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Preparing school administrators: an exploratory study of how the Educational Leadership Constituent Council standards are reflected in the practices of school principals

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PREPARING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF HOW THE
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONSTITUENT COUNCIL STANDARDS ARE
REFLECTED IN THE PRACTICES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

by

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and the School of Education, George Fox University

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“PREPARING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF HOW THE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONSTITUENT COUNCIL STANDARDS ARE REFLECTED IN THE PRACTICES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS,” a Doctoral research project prepared by DORIS SPRINGER VICKERY in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in the Educational Foundations and Leadership Department.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored school administration preparation through the use of personal interviews and survey results from Oregon school administrators. The researcher interviewed five second-year principals in order to better understand students' perceived leadership preparation for the role of school principal. The Educational Leadership Constituent Council Building-level Standards (ELCC), adopted by the state of Oregon for administrative training, were used as a guide to analyze the content of the interviews and surveys. Findings include four themes: professional development, time in classrooms, school vision with collaboration, and effective school management. There was also strong alignment between the four themes and the results of the most recent survey. The perceived leadership preparation was positive; participants self-reported that the administrative preparation program benefited their leadership ability. Recommendations for future studies include exploring Continuing Administrator License programs for similar alignment with standards, district level support for new principals, and the effectiveness of instructional leadership for improved student learning.

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Education Act, represented an effort by the federal government to address failing schools. NCLB contained mandates for school improvement including both student achievement and retention of qualified teachers. These mandates began an era of school reform efforts with high-stakes testing for students and increased accountability for teacher performance. In addition, the changes impacted how schools function and the role of a school principal (Marks & Nance, 2007; McGhee & Nelson, 2005). As compared to 15 years ago, school principals are now more involved in the instructional process and responsible for student outcomes (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Levine, 2005).

Today, principals manage schools while also being heavily involved in the daily instruction of students (Bottoms, O'Neill, Fry, & Hill, 2003; Crum, Sherman, & Myran, 2009). Catano and Stronge (2007) explained that the management of a school requires knowledge of district policy, school law, and the student/parent handbook along with seeing that “daily operations are handled fairly and expeditiously” (p. 383). School principals are also expected to manage the building budget, care for staffing issues, evaluate all staff, and provide the link between the school staff, the district office, and the community. These responsibilities require both specialized coursework and on-the-job training.

Along with school management, school principals are responsible for communicating the mission and vision of the school. The ability to work with staff, parents, and students to create a positive learning climate is crucial to student success (Crum et al., 2009). In this way, principals are transformational leaders for the school. They communicate what is expected and then

establish the systems and routines needed to promote the vision and mission of the school.

These management skills require strong communication, as well as knowledge of and the ability to work with diverse groups of people (Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer, 2007).

Today, principals play a significant role in the instructional process within their school (Crum et al., 2009; Grubb & Flessa, 2006). They must be knowledgeable about academic standards and the district adopted curriculum. Principals also play a key part in the professional development of teachers. Reitzug, West, and Angel (2008) explained that the shift in instructional leadership has moved from directing teachers to collaborating with teachers. In this process, principals become the experts regarding instructional practice and often provide training for the staff.

The many responsibilities of the school principal, some driven by NCLB requirements, have increased the need for specialized training. To meet these challenges, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) constructed a set of standards designed to direct preparation programs for school administration. These standards, last updated in 2008, drive the Initial Administrative License (IAL) coursework for universities granting licensure through the state agency. Over 32 educational and professional organizations have participated in the creation and adoption of these standards (Ballenger, Alford, McCune, & McCune, 2009).

The 2008 ISLLC standards include areas of school leadership such as creating a vision, teaching and learning, managing organizational systems, collaborating with families and stakeholders, ethics and integrity, and understanding the educational system. These standards are based on educational research regarding the best practices of school leadership. Each standard requires an extensive knowledge base, additional training, and years of experience to

fully develop. The ISLLC standards are foundational as to how universities prepare principals for school administration.

The state of Oregon has adopted a set of standards created by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC). These standards, known as the ELCC standards, (see Appendix A) are closely aligned with the ISLLC standards. The ELCC standards for building-level leaders guide the content of the university IAL training programs. Educators hoping to earn their IAL must first be instructed and then demonstrate knowledge of the ELCC building-level standards within their practicum experience. University IAL programs have the responsibility to see that potential school principals are well-trained to implement the ELCC building-level standards within school settings.

