these efforts continue to inform SFASU's teacher

preparation programs and support the next generation of classroom teachers who will be delivering instruction to our state's diverse student population.

Professional development is integral to the success of ELLs in Project ENLACE's partnership districts and schools. Focused professional development was conducted during the initial year of the grant's implementation which was aligned with the goals of Project ENLACE to (1) increase the achievement of LEP students by improving classroom instruction through systematic development and delivery of research-based instruction in language development, instructional best practices, and strategies for English language learners; (2) provide joint inservice to educators in the PDS partner school districts and SFASU College of Education faculty to impart the knowledge and skills needed to prepare teachers to instruct LEP students effectively in mainstream classes; and (3) restructure all SFASU teacher education program curricula to prepare all teacher candidates in ELL instructional strategies, instructional best practices, and language development, and to prepare them to pass the TExES exam for ESL certification. During 2007-08 nationally recognized leaders, such as, Patricia Morales, June McBride, Jane Hill, Lupe Lloyd, along with state practitioners like like Becky Hernandez-Owolabi and J. C. Harville from the Spring (Texas) Independent School District, and local presenters provided professional development for Lufkin ISD and Nacogdoches ISD teachers, Project ENLACE instructional coaches, and school and district leaders during three Leadership Institutes held on the campus of SFASU. These sessions were designed to provide a foundation for understanding the needs of ELLs and best practice approaches for meeting their needs. Sessions were also targeted the unique needs of district and campus administrators and instructional coaches from partnership districts

Additionally these professional development opportunities were aligned with the project's goals and with National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards to ensure the content of these trainings provided the requisite foundation for assessing the efficacy of the Leadership Institutes and subsequent integration of ELL best practices into classroom instruction.

Professional Development of Project ENLACE Coaches

Teacher-leaders, as instructional coaches, provided embedded professional development on effective ELL strategies for Project ENLACE schools. Serving as content experts, these coaches took the lead in working with classroom teachers who were endeavoring to integrate ELL strategies into their practice. Instructional support of this nature could take many approaches as Knight (2004) found including,

- Conducting one-on-one or small group meetings to identify how best to collaborate with a teacher or teachers to address the most pressing concerns;
- Guiding teachers through instructional manuals, checklists, and other materials;
- Collaboratively planning with teachers to identify when and how an intervention might be implemented;
- Preparing materials for teachers before instruction;
- Modeling instructional practices in teachers' classrooms;
- Observing teachers using interventions;
- Providing feedback. (p.1)

The process for coaching within Project ENLACE incorporates these fundamentals on two levels: a coach of coaches – a grant supported master teacher-leader and campus-level ELL

coaches. This twofold coaching approach is designed to assist partnership campuses implement research-validated practices and ELL interventions.

Coach of Coaches. A major responsibility of the grant's "coach of coaches" is to model the approaches to ELL instruction learned through the grant's professional development activities. This embedded approach is designed to assist classroom teachers with an understanding of how to integrate the ELL best practice into their daily classroom instruction. Barnes, in Knight (2004), maintained,

Teachers need to see it. They need to see you [coach] modeling, and that gives them insight into other things that need to be done – keeping kids on task, redirecting inappropriate behavior, giving feedback, recognizing kids when they are doing great, keeping the room positive and energized.... There's an art to teaching, and a lot of that art is hard to learn from reading teachers manuals. (p.3)

It is this demonstration of the art of teaching that provides both teacher support for implementing learned strategies for approaching ELL instruction but also serves to energize the faculty.

Campus-Based Instructional Coaches. Campus instruction coaches are the *sine qua non* – that indispensable element – for the successful embedding of ELL best practices into the classrooms of partnership schools. These campus-based coaches are a readily accessible complement to the modeling provided by the "coach of coaches". Research into successful coaching conducted by Schen, Rao and Doobles (2005) for the Annenberg Institute, supported the value of teacher-leaders serving in this capacity and concluded that "coaching supports collective, interconnected leadership across the school system" (p. 2).

A Report on Progress

In this project, the coaches and administrators from the two districts attended three leadership institutes each year and participated in on-site coaching on the campus. Six teachers per campus who were acquiring English as a Second Language (ESL) certification attended three Saturday ELL Institutes as well as participating in the coaching sessions. A survey was administered to determine the effectiveness of the training campus-wide. While additional data are being attained through observations and interviews as part of an ongoing evaluation process, this paper will report on the survey results to identify campus-wide impact. On only three questions of the survey did the mean responses of agree or strongly agree exceed 70 percent. The strongest positive survey responses suggest that the respondents believe that administrators support professional development initiatives related to English language learners with 76.8 percent marking agree or strongly agree. In addition, 71.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that leaders recognize professional development as a key strategy for supporting significant improvement in meeting the needs of a diverse student population. It is noteworthy that 71.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that both administrators and teacher leaders develop knowledge, skills, and best practices related to the needs of English language learners necessary to be professional development leaders. 64.1 percent agreed or strongly agreed that a variety of learning strategies were being used to achieve the professional development goals to meet English language learners' needs, and 62.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed that educators were learning how to create practices to convey respect for ELL families and cultures school-wide. 65.1 percent agreed or strongly agreed that faculty, administrators, and learning teams focus on school goals inclusive of best practices for meeting the needs of the English language learners while 61.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed that disaggregated data were used as a focus for

professional development. Only 55.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that sufficient time was dedicated to professional development to meet the needs of the English language learner. Only 62.5 percent agreed or strongly agreed that professional development was preparing educators to be skillful users of research. Only 50 percent agreed or strongly agreed that research on meeting needs of ELLs was consistently studied.

Areas that had an area of agreement below 50 percent of respondents included knowledge of whether 10 percent of the budget was used for professional development (47.9 percent), increased skills in the use of technology (46.3 percent), increased professional development to prepare educators to use technology to collaborate (44.4 percent), increased knowledge of ways to resolve conflict (45.4%), increased knowledge of ways to resolve conflict to understand the mission of professional development, and increased skills to serve as members of site-based groups (47.1 percent). It is noteworthy that while these are areas recommended as outcomes of quality professional development (Gordon, 2004), these areas have not been primary areas of emphasis in the ENLACE professional development for Year 1 of the project.

For questions regarding the process of professional development to provide coaching and follow-up, room for improvement was indicated by response means of agree or strongly agree of 58.2 percent for use of small learning teams in professional development for a systematic process for all teachers to be part of school-based teams to plan for instruction. 45.3 percent agreed or strongly agreed that follow-up activities follow ENLACE professional development, 51.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed that feedback is provided on performance of skills in working with English language learners, and 51 percent agreed or strongly agreed that feedback to gather and use concerns to plan professional development is occurring.

Only 52.7 percent believed that gathering evidence of improvements in the learning of English language learners to determine the effects of professional development was occurring. A part of studying practice would be utilizing various types of evidence to improve the quality of professional development but only 56.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that this was occurring in formative evaluation and only 53.5 percent in summative evaluation. Only 50.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the evaluation of the professional development included data concerning knowledge gained by participants, level of implementation and changes in ELL student learning, and only 49 percent agreed or strongly agreed that pilot studies and action research were being used at their school to test the effectiveness of new approaches.

During year three of the grant, additional focused work will be provided in implementing the professional development of ENLACE to advance campus learning communities, prepare educators to be skillful users of educational research related to best practices for ELLs, and to use the professional development as a means for fostering campus collaboration. More attention to follow-up and action research is needed to meet the tenets of quality professional development experiences.

Conclusions

The administrator's impact in improving student achievement is second only to the classroom teacher (Leithwood, et al., 2004). Therefore, it is noteworthy that teachers predominately believe that the administrators' support the ELL professional development and suggests the potential positive impact that high-quality professional development may yield in the five years of the ENLACE project. That the participants also report that teachers' and administrators' development of knowledge, skills, and best practices in working with English

language learners is necessary also suggests that continued professional development will be supported.

