

An Evaluation of Principal Interns Performance on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards

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ABSTRACT

The nations' urge for effective schools have drawn much attention on the role of school leaders. Although there is abundant research on how school leaders influence better schools, not much is known about how principal interns effectively master the ISLLC standards during their internship to improve student learning. To have a bird eye view of principal interns' performance on the ISLLC standards during their field experience, the author administered a pre and post self-inventory evaluation to determine if there is a significant difference between the pre/post on school leadership practices with respect to the knowledge, disposition, and performance outlined in the ISLLC standards. A significant increase in the mastery of the ISLLCs from pre self-evaluation to post self-evaluation was found.

Introduction

The traditional role of the principal has been to administer and preserve the status quo rather than vivify change. In the past, the principal has been a manager of educational enterprise, and not necessarily the school leader. For many years, the principal's role was related to inventory of tasks and responsibilities. The role expectations were identified as formal relationships within the school expectations of how the principal should fulfill her role held not only by her but also by faculty and students. Certain behaviors were mandatory for the role.

Role perception studies in past years have been concerned with systematic descriptions of what principals actually do. Research studies that used this method looked at principal's use of time and the nature of the tasks with which they are involved through observations. These studies revealed that principals' working days are characterized by

brevity and fragmentation. A greater number of the principals spent large portions of the day in their offices or the surrounding vicinity of the school's main office and less time in the classroom.

Purpose of the Article

The purpose of this article is to explain how principal interns effectively master the ISLLC standards during their internship to improve student learning.

Research

Other researchers saw the principalship as being more than a job. It is a noble call, a stewardship that requires the principal to strive constantly to enhance others, and to enlarge their areas of responsibility to make them do more. During the effective school movement, some researchers viewed the principal as the counselor of student, the disciplinarian, the organizer of the schedule, and the supervisor of the instructional program. The school leader is the pupil relations representative for the attendance area, the liaison between teachers and the district office. The school leader serve as the director and evaluator of teaching efforts, the manager of school facilities, the supervisor of custodial and food service employees, and as a professional leader. These constructs are still evidence in our schools with big-time words.

According to Davis, et al. (2005),

Growing consensus on the attributes of effective school principals shows that successful school leaders influence student achievement through two important pathways, the support and development of effective teachers and the implementation of effective organizational processes. This consensus is increasingly reflected in preparation and licensing requirements that generally subscribe to a set of common expectations for the knowledge, skills, [performance] and dispositions of school leaders.
(p. 3)

Disposition, knowledge, and performance have been long recognized as essential constructs for school effectiveness. The nations' urge for effective schools have drawn much attention on the role of school leaders. In light of the urge, the role of principal has swelled to include a staggering array of professional tasks and competencies. In today's schools, principals are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations and communications experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, as well as guardians of various legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. In

addition, principals are expected to serve the often conflicting needs and interests of many stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, district office officials, unions, and state and federal agencies. As a result, many scholars and practitioners argue that the job requirements far exceed the reasonable capacities of any one person (Davis, et. al., 2005). Therefore, it should come as no surprise then that the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), in 1996, adopted a national policy for educational administration, and identified three indicators as the fundamental and critical skills that all candidates preparing to become school administrators must acquire.

To acquire the critical skills, the CCSSO created a set of standards that would provide the basis for restructure of school administration in the nation, around the perspectives on school leadership. The CCSSO also developed practice domains of the profession consistent with school leadership. Thus, the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards were developed to influence the leadership skills of existing school leaders as much as they were to shape the knowledge, disposition, and performance skills of prospective leaders in preparation programs.

Alao, et al., (1999), report on the results of a questionnaire, which was given to students in a program developed by the Baltimore City Public School System and Morgan State University. This program, called the Aspiring leaders Development Program (ALDP), is a graduate program in school administration. The cohort of students surveyed possessed an average of 24 years of teaching experience and 3.4 years of administrative experience. The survey was particularly interested in discovering if the student cohort felt that the program adequately addressed the needs of the students in terms of the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and the ISLLC examination for licensure. While 70% of the participants stated that core courses addressed concepts relevant to the ISLLC standards, responses indicated that the cohort desired that courses be more strongly aligned with the standards. Students wished for more coverage of the ISLLC assessment and wanted advising pertaining to anxiety associated with the ISLLC. Students wished for case studies to familiarize themselves with standards and wanted assurance that program instructors and administrators in the program were familiar with the ISLLC examination. Although there is abundant research on how school leaders influence better schools, not much is known about how principal interns effectively master the ISLLC standards during their internship.

To have a bird eye view of principal interns' performance on the ISLLC standards during their field experience, the author administered a pre and post self-inventory evaluation to determine if there is a significant difference between the pre/post on school leadership practices with respect to the knowledge, disposition, and performance outlined in the ISLLC standards.

Methods

The self-evaluation inventory is designed to provide a personal profile of candidate school leadership assets based on the ISLLC Standards for school leaders. At the beginning of the principal interns' internship, a self-evaluation inventory was administered to measure candidate's baseline knowledge and skill. The inventory consists of 179 statements that

describe the knowledge, dispositions, and performances contained within the ISLLC Standards for school leaders. Interns were asked to respond to each statement by reflecting on what they already know, what they believe and value, and what skills they have gained as a school leader. The self-evaluation inventory is administered at the beginning and the end of the interns' internship experience.