In 2002 and 2009, the Oregon Professors of Educational Administration (ORPEA) surveyed newly-certified principals to learn to what extent the ELCC building-level standards were understood and practiced within the school setting. The surveys informed Oregon IAL programs as to the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership training programs. Since that time university IAL programs across the state have worked to align the coursework and practicum experience to the ELCC building-level standards in hopes of better preparing educators for the role of school principal.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore leadership preparation for a small group of newly prepared school principals. I conducted a qualitative study by comparing the ORPEA survey results from a 2002 and 2009 program evaluation with personal interviews of second-year school principals who had received their training from one administrator preparation program. The ELCC standards were used as a guide to understand the perceived preparation of the

participants for their role as school principals. The findings will potentially inform university programs and districts as to how the ELCC standards are reflected in the activities of new school principals.

Research Questions

For this qualitative study, I created broad research questions that aligned with the selected problem and the intent of the study. I examined the following research questions:

1. In what ways are ELCC standards reflected in the self-reported activities of principals who recently completed an administrative preparation program?
2. What do second-year principals self-report about their preparation for the role of school principal from their administrative licensure program?
3. What commonalities and differences exist between the second-year principals' perceived preparation and results from the 2002 and 2009 surveys?

Key Terms

Continuing Administrative License (CAL) - The CAL is the second tier of training and licensure for Oregon school administrators. The CAL requires additional coursework beyond the IAL and a district level practicum experience (<http://tspc.oregon.gov>).

Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) - The council approved by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium to design standards used for state administrative licensure (<http://npbea.org>).

ELCC Building-level Standards (ELCC standards) - A set of seven standards used in Oregon administrative preparation programs to meet the requirements of state administrative licensure at the building-level (see Appendix A).

Initial administrative license (IAL) - The Oregon state license required to be a school principal. The license requires coursework, passing scores on national tests, and an extensive practicum experience (<http://tspc.oregon.gov>).

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) - The organization responsible for creating the national standards for school administration. The ISSLC standards closely align with the ELCC building-level Standards. The ISSLC standards were last updated 2008. (http://npbea.org/major_projects).

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) - Founded in 1954, its dual mission is accountability and improvement in education preparation. NCATE is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as professional accrediting organization for universities (<http://www.ncate.org>).

National Council for Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) – Established in 1947, this organization serves the interests and needs of professors of educational administration and practicing school leaders (<http://www.emich.edu/nceaprofessors>). Publications include the *Education Leadership Review* and the *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – The 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary School Education Act. NCLB represents one of the largest efforts by the federal government to improve schools (<http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>).

Oregon Leadership Network (OLN) – The organization consists of state partners, school districts, national affiliations, and nongovernmental organizations. OLN works to enhance instructional leadership for equity (<http://oln.educationnorthwest.org>).

Oregon Professors of Educational Administration (ORPEA) – Professional organization that works to improve the training and certification process for educators in Oregon (<http://www.emich.edu/ncpeaprofessors>). Conducted the 2009 survey for new administrative licensure standards.

State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) – Conducted the 2002 survey. The Oregon consortium included representatives from the Office of the Governor, Oregon Legislature, Oregon Department of Education, Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, Oregon School Boards Association, and the Oregon University System. In 2007 this organization changed to the Oregon Leadership Network.

Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) - State agency in Oregon implements policy related to teacher and administrative licensure (<http://tspc.oregon.gov>).

University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) - A consortium of higher education institutions committed to advancing the preparation and practice of educational leaders for the benefit of schools and children (<http://www.ucea.org>). Publications include the *Educational Administration Quarterly* and the *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*.

Limitations and Delimitations

A natural limitation with any qualitative study is that the sample cannot be generalized to the entire population. In the case of my research questions, the study reflects the self-reported preparedness of a small group of school principals from one university training program (Murray University, pseudonym), as evidenced by the ELCC standards. Given that Murray University's program is unique in how it prepares students in coursework and practicum, this small group of school principals and their associated leadership preparation program should not be generalized

to the larger population of Oregon school principals and other administrative preparation programs.