Quality professional development occurs over time (Sparks, 1997), and the positive responses on surveys, indicating awareness of the importance of professional development to meet English language learners' needs, suggests that creating an awareness of the need is not necessary. Instead, the responses suggest a desire for additional knowledge, skills, and best practices in working with English language learners. This finding is also consistent with best practices noted for professional development in that subject-specific professional development for all is advocated rather than generic, professional development for a few (Sparks, 1997). Coaching is advocated for lasting results-based professional development (Glatthorn & Fox, 1996) and is an integral part of the ENLACE project. A collaborative framework for follow-up with school-based teams and coaching is present for a majority of the participants, but all of the participants are not experiencing this. The responses on surveys and focus groups suggest the need to strengthen the coaching and collaborative structure for planning

Data-based decision making is advocated for planning to meet needs in a learning community, and focus is a primary factor in whether school improvement goals are achieved in a change process (Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy, & Muth, 2007). Over 60 percent of respondents to a survey agreed or strongly agreed that data were used for determining professional development that focuses on the needs of the English language learner is promising. This trend can be strengthened but suggests that there are practices to build upon. Finding time for ongoing professional development is a challenge in the busy environment of schools, but it is essential in a change process (Arbuckle, 1997; Donaldson, 2008; Early & Bubb, 2004). That just a little over half agreed or strongly agreed that adequate time is provided suggests the need for additional

time and follow-through in order for goals to be achieved. Studying practice through action research is important in a change process (Murphy, 2005), yet only a little over half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that this was occurring suggesting the need to engage in action research to determine the impact of the professional development activities. It is noteworthy that the areas that only 40 percent agreed or strongly agreed were knowledge of the budget for professional development, increased skills in technology and increased skills in conflict resolution related to the mission of the professional development which were not explicit goals of the ENLACE project.

From these findings, the following recommendations are offered:

- Continue focused professional development to develop knowledge, skills, and best practices.
- Strengthen collaborative frameworks through coaching as follow-up to leadership institutes.
- Investigate the use of technology as a tool to enhance learning for the English language learner.
- Engage in action research of practices with English language learners to determine high-yield strategies, i.e. those that foster increased learning.
- Provide additional follow-up activities to the ELL Institutes.
- Use data concerning knowledge gained by participants, level of learning, and changes in English language learners for formative and summative evaluation.
- Provide opportunities to study research to gain knowledge of best practices.

With an ever-increasing focus on improving the delivery of high-quality instruction to all students, partner schools in the English Language Acquisition Center for Excellence (ENLACE)

project are being provided with embedded professional support through the use of coaches. Congruent with key finding by Joyce and Showers (2003) indicating that effective professional development of teachers should consist of four components, “developing knowledge, through exploring theory to understand the concepts behind a skill or strategy; the demonstration or modeling of a skill; the practice of skill and peer coaching,” well-trained coaches are a key for increasing these teachers’ content knowledge and confidence in working with the challenges of ELLs in their classrooms (p.1). These coaches serve to nurture a culture of an academic focus and high expectations for all students by valuing the current professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions of their colleagues and by extending and enhancing campus-wide pedagogy. More importantly, these academic coaches provide the campus-based leadership and modeling crucial for improving teachers’ practice of evidence-based best practices for differentiating instruction for English language learners.

Maximizing the potential of the goals outlined for Project ENLACE necessitates that the classroom teachers who are providing the ELL coaching be provided with the high quality professional development necessary to ensure a collegial campus support system. Meeting the challenges of creating this systematic coaching role requires delivery of professional development to the coaches centered on building an understanding of the differentiated scaffolding needed for working with ELLs, a thorough grounding in effective coaching roles, and university support for coaches aligned with national staff development standards.

Boreen and Niday (2003) point out that one of the seminal attributes for an individual selected to work with other teachers as a coach would be to “have a vision beyond their own classroom” (p. 10). This includes the individual’s ability to plan for learner-centered instruction, promote excellence and equity, and possess effective communication skills for collegial dialogue

within their learning community and externally to parents and community. In essence, these instructional coaches are leaders and learners and, as Klimek, Ritzenhein and Sullivan (2008) stated, "... are avid and humble continual learners, seeking wisdom from experts both within and beyond education" (p 64). Coaches continue to identify best practices and translate these proven methods with colleagues on their campus.

As instructional coaches accept their role in leading the learning of effective strategies for meeting the needs of all students in their school they, in turn, must be supported by the administrative leadership and collegially work to create a school culture accepting of the requisite change needed to move the delivery of instruction of ELLs away from the traditional instructional approaches and toward teacher practice informed by a solid body of research. This alliance necessitates not only an understanding of successful pedagogical practices, but also attention to the professional development needed by those teachers selected to be coaches. District and campus leaders must understand that embedded and progressive professional development is complementary to the campus culture and can be a catalyst for needed change on a campus (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).

Accordingly, the work of district and campus leaders is to become part of the learning community and work to relieve the multiplicity of pressures that affect the equilibrium of a school's academic mission. Much the way Lewin (1997) described in his force-field theory, leaders must become a driving force for addressing the instructional deficiencies found in traditional approaches to ELL instruction and work to ease restraining forces needed for district and campus goal attainment. As an example, in the context of school, Lewin's theory would serve to identify the perceived driving and restraining forces affecting the delivery of professional development support to the classroom teacher as well as those chosen to support

classroom instruction as coaches. Efforts would then center on minimizing the restraining forces while maximizing the driving forces involved with the attainment of professional development program goals and the attainment of student success and equity.

As we enter our second year of the ENLACE project, it is appropriate to pause and consider our effectiveness in implementing professional development opportunities that will advance campus learning communities wherein educators become skillful users of educational research related to best practices for English language learners in a campus culture of collaboration. Improving learning for English language learners is a school-wide need that should not be relegated to only a few (Necochea & Cline, 2000). Through the ENLACE professional development, we have sought to impact each educator's development as a skilled teacher of the English language learner.

The range of leadership positions and accomplishments in school improvement highlight that leadership involves the efforts of many individuals representing multiple roles throughout the organization (Matthews & Crow, 2003). In short, school improvement is not an individualistic effort and, instead, represents the efforts of many (Murphy, 2005). Schools have to change in order to meet the needs of a changing and diverse society (Murdock, White, Hoque, Pecotte, You, & Balken, 2003). Quality professional development can serve as the key to increase the learning capabilities of the organization's members and empower them to lead organizational changes to impact learning for the English language learner.

Meeting the needs of all learners is important and requires our collective best efforts. As we continue the next four years of the ENLACE project, the results of this study serve as benchmarks to guide decision-makers as programs are implemented that promote a professional

learning community sustaining the effort to meet the needs of the English language learner through the improvement of practice.

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Appendix “A”



Project ENLACE Survey of Professional Development

Circle one: Teacher ENLACE Coach

District:

<input type="checkbox"/> Lufkin Independent School District <input type="checkbox"/> Nacogdoches Independent School District

Directions: With your school as the focus for your answers, indicate whether your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling the corresponding number. If a question does not relate to you or you do not know, leave it blank.

Your individual survey responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

(This survey was adapted from the National Professional Development Council’s 2001 Revised Standards for Professional Development and is used with permission of the National Professional Development Council, 2008)

Learning Communities

<i>Learning Communities</i>	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. Project ENLACE in our school effectively utilizes small learning teams as a primary component of professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Project ENLACE in our school provides a systematic process for all teachers to be part of ongoing school-based learning teams that meet to plan instruction for English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
3. In our school, faculty, administrators, and learning teams focus on school goals inclusive of best practices for meeting the needs of our English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5

Leadership

<i>Leadership</i>	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
4. In this school, administrators support professional development initiatives related to English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
5. In this school, leaders recognize professional development as a key strategy for supporting significant improvement in meeting the needs of a diverse student population.	1	2	3	4	5
6. In this school, administrators and teacher leaders develop knowledge, skills, and best practices related to the needs of English Language Learners necessary to be professional development leaders.	1	2	3	4	5

Resources

<i>Resources</i>	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
7. In our school, at least 10% of the school's budget is dedicated to professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
8. In our school, disaggregated data on student learning provides focus for professional development efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
9. In our school, sufficient time is dedicated to professional development related to best practices for English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
10. In our school, teachers gather evidence of improvements in English Language Learners learning in their classrooms to determine the effects of their professional development on their students.	1	2	3	4	5
11. In our school, data are disaggregated to ensure equitable treatment for all subgroups of students, including English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5