In fall of 2007, the self-evaluation inventory questionnaire was administered to sixteen interns registered for a year long principal internship. The first and second self-evaluation evaluations are regarded as pre/post in this paper. The first questionnaire, which is the pre self-evaluation inventory, was administered to the principal interns during their orientation. On a scale of 1.0 to 4.0 (with 4.0 being the highest), candidates were to rate themselves: (1 represents Little Extent; 2 represents Some Extent; 3 represents Sufficient Extent; 4 represents Exemplary Extent) on the knowledge, disposition, and performance indicators.

After completion, the questionnaires were collected and the interns were informed that the process would be repeated in spring of 2008 for a post self-evaluation. A frequency analysis of the data, and a paired t test was used to compare the means of the two scored related samples.

Results

Data for the pre self-evaluation inventory was entered in a Statistical Package Social Sciences (SPSS) for a frequency analysis. The findings on ISSLC standard 1: Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community, 95% of the interns rated themselves some extent in meeting the competency. Sixty-four percent demonstrated deficiency in information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies. Sixty-four percent also rated themselves exemplary extent on the educability of all children. With ISSLC standard 2: Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth, 90% of the interns rated themselves sufficient extent in meeting the competency. For knowledge and skills relating to adult learning and professional development models, the interns rated themselves exemplary extent, and some extent on performance strands in the area of diversity.

On ISSLC standard 3: Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, 50% of the interns rated themselves sufficient extent in meeting the competency. With ISSLC standard 4: Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources the candidates scored low on the item, 60% of the interns rated themselves sufficient extent in meeting the competency. On emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community, working with families and communities, and collaborating with communities, businesses, religious and political organizations, and service agencies was very low, data shows that 80% of the interns have had little experience in these areas. With ISSLC standard 5: Acting with integrity,

fairness, and in an ethical manner, 60% of the interns rated themselves little extent in meeting the competency.

On ISSLC standard 6: Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context, 50% of the interns rated themselves some extent in meeting the competency. One area of weakness identified by the interns was their experiences working with families and communities of diverse and underrepresented populations.

The mean scores of the interns on the self-evaluation inventory were calculated. The chart below is the average scores of each intern's pre self-evaluation inventory. See Table I below.

Table I: Pre Self-Evaluation Inventory (Fall 2007)

Id	Average
1	2.723757
2	2.640884
3	2.743094
4	2.894444
5	2.883978
6	2.569061
7	2.879747
8	2.502762
9	3.116022
10	2.917127
11	2.320442
12	2.346821
13	2.099448
14	2.093923
15	2.038674
16	3.022099

In spring 2008, the post self-evaluation inventory was administered to the interns. Data analysis was done on the responses and a report of the findings showed, ISSLC standard 1: Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community, 95% of the interns rated themselves exemplary extent in meeting the competency. Ninety-one percent of the interns rated themselves high on information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies. Ninety percent also rated themselves sufficient to exemplary extent on the educability of all children.

With ISSLC standard 2: Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth, 87% of the interns rated themselves as exemplary. On ISSLC standard 3: Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, 94% rated themselves as exemplary. With ISSLC standard 4: Collaborating

with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources, 92% rated themselves exemplary extent in meeting the competency. In reference to ISSLC standard 5: Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner, the 88% of the interns rated themselves as exemplary. On ISSLC standard 6: Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context, 85% rated themselves as exemplary in meeting the competency.

The mean scores of the interns on the self-evaluation inventory were calculated. Below are the average scores of each intern on the post self-evaluation inventory. See Table II below.

Table II: Post Self-Evaluation (Spring 2008)

Id	Average
1	3.837989
2	2.832402
3	3.910615
4	3.854749
5	3.608939
6	3.843575
7	3.621951
8	4.000000
9	3.877095
10	3.430168
11	3.960894
12	3.301676
13	3.363128
14	3.402235
15	3.530726

To determine whether there is a significant difference between the pre self-evaluation and post self-evaluation inventory on the knowledge, dispositions, and performances on the ISSLC standards, a paired-sample t test was used to compare the means of the scores from the related samples. The assumption for using the paired-sample t test is that both variables are at the interval levels and are normally distributed.

The mean on the pre self-evaluation was 2.6 (sd = .34), and the mean on the post self -evaluation 3.6 (sd = .32). A significant increase from pre self-evaluation to post self-evaluation was found ($t(14) = -10.052, p < .001$).

Concluding Remarks

The current prevailing model of assessing principal interns' knowledge, performance, and disposition strands have served school administrator preparation programs extremely well, especially during the internship. In assisting principal interns become expert observers of their own leadership skills, they acquire the necessary skills and are able to self-direct and change their own behaviors toward desired outcomes of their school administration preparation programs. This notion has been clearly demonstrated in their pre/post self-inventory evaluation results. By involving interns in their own evaluations, they learn to manage their professional conducts that facilitate and enhance their leadership, and decision-making skills long after they have left their school leader preparation program.

References

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