Exploratory studies, while valuable for in-depth exploration of a topic, are susceptible to misinterpretation from the researcher (Stake, 1995). Therefore, it was with great care that I compared the content of the interviews with the results of the 2002 and 2009 program evaluation surveys. The ELCC building-level standards were used as a guide for comparing the data. The final exploratory narrative mirrors the attitudes and experiences of the participants along with my interpretations as a researcher. I also considered that the information gained during the personal interviews reflected the perceived feelings of the participant during that brief time period. As the participants gain more experience, they may reflect differently concerning their level of preparedness and leadership practices.

Delimitations included selecting Murray University's administrative preparation program and choosing a small sample of Oregon school principals who received their administrative training from Murray University. The intent of the study was to explore leadership preparation using the ELCC standards and the self-reported activities of the participants, along with a comparison of the 2002 and 2009 program evaluation surveys. Therefore, the participants completed their IAL certification at Murray University between the years of 2009 - 2011 and were currently in their second-year of school administration. Restricting the amount of time since the participants earned their IAL to the years of 2009-2011 produced rich information regarding their daily activities as they related to the ELCC standards and their perception of how well-prepared they were for the role of school principal. In addition, this delimitation protected against participants having completed the surveys conducted in 2002 and 2009. I restricted the participants to only those in their second-year, which allowed for them to be heavily involved in

the school administration they were prepared to do, but still new enough to the demands of the position to be aware of the ways they did not feel prepared.

There are two programs at Murray University for administrative licensure. The first tier for a licensed school administrator is to earn the IAL. The second tier is the CAL program, which requires additional coursework and experience at the district level. School principals who have completed their CAL typically have several years of school administration experience. For the purpose of this study, only the IAL program was considered. I initiated this delimitation to focus only on the coursework for the IAL and the experiences of newly hired school principals.

Murray University's IAL program is aligned to the ELCC building-level standards. There are seven standards, which are the basis for the entire IAL program and state administration licensure. For the purpose of this study, only the first six standards were considered (see Appendix A). The seventh standard is the practicum experience and was not considered for this exploratory study. My intent was to limit the study to the ELCC standards directly connected to coursework, in order to provide a more detailed analysis of how the self-reported activities of the participants reflected the first six ELCC standards.

Additional delimitations included participants' school locations and the possibility that I might personally know them. The selected participants worked within a reasonable traveling distance from my place of residence. Therefore, I was able to schedule and conduct the personal interviews within a reasonable amount of time and cost. The participants were also previously unknown to me, to limit any possibility of conflict and to allow for new information to be gained from the personal interviews.

To avoid personal conflict in the research, I selected an administrative preparation program at a university different from the program I completed in 2005. This delimitation

allowed me to explore leadership preparation, for which I had no previous experience or knowledge.

Summary

This chapter established the background and purpose for my exploratory study of leadership preparation, which used survey results from 2002 and 2009 along with personal interviews. The interviews were transcribed and compared with the results of both surveys. ELCC standards were used as a guide for comparing the content of the transcribed interviews with the survey results. The delimitation of selecting participants who graduated from the same university administrative preparation program within the last three years assisted in creating a narrative of their leadership training experience. These participants, who did not participate in either of the surveys, provided additional information regarding their preparation for the role of school principal.

The literature review explores the changing role of the school principal and provides a brief history of leadership preparation. A review of the research conducted in the last eight years supports the characteristics of exemplary leadership preparation programs. Additionally, the impact of policy on leadership preparation is briefly explored. These studies provide support for the changing role of the school principal along with the development of the standards and policies that influence leadership preparation today.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

There have been several attempts by the federal government to improve student achievement within the public school system. One of these attempts was No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Education Act. NCLB required states to implement high stakes testing, policies that ensured highly qualified teachers, and established goals for schools to make adequate yearly progress. These mandates set into motion a focus on student achievement results in areas of math and reading, along with increased accountability for teacher performance. States now required more student data from schools by way of attendance and yearly assessments. Since that time, these expectations have impacted the role of the school principal (Marks & Nance, 2007; McGhee & Nelson, 2005). Gradually, the principal has become more heavily involved in the instructional process, overseeing classroom instruction and assessment, and having a responsibility for student outcomes (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Levine, 2005).

The school principal has great potential to impact school climate, teachers' professional development, and school-community connections. The degree to which a principal is able to manage these three critical areas influences the amount and quality of student learning that takes place in a given school year (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Studies have shown the importance of a positive school climate for student learning, including managing student behavior, creating a safe learning environment, and addressing discipline issues (Drago-Severson, 2012; Youngs,

2007). Improving school climate can also occur through teacher professional development, affecting the perception of teachers and influencing their ability to instruct at high levels (Flores, 2004).