Evaluation

<i>Evaluation</i>	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
12. Project ENLACE in our school utilizes various types of evidence to improve the quality of professional development (formative evaluation).	1	2	3	4	5
13. Project ENLACE in our school utilizes various types of evidence to determine whether our professional development plan achieved its intended results (summative evaluation).	1	2	3	4	5
14. Project ENLACE in our school utilizes the evaluation of professional development that consistently includes <u>all</u> of the following: data concerning knowledge gained by participants, level of implementation, and changes in ELL student learning.	1	2	3	4	5

Research-Based

<i>Research-Based</i>	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
15. In our school, professional development prepares educators to be skillful users of educational research related to best practices for English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
16. In our school, teams of teachers and administrators methodically study research related to English Language Learners before adopting improvement strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
17. In our school, pilot studies and action research are used when appropriate to test the effectiveness of new approaches.	1	2	3	4	5

Design

<i>Design</i>	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
18. In our school, educators participate in a variety of learning strategies to achieve professional development goals related to effective practices for meeting the needs of our English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
19. In our school, technology supports educators' individual English language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
20. In our school, a variety of follow-up activities follows every major Project ENLACE change initiative.	1	2	3	4	5

Learning

Learning	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
21. In our school, professional development learning methods for English Language Learners mirror, as closely as possible, the methods teachers are expected to use with their students.	1	2	3	4	5
22. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development regularly offers opportunities for feedback on the performance of those skills.	1	2	3	4	5
23. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development leaders gather and use individuals' concerns about professional development initiatives to design follow-up strategies.	1	2	3	4	5

Collaboration

<i>Collaboration</i>	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
24. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development prepares educators to be skillful members of various groups (for instance, site-based committees, grade-level teams).	1	2	3	4	5
25. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development provides educators with the skills necessary to productively manage conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
26. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development prepares educators to use technology to collaborate.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Our principal deals effectively with professional member performance problems related to Project ENLACE.	1	2	3	4	5

Equity

<i>Equity</i>	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
28. In our school, educators learn how to create schoolwide English Language Learners practices that convey respect for students, their families, and students' diverse cultural backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5
29. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development prepares educators to establish learning environments that communicate high expectations for the academic achievement of all students.	1	2	3	4	5
30. In our school, educators learn how to adjust instruction and assessment to match the learning requirements of individual English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5

Quality Teaching

<i>Quality Teaching</i>	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
31. In our school, teachers have many opportunities to develop deep knowledge of the delivery of content to English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
32. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development expands teachers' instructional methods appropriate to specific content areas.	1	2	3	4	5
33. In our school, professional development teaches classroom assessment skills that allow teachers to regularly monitor gains in student learning for English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5

Parent-Community Involvement

<i>Parent-Community Involvement</i>	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
34. In our school, Project ENLACE professional contributes to the development of leaders for building consensus among educators and community members concerning the overall mission and goals of professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
35. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development contributes to the preparation of educators for building relationships with parents to support student learning.	1	2	3	4	5

36. In our school, technology is used to communicate with parents of English Language Learners and their community.	1	2	3	4	5
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Personal Background Information

Please circle or check the appropriate response:

37. What is your length of service with your District (in years)?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 to 20 years
- More than twenty years

38. What is your ethnicity?

- African American
- Hispanic
- White
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Native American

Please provide any additional comments you might have related to Project ENLACE below:

Thank you for participating in the survey.

Appendix “B”



Project ENLACE Professional Development

Evaluation Matrix

Context Standards Staff development that improves the learning of all students:	Leadership Institute 11/5/2007	Leadership Institute 2/15/2008	Leadership Institute 4/11/2008	Training (date)	Training (date)	Training (date)
Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district. (Learning Communities)						
Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement. (Leadership)						
Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration. (Resources)						
Process Standards Staff development that improves the learning of all students:						
Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement. (Data-Driven)						

Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact. (Evaluation)						
Prepares educators to apply research to decision making. (Research-Based)						
Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal. (Design)						
Applies knowledge about human learning and change. (Learning)						
Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate. (Collaboration)						
Content Standards Staff development that improves the learning of all students:						
Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement. (Equity)						
Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use						

various types of classroom assessments appropriately. (Quality Teaching)						
Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately. (Family Involvement)						
Context Standards Staff development that improves the learning of all students:	Leadership Institute 11/5/2007	Leadership Institute 2/15/2008	Leadership Institute 4/11/2008	Training (date)	Training (date)	
Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district. (Learning Communities)						
Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement. (Leadership)						
Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration. (Resources)						
Process Standards Staff development that improves the learning of all students:						
Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement. (Data-Driven)						
Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact. (Evaluation)						

Prepares educators to apply research to decision making. (Research-Based)					
Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal. (Design)					
Applies knowledge about human learning and change. (Learning)					
Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate. (Collaboration)					
Content Standards Staff development that improves the learning of all students:					
Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement. (Equity)					
Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately. (Quality Teaching)					
Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately. (Family Involvement)					

Adapted from *National Staff Development Council Standards*

Writing with Discipline: A Call for Avoiding APA Style Guide Errors in
Manuscript Preparation

Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie, Sam Houston State University
Julie P. Combs, Sam Houston State University

The education community in the United States—as in many countries—is extremely large and diverse. Indeed, as documented by Mosteller, Nave, and Miech (2004),

The United States has more than 3.6 million teachers in elementary and secondary education, more than 100,000 principals, and about 15,000 school districts, each with its own set of district administrators, school board members, and concerned citizens. The parents and family members of the 60 million students in elementary and secondary education represent another constituency, as do the policymakers and legislators in the 50 states (along with the District of Columbia) and at the federal level. Postsecondary education represents another 1 million faculty members, along with an enrollment of 15 million undergraduates and 1.8 million graduate students. (p. 29)

Indeed, with the number of individuals involved in the educational system, educational research has the potential to play a pivotal role in improving the quality of education—from Kindergarten through primary, through secondary, through tertiary education. Yet, for educational research to play such a role, its findings must be disseminated to individuals (e.g., educators, administrators, stakeholders, policymakers) and groups (e.g., teacher associations) who can most effectively use them (Mosteller et al., 2004; Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Whitmore, 2008). Unfortunately, research findings do not disseminate themselves, regardless of how statistically, practically, clinically, or economically significant they are for the field of education. Rather, it is educational researchers in general and practitioner-researchers in particular who must convey these findings.

One of the most effective ways of disseminating educational research findings is by publishing articles in education journals—of which there are more than 1,100 journals that collectively contain more than 20,000 education research articles each year (Mosteller et al., 2004)—especially those journals that are considered to have the highest visibility for stakeholders and policymakers. Highly visible journals tend to be those that have the most influence for policy and practice. These journals, in turn, tend to be those that have the lowest acceptance rates and highest impact factors (Saha, Saint, & Christakis, 2003). One such influential educational journal is *Educational Researcher*. Indeed, *Educational Researcher* is one of the six flagship journals of the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

According to the website of AERA:

Educational Researcher (ER, begun in 1971; 432 pp./yr.) is published nine times per year and is received by all members of AERA. It contains scholarly articles that come from a wide range of disciplines and are of general significance to the education research community. (AERA, 2008, ¶ 1)

Because we serve as editors of *Educational Researcher*, and one of us serves as a co-editor of another journal—*Research in the Schools*, and because we serve on eight editorial boards and have reviewed manuscripts for 26 journals between us, we have had the opportunity to review and make decisions on hundreds of manuscripts over the last several years. Unfortunately, although many authors who write about school leadership topics or other areas that have implications for school leadership have important findings and/or ideas to impart, they are unable to convey the information in their manuscripts effectively, and thus their manuscripts end up receiving negative evaluations from the reviewers and subsequently get rejected by editors,

including us. A major reason why these authors are unable to submit a publishable manuscript is that they are unable to produce manuscripts that exhibit what we call *writing with discipline*.

Writing With Discipline

By *writing with discipline* we mean writing research-based manuscripts in a way that demonstrates clarity, focus, and reader-friendliness. In addition, as described in the document “Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications” (AERA, 2006), developed by the Task Force on Reporting of Research Methods in AERA Publications and adopted by the AERA Council in 2006,

First, reports of empirical research should be *warranted*; that is, adequate evidence should be provided to justify the results and conclusions. Second, reports of empirical research should be *transparent*; that is, reporting should make explicit the logic of inquiry and activities that led from the development of the initial interest, topic, problem, or research question; through the definition, collection, and analysis of data or empirical evidence; to the articulated outcomes of the study. (AERA, 2006, p. 33)

According to the standards, “Reporting that takes these principles into account permits scholars to understand one another’s work, prepares that work for public scrutiny, and enables others to use that work” (AERA, 2006, p. 33) (see also, Elmore, Camilli, Onwuegbuzie, & Mallette, 2007).

Writing With Style

However, most importantly, writing with discipline in the field of education means that the manuscript must adopt the language, format, conventions, and standards of the educational community if it is to reach the intended audience. Simply put, it must follow the *style* belonging

to that educational community. According to the 10th edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2001), style is "a convention with respect to spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and typographic arrangement and display followed in writing or printing" (p. 1169).

Notwithstanding, in the formal writing process, the individual components that characterize a style can vary from one field to the next, from one discipline to next, and even from one publication outlet to the next. However, in the world of academia in general and the field of social and behavioral sciences in particular, fortunately, there are a limited number of formal style guides in the United States, with three of the most common styles in the United States being the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago Manual, 2003), the *Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (Gibaldi, 2003), and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2001). In the field of Education, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2001) is the style that is most required by journal editors. In fact, Henson (2007), who administered a survey to editors of 50 prominent journals in education, documented that 60% of education journals use APA style. Further, each year, more than 200,000 copies of the *Publication Manual* are sold throughout the world (Gelfand, Walker, & APA, 2002). Thus, in order to have articles published in education journals, it is difficult for authors from the field of education to avoid having to be familiar with the *APA Publication Manual*.

History of APA

In 1928, Madison Bentley chaired a meeting of editors and business managers of journals of psychology and anthropology that was sponsored by the National Research Council, which provided the impetus for the first edition of the *APA Publication Manual* (APA, 2001). The goal of this meeting was to discuss the format of journal manuscripts and to reach consensus as to

how to write instructions for authors submitting manuscripts to their journals. This historic meeting led to a report that was published as a seven-page article in *Psychological Bulletin*. This article contained a set of recommendations for authors regarding writing style.

In 1952, a 60-page supplement within *Psychological Bulletin* was published using the title of *Publication Manual* (APA Council of Editors, 1952)—and subsequently published as a stand-alone volume (APA Council of Editors, 1957). Thus, the first edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* was born! The 1957 manual was published in a revised edition 10 years later (APA, 1967), and four additional updated editions of the manual subsequently have been published (APA, 1974, 1983, 1994, 2001) at 7-year intervals—one for every decade that has elapsed since the first edition of the manual. As noted by Daniel and Onwuegbuzie (2007),

Initially, the target audience for the *Publication Manual* was psychologists and researchers and authors from the field of psychology; however, over the years, its audience has broadened substantially—now being utilized throughout the social sciences, including the field of education. The *Publication Manual* has gradually increased both in girth—from 65 pages in the first (1967) edition to 208 in the third to 467 in the fifth—and in scope—from strict attention to formatting and referencing in earlier editions to a focus on “specificity and sensitivity” (APA, 2001b, p. xxiv) and socially correct language in the fourth edition and to firmer details about methodological considerations in the fifth edition. (p. ii)

What is APA Style?

The *Publication Manual* is a reference book that contains rules, conventions, and guidelines commonly referred to as APA style. More specifically, APA style is a standardized

way of writing professional documents. The purpose of APA style is to facilitate clear, standardized, consistent, and informative communications and referencing so that readers of the article from various social and behavioral science fields and beyond can extract similar meaning from the text. As noted by Gelfand et al. (2002), “APA style has also been widely acknowledged as a practical means to organize and communicate technical information” (p. 4). Although it is natural for authors—even prolific authors—to submit manuscripts to journal editors (who require APA style) that contain a few violations to APA style (i.e., APA errors), when authors’ manuscripts grossly deviate from APA style in multiple areas, it is likely that their manuscripts will be considered by the reviewers and editors as appearing to be unprofessional and underprepared. Also, by not following the APA rules, conventions, and guidelines, authors’ manuscripts are more likely to be difficult to understand, inaccurate, inconsistent, and/or disorganized.

Writing With APA Style

Virtually every field and discipline has conventions for communicating information. For example, mathematicians in the Western world are expected to utilize universal mathematical symbols (e.g., “+” to represent addition, “ \geq ” to represent greater than or equal to). If a mathematician decided to ignore these conventions (e.g., used “+” to represent multiplication), then readers of her/his manuscript would have extreme difficulty understanding the symbols. Thus, it is imperative that mathematicians use the same symbols and conventions. Similarly, if school and district administrators used their own set of created budget codes to organize their budgets and expenditures, chaos would ensue. Therefore, it is essential that school administrators adhere to a predetermined structure to facilitate planning and purchasing.

In much the same way, authors from the field of education submitting manuscripts should communicate their ideas, findings, and interpretations in a consistent manner. More specifically, authors from the field of education submitting manuscripts to editors that require the use of APA style must learn to be competent in its use. Unfortunately, for many—if not most—authors, mastering the appropriate editorial and writing guidelines specified in the *Publication Manual* is extremely difficult (Austin & Calderon, 1996; Hummel, Kaeck, Whatley, & Monetti, 2004). At the same time, instructors find it extremely challenging to teach APA style effectively (Madigan, Johnson, & Linton, 1995; Smith & Eggleston, 2001). One reason might be because the fifth edition of the *Publication Manual* contains a great amount of information to understand and learn.

The problem with attempting to learn APA style is that both students and instructors of the *Publication Manual* do not know where to begin. As such, students of the *Publication Manual* are unable to learn APA style in an optimal manner and instructors are unable to teach in an efficient way. Over the years, several authors have developed techniques that might assist students in learning APA writing style. For example, Stahl (1987) demonstrated that using checklists and consistent requirements across courses facilitated instruction in APA style. Rosenthal, Soper, Coon, and Von Bergen (1999) developed a procedure in which the instructor anonymously displayed the first page of each student's paper via an overhead projector and co-edited each introduction with the class. Ault (1991) designed an assignment in which students learned the appropriate organization of empirical reports by placing scrambled paragraphs of an article in the appropriate sections. Ware, Badura, and Davis (2002) also created a set of strategies for learning APA. Dunn et al. (2001) designed a checklist to help students be cognizant of some of the most common APA formatting errors. Gelfand and Walker (1990) developed a training

manual that provides students with opportunities to test their knowledge of APA guidelines via multiple-choice quizzes and to utilize these guidelines in various exercises. Smith and Eggleston (2001) used Gelfand and Walker's (1990) training manual in a study they conducted, wherein 18 students read a poorly written paper and identified as many style errors as possible. Smith and Eggleston (2001) found that students reported positive perceptions of the activity. Further, these students' knowledge of APA (1994) style improved significantly from preactivity to postactivity quizzes. Also, performance on the activity was statistically significantly related to the application of APA (1994) style in an empirical report, with a moderate effect size ($n^2 = 0.59$). More recently, Gelfand et al. (2002) developed a training manual based on the APA (2001) style guide.

Although many of these techniques, guides, and checklists are useful for students and instructors of the *Publication Manual*, with the exception of Dunn et al. (2001), they are not evidence-based. That is, they were developed based on what the authors *think* are the most common APA errors and not based on what *are* the most common APA errors. Thus, through these sets of materials, students likely will be introduced to some APA rules that yield low-incidence errors. Because APA style typically is a small part of any graduate course, instructors do not have the luxury of teaching every or even most aspects of the *Publication Manual*. Also, authors who have graduated from their degree programs and have a need to learn APA style do not have the time to wade through the entire *Publication Manual*. Thus, it is likely that these published tools are not adequately efficient for teaching and learning APA style.