Youngs (2007) also found that on-going professional development for teachers influenced the school climate. The principals in this study facilitated the professional development of teachers through direct interaction, providing mentors, and developing grade-alike teams. In order for professional development to be effective, the principal must align the staff training to the needs of the students. Graczewski, Knudson, and Holtzman (2009) found that when principals articulated a vision for the school with strategies consistent with professional development for teachers, the school was more likely to have relevant professional development for improved student learning. These studies affirm that the school principal is the key person to oversee professional development for teachers.

Along with providing professional development, the principal must manage the school budget and effectively use community resources (Grigsby, Schumacher, Decman, & Simieou, 2010). As more states move to open enrollment or school choice, principals must actively promote the school to the community. Public relations for the school can include updating web pages, participating in community events, meeting with community leaders, and being constantly aware of changes in district and state policy. Principals are key leaders with the potential to influence adults and change the direction of the school (Hallinger, 2003).

In addition to external relations and influence, principals have the responsibility to hire, evaluate, and support teachers. More recently, states are adopting teacher evaluation systems based on student achievement results ("Race to the top program: Executive summary," 2009). This places additional pressure on the school principal to accurately and fairly evaluate teacher

performance connected to student achievement. To accomplish these tasks, principals must have knowledge of student data, instruction, curriculum, and assessment practices. They must also earn the trust of teachers and develop positive working relationships with all stakeholders. The role of principal can include mentor, public relations director, evaluator, manager, and counselor, all in a given day.

For over two decades, schools have been under attack for low achievement scores. The federal government imposed standard-based education, increased testing, and established state level accountability for highly qualified teachers and improved test scores (King, 2002; Marks & Nance, 2007). These mandates increased the principal's responsibilities for daily instruction of students, alignment of core curriculum to the standards, and professional development for teachers. As previously stated, the potential to impact student learning by one school principal is enormous.

The expectation that school principals will communicate a shared vision, use data to identify school goals, and assess the overall effectiveness of the school are part of the Educational Leadership Constituent Council standards (ELCC) (*Educational leadership program standards*, 2011). There are seven standards foundational to how school principals are trained in the state of Oregon. The ELCC standards represent "the fundamental knowledge, skills, and practices intrinsic to building leadership that improve student learning" (p. 5). Leadership preparation programs accredited by the state are expected to train future school leaders using these standards. According to the ELCC, educators earning their Initial Administrative License (IAL) must have an awareness of the concepts within the standards, be able to interpret and integrate the standards, and apply this knowledge to the role of being a school principal.

In the state of Oregon there are over 1,300 public schools serving well over 500,000 students K-12. Within those 1,300 schools there are 1,671 school principals (<http://www.localschooldirectory.com/state-schools/OR>). Nationally, a report published by the Wallace Foundation (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, Syat, & Vine, 2003), estimated that within the next six years 40% of school principals would be eligible for retirement. The combination of job responsibilities and the number of potentially new principals entering the field adds to the importance of leadership preparation. Teachers, parents, students, and ultimately the growth and health of the community depend on well-trained school principals.

In the process of reviewing and synthesizing the literature for this study, I discovered an increase in the demands placed on the school principal since NCLB. This reality influences the roles principals play with teachers and students, the decisions they make, and the increased need for leadership preparation aligned to the current responsibilities of the school principal.

In the literature, there was a significant difference in the research after 2003, which included a focus on schools using data to inform leadership decisions. Additionally, several names surfaced as lead researchers in the field of school leadership and leadership preparation. These included Linda Darling-Hammond, Margaret Terry Orr, Joseph Murphy, Kenneth Leithwood, and Andrew Levine. These researchers investigated and documented how school leadership has changed in the last 15 years, as well as the key elements of an exemplary administrative preparation program.

It is important to note that in Oregon, the ELCC building-level standards have been adopted as the foundation for the IAL program. University administrative preparation programs must align the coursework to the ELCC standards. This illustrates the influence of policy regarding how school principals are prepared, which is also briefly discussed. The literature

investigated for this study includes the expanding role of school principals, a brief history of leadership preparation programs, and the ELCC standards and their impact of policy on administrative licensure.