Sources of Evidence

One way of increasing the efficiency with which the *Publication Manual* is learned and taught is by determining the most frequent APA errors (i.e., violations to APA style) and then using this information to provide direction for teaching and learning and to guide the areas of

APA on which to focus—or at least to focus on first. Juve, Weiser, Kennedy, Davis, and Rewey (2000) conducted a study in which they identified the most common APA (1994) formatting errors among 69 manuscripts that were submitted to the *Psi Chi Journal of Undergraduate Research*. Juve et al. (2000) reported 780 total errors, yielding an average of 11.3 formatting errors per manuscript. However, formatting errors are just one class of errors of the many classes of errors documented in the *Publication Manual*. Fortunately, Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) recently conducted a mixed research study in which they examined 110 manuscripts submitted to *Research in the Schools* over a 6-year period. This number of manuscripts represented more than 50% of all manuscripts submitted to this journal over this period, thereby justifying generalizations being made to the population of manuscripts submitted to *Research in the Schools*—at least over this period of time. Combs and Onwuegbuzie meticulously documented every single APA error committed by these 110 sets of authors over a 6-year period. As such, Combs and Onwuegbuzie’s data set likely is the only one of its type anywhere. Indeed, only journal editors have the opportunity to collect such data and because of the rigor needed in collecting these data, it is extremely unlikely that any other editor documents such information in such a detailed and systematic manner as do these editors. Thus, it is not surprising that findings of this type have never been delineated prior to their study.

Most Frequent APA Errors

Across the 110 manuscripts submitted to *Research in the Schools* that were selected for the study, Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) identified a total of 1,163 APA errors that were committed at least one time by the sets of authors, yielding a mean APA error rate of 10.57 per manuscript submitted to *Research in the Schools*. Using classical content analysis techniques (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, 2008), Combs and Onwuegbuzie identified a total of 60 unique

APA errors that were committed across these 110 manuscripts. These authors then analyzed these 60 APA errors using the method of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This analyses led to the extraction of the following 14 themes: grammar, format, hyphenation, citing multiple authors, in-text citations, numbers, capitalization, formality and clarity, statistical copy, punctuation, tables and figures, abbreviations, quotations, and bias in language— as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Themes Emerging from APA Errors Identified by Editor for Manuscripts Submitted to Research in the Schools

Themes	Rank	Frequency (%)
Grammar	1	72
Format	2	67
Hyphenation	3	65
Citing multiple authors	4	61
In-text citations	5	60
Numbers	6	57
Capitalization	7	57
Formality and Clarity	8	56
Statistical copy	9	54
Punctuation	10	48
Tables and Figures	11	45
Abbreviations	12	42
Quotations	13	36

Bias in Language	14	32
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Relationship of Emergent Themes to Manuscript Disposition

Once the themes had been identified, Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) used a mixed analysis technique called quantitizing (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), wherein the themes were converted to numeric data by assigning a “1” if the manuscript contained one or more APA errors that was classified under that theme and a “0” if the manuscript did not contain any APA errors that were classified under that theme. This dichotomization led to the formation of what Onwuegbuzie (2003) referred to as an “inter-respondent matrix” (i.e., *manuscript x theme matrix*) that contains a combination of 0s and 1s (p. 396), that indicates which manuscripts contribute to each emergent theme. This inter-respondent matrix allowed Combs and Onwuegbuzie to undertake an array of quantitative analyses. In particular, they undertook two sets of canonical discriminant analyses to determine which of the 14 themes best predicted the disposition of manuscript—that is the decision that the editor made on the manuscript (i.e., reject, revise and resubmit, or accept).

For the first canonical discriminant analysis, Combs and Onwuegbuzie sought to determine which of the 14 themes predicted whether the editor’s decision for a manuscript was reject, revise and resubmit, or accept. This analysis revealed two statistically significant canonical functions. The first canonical function ($R_c = 0.48$; $X^2[28] = 47.47$, $p < .05$) indicated that the following six variables played an important role in predicting the editor’s decision: *tables and figures* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .70, structure coefficient = .69), *grammar* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .34, structure coefficient = .30), *abbreviations* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .34, structure coefficient = .35), *citing multiple authors* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .30, structure coefficient = .33), *formatting* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .21, structure

coefficient = .47), and *statistical copy* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .17, structure coefficient = .30). The second canonical function ($R_c = 0.45$; $X^2[13] = 22.08$, $p < .05$) indicated that the following six variables played an important role in predicting the editor's decision: *formatting* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .60, structure coefficient = .40), *capitalization* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = -.57, structure coefficient = -.21), *citing multiple authors* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = -.49, structure coefficient = -.40), *abbreviations* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = -.41, structure coefficient = -.33), *grammar* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .33, structure coefficient = .11), and *formality and clarity* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .30, structure coefficient = .25).

For the second canonical discriminant analysis, Combs and Onwuegbuzie sought to determine which of the 14 themes predicted whether the editor's decision for a manuscript was reject versus non-reject (i.e., revise and resubmit or accept). This analysis revealed a statistically significant canonical function ($R_c = 0.48$; $X^2[14] = 24.84$, $p < .05$), which indicated that the following four variables played an important role in predicting the editor's decision: *tables and figures* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .69, structure coefficient = .74), *grammar* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .45, structure coefficient = .32), *formatting* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .45, structure coefficient = .59), and *statistical copy* (standardized canonical discriminant coefficient = .24, structure coefficient = .32).

In summary, across the two canonical discriminant analyses, the following eight variables played a role in predicting the manuscript's disposition: tables and figures, grammar, abbreviations, citing multiple authors, formatting, statistical copy, capitalization, and formality

and clarity. The following six variables did not appear to play an important role in this prediction: numbers, hyphenation, in-text citations, bias in language, quotations, and punctuation.

Relationship of Total Number of APA Errors to Manuscript Disposition

A one-way analysis of variance revealed a statistically significant difference in the total number of codes among the accept ($M = 7.69$, $SD = 4.50$), revise and resubmit ($M = 9.62$, $SD = 4.85$), and reject ($M = 11.78$, $SD = 5.22$) editor decisions ($F[2, 103] = 4.45$, $p = .014$; $\eta^2 = .08$). A follow-up Scheffé test revealed that manuscripts that were rejected by the editor contained statistically significantly more APA errors than did manuscripts that were accepted by the editor. Moreover, a statistically significant linear trend was found ($F[1, 103] = 8.90$, $p = .004$; $\eta^2 = 0.09$), with the number of errors increasing monotonically as the editor decision went from accept to reject.

Further, when the revise and resubmit and accept decisions were combined to form a non-reject decision, an independent samples t test revealed that manuscripts that were rejected by the editor contained statistically significantly ($t[93.18] = 2.80$, $p = .007$; Cohen's [1988] $d = 0.55$) more APA errors than did manuscripts that were not rejected ($M = 12.09$, $SD = 5.41$). Even more compellingly, manuscripts that contained nine or more different APA errors were 3.00 times (95% confidence interval [CI] = 1.31, 6.87) more likely to be rejected. These findings suggest strongly that a manuscript that contains many different APA errors—in particular, at least nine different APA errors—is associated with an increased probability of getting a reject decision.

Relationship of Total Number of Emergent Themes to Manuscript Disposition

A one-way analysis of variance revealed a statistically significant difference in the total number of themes among the accept ($M = 5.58$, $SD = 3.45$), revise and resubmit ($M = 6.79$, $SD = 3.02$), and reject ($M = 8.31$, $SD = 2.83$) editor decisions ($F[2, 103] = 5.74$, $p = .004$; $\eta^2 = 0.10$). A follow-up Scheffé test revealed that manuscripts that were rejected by the editor contained statistically significantly more APA errors that were classified as one of the 14 themes than did manuscripts that were accepted by the editor. Moreover, a statistically significant linear trend was found ($F[1, 103] = 11.43$, $p = .001$; $\eta^2 = 0.10$), with the number of themes increasing monotonically as the editor decision went from accept to reject.

Further, when the revise and resubmit and accept decisions were combined to form a non-reject decision, an independent samples t test revealed that manuscripts that were rejected ($M = 8.31$, $SD = 2.83$) by the editor contained statistically significantly ($t[78.38] = 3.09$, $p = .003$; Cohen's $d = 0.63$) more APA errors that were classified as one of the 14 themes than did manuscripts that were not rejected ($M = 6.44$, $SD = 3.16$). Even more compellingly, manuscripts that contained APA errors that can be classified as falling into eight or more different themes were 3.68 times (95% CI = 1.61, 8.43) more likely to be rejected. These findings suggest strongly that a manuscript that contains many classes (i.e., themes) of APA errors—in particular, at least eight different classes of APA errors—is associated with an increased probability of getting a reject decision.

Description of Themes Emerging from APA Errors Identified by Editor

Based on the findings of Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009), we will now describe the 14 themes that represent the errors made by authors submitting manuscripts to *Research in the*

Schools. In the following sections, APA violations are presented in rank order of their error rates as shown in Table 1. Moreover, the errors contained in each theme are described.

Grammar. Errors in grammar were found in 71.82% of the manuscripts. Based on the canonical discriminant analysis presented earlier, this theme also was a significant predictor of whether a manuscript was rejected. When defining grammar, the authors of the *Publication Manual* did not include all components of grammar but rather grammar and usage errors “that occur frequently in manuscripts submitted to APA journals” (APA, 2001, p. 41). Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) coded grammatical errors in manuscripts in the following areas: disagreement between the subject and verb (e.g., “data is” instead of “data are”), pronoun disagreement (e.g., pronouns disagree in number and gender), incorrect use of relative pronouns (e.g., who, whom, that, which), and incorrect use of subordinate conjunctions (e.g., while, since, although). These errors then were combined and assigned to the theme of grammar. The most frequent error within this theme was the use of *since* when the word *because* would be more specific (see APA, 2001, p. 57); this error was located in 41.82% of the manuscripts. The next most frequent error found in 29.09% of the manuscripts was the use of *while* instead of *although* or *whereas* (see APA, 2001, p. 56). A significant number of authors also had difficulty deciding when to use *which* versus *that*; this APA violation was present in 28.18% of the manuscripts. Although there were errors noted in subject/verb disagreement, the use of *data* paired with a singular verb (e.g., *data is*) was located in 24.55% of the manuscripts. Thus, attention to the correct use of *although*, *because*, *which*, and *that*, along with an understanding that *data* are plural, could help authors avoid some of the most common violations reported by Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009).

Format. Errors involving formatting were located in 67.27% of the manuscripts. Based on the canonical discriminant analysis presented earlier, this theme also was a significant predictor of whether a manuscript was rejected. The theme of format included categories that can be found in chapter 1 of the *Publication Manual* concerning the manuscript's organization and chapter 5 regarding the preparation of the manuscript. The most frequently occurring error within this theme and found in 30.00% of the manuscripts involved the use of incorrect spacing between words, sentences, and lines. Specifically, the authors of the *Publication Manual* specify that double-spacing is to occur between all lines in the manuscript, including the title, headings, quotations, references, and tables. Regarding the spacing between characters, only one space should occur after all punctuation—including periods, comma, colons, and semicolons. Moreover, the lines of text should not be justified; instead, authors are instructed to leave “the right margin uneven, or *ragged*” [italics in original] (APA, 2001, p. 287). Other errors noted in the theme of format were missing indentations for paragraphs, incorrect use of underlining, incorrect use of bold typeface, incorrect presentation of lists, and incorrect ordering of the various components of the manuscript (e.g., title page, abstract, references). Another problematic component for authors was the abstract; fortunately, the *Publication Manual* emphasizes the importance of the abstract and provides specific guidelines for writing a concise abstract. Attention to this theme of format might assist authors in preparing manuscripts that appear to comply with the *Publication Manual*. Further, having a polished appearance might increase the chances that the editors will send the manuscript to reviewers. In addition, authors who attend to the details of formatting might be perceived as being those who also attend to other details in their manuscripts.

Hyphenation. Even though the hyphen represents a small character, its use appears to cause much confusion for authors; errors in hyphenation were found in 65.45% of the manuscripts reviewed by Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009). Instructions regarding hyphenation are contained in the Spelling section of the *Publication Manual*. Admittedly, the authors of the *Publication Manual* noted that “choosing the proper form [hyphenated or not hyphenated] is sometimes frustrating” (APA, 2001, p. 89). Authors of manuscripts are instructed first to consult a dictionary; if the word cannot be located, instructions are provided in Table 3.1 of the *Publication Manual* (see APA, p. 91). The most common hyphenation errors reported by Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) were as follows: (a) not hyphenating "a compound with a participle when it precedes the term it modifies" (APA, p. 91) (e.g., role-playing technique), (b) not hyphenating “an adjective-and-noun compound when it precedes the term it modifies” (APA, p. 91) (e.g., middle-class families), (c) omitting a hyphen with “a compound including an adverb ending in *-ly*” (APA, p. 91) (e.g., widely used practice), and (d) not hyphenating "a compound with a number as the first element when the compound precedes the term it modifies" (APA, p. 91) (e.g., 12th-grade students). Another common error involves the incorrect placement of a hyphen in “common fractions used as nouns” (APA, p. 91). For example, *one third* in the phrase *one third of the principals* would not be hyphenated, although spell check functions in word processing software might indicate that a hyphen is needed.

Citing multiple authors. The next most frequent error found in the manuscripts reviewed by Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) involved citations of more than one author used in the text of the paper. Such errors were located in 60.91% of the manuscripts. Based on the canonical discriminant analysis presented earlier, this theme also was a significant predictor of whether a

manuscript was rejected. Within the theme of citing multiple authors, the most problematic convention was the use of *et al.* Specifically, the authors of the *Publication Manual* state that when a work has three, four, or five authors, cite all authors the first time the reference occurs; in subsequent citations, include only the surname of the first author followed by *et al.* (not italicized and with a period after "al"). (APA, 2001, p. 208)

However, it is possible that the *Publication Manual* contributes to the problems that authors experience when citing multiple authors because, as noted by Daniel and Onwuegbuzie (2007), it contains a glaring inconsistency:

APA contains a gross contradiction that, to date, no one seems to have noticed. Specifically, on page 209, the *Publication Manual* states that “When a work has six or more authors, cite only the surname of the first author followed by *et al.* (not italicized and with a period after ‘al’) and the year for the first and subsequent citations” [italics in original]. Yet, several pages later, on page 241, it is stated that “After the sixth author’s name and initial, use *et al.* to indicate the remaining authors of the article” [italics in original]. Clearly, “six or more” (p. 209) is not the same as “After the sixth.” Thus, this inconsistency needs to be resolved in future editions of the *Publication Manual*. (p. viii)

In their analysis, Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) noted that some authors included all authors’ names each time the work was cited and that other authors abbreviated all works using *et al.* after the first author’s name. Several errors were noted in the formatting of *et al.* such as commas and periods being misplaced. Further, in listing a work with three or more authors, a

comma should separate the last two authors. Learning the conventions of citing multiple authors within a manuscript appears to be time well spent for the academic writer.

In-text citations. Similar to the previous theme, the theme of in-text citations emerged as a common error reported in 60.00% of the manuscripts. Although both of the themes, citing multiple authors and in-text citations, comprise errors made when citing sources in the text of a document, each theme is independent such that the coding of errors in each of these themes did not overlap. The most common error coded in this theme was the incorrect use of *and* and *&* when citing authors in the text of a document; this error was found in approximately one third (33.64%) of the manuscripts. Another common error located in 26.36% of the manuscripts involved the incorrect ordering of multiple works within a parenthetical citation. When multiple citations are used to provide evidence to an assertion, the multiple references should be placed in alphabetical order. However, inexperienced academic writers may confuse the placement of multiple citations with the placement of individual authors' names within a single citation. Thus, this distinction about order of authors within a single citation and alphabetical arrangement of multiple citations listed in parentheses should be highlighted. Other errors coded in this theme included the incorrect placement of the year and the incorrect use of authors' initials in citations appearing in the text. Academic writers would be wise to master the conventions for citations.

Numbers. Errors made using numbers was the sixth most frequently occurring APA violation; such errors were found in 57.27% of the manuscripts. Interestingly, nine pages in the *Publication Manual* are devoted to the use of numbers; however, more pages are used to explain exceptions rather than the few rules. The first two rules specify that authors should "use figures to express all numbers 10 and above" and should use figures with "all numbers below 10 that are grouped for comparison with numbers 10 and above" (APA, 2001, p. 123). Exceptions are then

listed in the five pages following these two rules. Some exceptions are to use numbers when representing percentages, ratios, time, ages, the number of participants, and scores on a scale. Another error in using numbers and common to those writing about education is the notation of grade levels. Some examples of correct APA format of grade levels using numbers are as follows: Grade 8, eighth grade, Grade 12, 12th grade, and 12th-grade students (note that the ordinal number is not a superscript font and the hyphen is used in the last example because *12th grade* describes the noun *students*). Because numbers are found in almost all manuscripts, it would be worthwhile for academic writers to learn conventions for using numbers.

Capitalization. Similar to number errors, capitalization errors were located in 57.27% of the manuscripts. Based on the canonical discriminant analysis presented earlier, this theme also was a significant predictor of whether a manuscript was rejected. The presentation of titles and headers accounted for capitalization errors in 50.00% of the manuscripts. Specifically, the *Publication Manual* states that “major words in titles” and all words with four letters or more should be capitalized (APA, 2001, p. 95). If conjunctions, articles, or short prepositions contain less than four letters, then these words would not be capitalized. In addition, words following a hyphen or a colon within a title are capitalized. Rules for capitalizing words in the various levels of headings and subheadings are explained on pages 113-114 and 289-290. In Levels 1, 2, and 3 headings, the same rules for capitalizing titles apply to these headings. Authors will find few occasions when all five levels of headings are used; rather, many articles require only three levels of headings: Level 1, Level 3, and Level 4 (APA, 2001). Therefore, authors who learn how to capitalize these three levels of headings will be less likely to have capitalization errors in their manuscripts.

Formality and clarity. Of the manuscripts reviewed, 56.36% of them contained errors related to the theme of formality and clarity. Based on the canonical discriminant analysis presented earlier, this theme also was a significant predictor of whether a manuscript was rejected. This theme was created to encompass errors contained in chapter 2 of the *Publication Manual* such as errors related to smoothness of expression, economy of expression, word choice, colloquial expressions, and attributions. The errors coded with highest frequency in this theme related to use of verb tense and attributions. In 32.27% of the manuscripts, authors misused verb tenses. These errors included (a) abrupt shifts in tense within the same paragraph, (b) not using past tense verbs to describe the results of the study or to report previous findings, and (c) not using present tense verbs in the discussions and conclusions. In addition to verb tense, three specific errors of attribution are outlined in the *Publication Manual*—“use of the third person, anthropomorphism, and use of the editorial *we*” (APA, 2001, p. 37). Anthropomorphisms, which represent the attributions of human characteristics to inanimate sources, were identified in 27.27% of the manuscripts. Some examples of anthropomorphisms are *schools learned their lessons* or *programs created new roles*. Therefore, authors who attend to verb tenses and anthropomorphisms might be able to express ideas in a more concise and clear manner.

Statistical copy. Several errors were noted in 53.64% of the manuscripts that were categorized as statistical copy errors. Based on the canonical discriminant analysis presented earlier, this theme also was a significant predictor of whether a manuscript was rejected. The authors of the *Publication Manual* devote 10 pages to this topic. The most common error described in this theme and found in 30.90% of the manuscripts involved the incorrect formatting of statistical symbols. Statistical symbols are to be presented using an italic typeface; for example, “a lowercase italicized *n* is used to designate the number of members in a limited

portion of the total sample (e.g., $n = 30$)” (APA, 2001, p. 139). Moreover, a space is inserted between the n , the equal sign, and the numeral. The number of decimals used, in general, should be rounded to “two decimal places” (APA, p. 129), and a comma is used between groups of three digits of 1,000 or higher, with a few exceptions (see APA, p. 129). Another common error made by authors is the exclusion of the percent (%) symbol when reporting percentages. Indeed, authors should “use the symbol for percent only when it is preceded by a numeral” (APA, p. 140). Because many empirical reports contain descriptions using numbers (e.g., participants, demographics, frequencies), authors should note the conventions adopted in the *Publication Manual* for the preparation of research reports.

Punctuation. Almost one half of the manuscripts (48.18%) contained punctuation errors. Punctuation included commas, semicolons, colons, and dashes. The placement of commas represented the majority of errors found in this theme; 40.00% of the manuscripts had errors of comma placement in a series of three or more items. In many cases, the comma was not included between the *and* or *or* and the last element in a series. Another common error in this theme was coded as a dash error. A dash—specifically, an em dash—is used to set off an element in a sentence or to show a “sudden interruption in the continuity of a sentence” (APA, 2001, p. 81). In some cases, authors used a single hyphen (i.e., en dash) instead of a dash, which is typed as two hyphens or an em dash (see APA, p. 291 for a description). Although there are numerous punctuation guidelines, authors could eliminate a common punctuation error by understanding the APA guidelines for using a comma in a series.

Tables and figures. Although the use of tables and figures can assist authors in presenting results in a clear and concise manner, 45.45% of the manuscripts contained errors that were related to the preparation of tables and figures. Interestingly, based on the canonical discriminant

analysis presented earlier, this theme was by far the most (practically) significant predictor of whether a manuscript was rejected. The authors of the *Publication Manual* stipulate that tables should be used to “supplement the text” (APA, 2001, p. 21). If the author discusses “every item of the table in text, the table is unnecessary” (APA, p. 154). Many errors in this category were related to the formatting used. Tables should be double-spaced and adhere to other formatting guidelines. Unfortunately, the default settings for creating a table in Microsoft Word include both vertical and horizontal lines, which ultimately must be reformatted. In addition, common errors were noted in the presentation of titles prepared for tables and figures (cf. Daniel & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Finally, tables and figures should be placed after the reference list instead of within the text of the document and each table and figure should appear on a separate page.

Abbreviations. Errors related to abbreviations were noted in 41.82% of the manuscripts. Based on the canonical discriminant analysis presented earlier, this theme also was a significant predictor of whether a manuscript was rejected. Authors should limit the use of abbreviations in their writings because an overuse could impede clear communication (APA, 2001). In fact, if an abbreviation is used fewer than four times in a long paper, writers of the *Publication Manual* suggest that abbreviations be spelled out each time. If abbreviations are used, authors should spell out abbreviations the first time used and include the abbreviations in parentheses. Typically, abbreviations that are acronyms do not require the use of periods. Moreover, abbreviations should not be used to begin a sentence. One common abbreviation error is made by writers who refer to the *United States*. When used as a noun, *United States* should be spelled out. When used as an adjective, an abbreviation, such as *U.S. schools*, can be used. When deciding whether to use abbreviations, authors should consider their audiences and “use only those abbreviations that will help you communicate with your readers” (APA, 2001, p. 104).

Quotations. Academic authors sometimes use other writers' and researchers' exact words. To avoid plagiarism, quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of others. In addition, the *Publication Manual* specifies that a source and location of the material is required (e.g., page number, paragraph number). Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) noted that 36.36% of the manuscripts in their sample contained errors related to direct quotations. The most frequent error occurred when authors failed to provide an exact location of the quoted materials; that is, a page number was not included. Although not stated directly in the *Publication Manual*, in keeping with the principle of economy of expression, the use of direct quotations should be limited to those instances when another's exact words are more precise and clearer than could be expressed in a paraphrase. When using direct quotations, authors should note several specific formatting rules provided in the *Publication Manual*.

Bias in language. In keeping with its principle of fairness, APA specifies that writers should "avoid perpetuating demeaning attitudes and biased assumptions" (APA, 2001, p. 61). Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) noted that 31.82% of the submissions contained errors related to labels used by authors to describe people. For example, the term *participants* should be used instead of *subjects* when describing individuals in a study. When identifying the racial or ethnic groups of individuals, the *Publication Manual* notes that these terms "change often" (APA, p. 67) and writers "are encouraged to ask their participants about preferred designations and are expected to avoid terms perceived as negative" (APA, p. 68). Moreover, authors should remember that racial and ethnic groups are proper nouns and thus should be capitalized (e.g., Black, White, Hispanic). In reference to gender, authors should strive to minimize the use of pronouns such as *he* and *she*, and avoid the substitution of *he/she*, which is "awkward and distracting" (APA, p. 67). When describing people and their age groups, *boys* and *girls* are used

to reference individuals who are younger than 18. For adults, the terms *men* and *women* should be used instead of *males* and *females*. Finally, authors should note the guidelines for referring to individuals with disabilities, adhering to the principle of putting “people first, not their disability” (APA, p. 75).

Discussion

The major purpose of this article was to provide evidence-based guidelines to help authors from the field of education in general and authors who write about school leadership topics in particular to write with discipline. Using Combs and Onwuegbuzie’s (2009) groundbreaking findings, we were able to provide guidelines for adhering to APA style based on the 60 most common APA errors and 14 classes (i.e., themes) of APA errors identified by these editor-researchers. We believe that an efficient way for authors—including graduate students—to learn APA style would be to focus initially on these 60 most common APA errors and 14 classes of APA errors. By the same token, we believe that these errors would serve as useful starting points for those who teach APA style. It is not possible—nor is it even advisable—for an instructor to cover the whole *Publication Manual* within a course—even if a significant portion of whole course is devoted to teaching APA style. Thus, focusing on these most common errors provides a much more manageable amount of material for an instructor to cover.

A stark reminder of the importance of authors adhering to APA style can be gleaned from Combs and Onwuegbuzie’s (2009) findings that authors who submit manuscripts to *Research in the Schools* that contain (a) nine or more different APA errors are exactly three times more likely—and based on the 95% confidence interval can be as much as nearly seven times more likely—to receive a rejection decision by the editor; and (b) eight or more different APA error themes are more than three-and-a-half times more likely—and based on the 95% confidence

interval can be more than eight times more likely—to receive a rejection decision by the editor. The canonical correlation analyses also helped to identify specific APA errors and error themes that place authors at risk for getting their manuscripts rejected. Although one cannot assume causality from these correlational findings (i.e., it cannot be assumed that an abundance of APA errors *causes* a manuscript to be rejected), it is likely that at the very least, a large number of APA errors is indicative of a general lack of attention to detail that prevails at one or more stages of the research process—an overall lack of research/writing discipline!

The frequency of the 14 APA error themes range from approximately one third (i.e., 32%; bias in language) to nearly three fourths (i.e., 72%; grammar). Thus, the frequencies of all 14 APA error themes are significant. The error themes of grammar and format are the most frequent in manuscripts submitted to *Research in the Schools*. Further, these error themes are the second and third best predictors of whether a manuscript ends up being rejected, respectively. Specifically, authors whose manuscripts contain the error theme of grammar are 2.43 times more likely (95% CI = 1.03, 5.71) to a receive a rejection than are those authors who avoid this class of errors. Also, authors whose manuscripts contain the error theme of format are 3.57 times more likely (95% CI = 1.51, 8.42) to a receive a rejection than are those authors who avoid this class of errors. The theme of grammar appears to encompass elements of clear communication, that of being understood. Conversely, formatting might attend to the audiences' need for order, familiarity, and ease when reading scholarly articles. Attention to formatting might assist authors in writing manuscripts that have appropriate structure, which, in turn, might provide the reviewer or editor with a good first impression, thereby increasing the likelihood of a favorable recommendation/decision, not only because the manuscript is easier to read, but because it might give the reviewer and/or editor the impression that the author is meticulous and trustworthy.

The theme of tables and figures is the 11th most common error theme. Yet, this theme is the best predictor of whether a manuscript was rejected. Indeed, authors whose manuscripts contain the error theme of tables and figures are 4.68 times more likely (95% CI = 1.96, 11.14) to receive a rejection than are those authors who avoid this class of errors. If the inclusion of tables and/or figures is justified in a manuscript, then they must contain important information. Thus, failure to construct tables and/or figures in a clear, coherent, and consistent manner can affect readability and even accuracy of the manuscript, which, in turn, might make a manuscript less appealing for a reviewer and/or editor. On the flip side, authors who have learned how to construct tables and figures in an optimal manner likely might reflect writers with more experience using APA.

Learning to give credit to appropriate sources is another important discipline for writers to master. Indeed, the error theme of citing multiple authors is one of the five best predictors of whether a manuscript is rejected. When citations are unclear, they prevent readers from locating the sources to conduct further research or to verify the findings that were reported—facets that are needed for a manuscript to be both warranted and transparent. Further, committing error themes pertaining to citing multiple authors and in-text citations can affect not only research integrity, but also the credibility of the researcher (Faunce & Job, 2001; Hernon & Metoyer-Duran, 1992; Jiao, Onwuegbuzie, & Waytowich, 2008; Onwuegbuzie, Waytowich, & Jiao, 2006; Pandit, 1993; Spivey & Wilks, 2004; Sweetland, 1989; Waytowich, Onwuegbuzie, & Jiao, 2006).

Currently, we are replicating the study of Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) on manuscripts submitted to the Tier 1 journal for which we serve as editors, namely, *Educational Researcher*. Our initial findings indicate a replication of the 14 error themes. These emerging

results not only provide incremental validity for the findings of Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) but suggest that APA errors also are rampant in manuscripts submitted to the most prestigious educational journals such as *Educational Researcher*.

Conclusions

The present article has both highlighted the most frequent APA errors committed by authors and has provided guidelines for good practice. Authors might wish to use Table 1 as a guide when preparing their manuscripts in an effort to avoid making the most prevalent citation errors. If academic writers only have limited time and can only master a few guidelines at a time, the information we have presented might help to focus writers' efforts. Another strategy that we suggest is that authors identify their most frequent errors and then develop a personalized checklist to use when editing their works. In any case, we hope that instructors will find our article useful for breaking the cycle of APA errors that appear to permeate many manuscripts that are submitted to journals.

The numerous findings of Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2009) have important implications for authors from the field of education in general and authors who write about school leadership topics in particular. By paying more attention to APA style, authors will exemplify writing with discipline and serve as models of disciplined communicators. Indeed, it is only by writing with discipline that authors likely will increase their chances not only of getting their manuscripts published in a timely manner, but also getting them published in journals that are considered to have the highest visibility for stakeholders and policymakers and that have the most impact for policy and practice.

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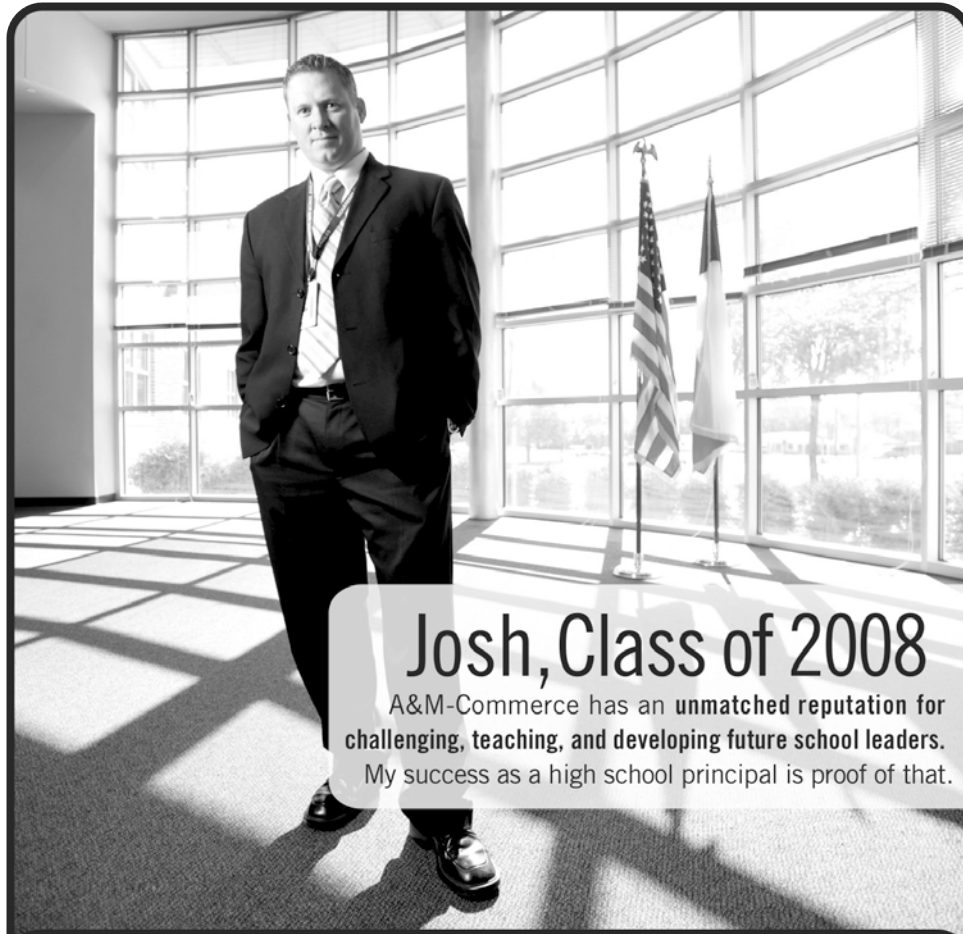
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