The Changing Role of the School Principal

The role of school principals began changing in the early 1980s. At that time, the U.S. Department of Education released its landmark report *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This document set into motion school reform efforts that continue to this day. In addition, the growth of technology, changing school demographics, and public scrutiny of student achievement scores have impacted the responsibilities of the school principal. Fredericks and Brown (1993) explained that prior to *A Nation at Risk*, principals spent time on general school administration including managing personnel, student activities, and developing schedules. Generally speaking, the school principal had limited involvement with academic programs. As the public school system shifted during the 1980s and 1990s into what became known as the standards movement, the role of a school principal became more heavily involved with curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Catano & Stronge, 2007; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Goals 2000, another federal government educational reform effort, initiated school-based site councils and school improvement plans. Principals were expected to build collaborative working relationships with teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents in an effort to improve student achievement results. During the 1990s, student data became more readily available to the public and school demographics continued to broaden. Educational issues included literacy instruction, bilingual instruction, and closing the achievement gap between low-income and

middle-class students. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the responsibilities of a school principal continued to grow.

Kelley and Peterson (2006) identified the 1990s reform efforts as a time of special attention on the classroom teacher and the importance of site-based management with all stakeholders. While schools were restructuring, the role of school principals became more collaborative. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) provided a long list of principal duties. They included those which were visionary, as well as those which were mandatory, such as overseeing special programs. The authors explained that the role of principal had become a combination of management and instructional leadership with continuous decisions that impacted the effectiveness of the school. Principals were expected to communicate a shared vision, collaborate with staff and parents, allocate resources, and encourage teacher development (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Murphy, 1994).

In addition to these responsibilities, principals were expected to access, analyze, and make decisions based on school-wide data in order to improve student performance (Farkas et al., 2003; Kirst, Haertel, & Williams, 2005). This responsibility has increased since the implementation of NCLB and state systems of accountability such as the Oregon school report card. Farkas et al. (2003) explained that superintendents are expecting principals to improve student achievement. In this survey, 63% of the superintendents state, “the biggest part of how they evaluate a principal is how successful they are at raising student achievement” (p. 21). However, Earl and Fullan (2003) discussed that, though principals were expected to use student data for their decisions, they lacked the training. This responsibility consisted of interpreting the data and deciding how to best communicate the information to teachers, parents, and the community. Principals needed to be trained to read the numbers and then use that information

for developing school improvement plans. The role of a principal has evolved from management to restructuring the school, requiring leadership preparation that included knowledge and skills pertinent to improving instruction.

Leadership Preparation 1987 - 2005

In 1987, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEAA) issued a report *Leaders for America's Schools*. The final conclusion was that, “fewer than 200 of the country’s 505 graduate programs in educational administration were capable of meeting necessary standards of excellence. The rest,” said the commission, “should be closed” (Levine, 2005, p. 18). This report was one of the few studies conducted on leadership preparation during the last two decades of the 20th century (Murphy & Vriesenga, 2007). Years later, Levine (2005) would provide additional insight into the problem with leadership preparation.

Following the 1987 report by the NCEEAA, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) produced a set of standards for school administration that were approved and adopted by the Council of Chief State School Officers in 1996. These standards, based on principles of teaching and learning, included the skills and knowledge needed for school leaders. At that time, 40 states implemented the ISLLC standards within their administrative licensure program (Davis et al., 2005). Since the implementation of the ISLLC standards, several studies have noticed a lack of alignment between leadership preparation programs and the role of school principal. This disconnect has impacted the quality of school principals being produced by the university programs (Bottoms et al., 2003; Farkas et al., 2003).

Despite the effort by states in adopting the ISLLC standards, several studies have argued that leadership preparation programs, as implemented by the universities, were out of date with

the demands facing school leaders. McCarthy (2002) noted the increase in accountability and assessment within the standards-based movement, along with the increased use of technology within school leadership. At that time, leadership preparation within the university system was not addressing these important issues. Principals and superintendents agreed that program preparation was not producing quality school leaders. In the report, *Rolling Up Their Sleeves* (Farkas et al., 2003), 72% of superintendents and 67% of principals felt that formal training programs did not adequately prepare leaders for the job of managing a school. Furthermore, only 8% of superintendents and 21% of principals acknowledged that being certified by the state guaranteed a principal had the training to be a competent principal.

The role of a school principal requires knowledge and understanding of leadership styles, the ability to synthesize through various reform efforts, and specialized training for managing a complex organization. According to Levine's report (2005), the amount of responsibility placed on the principal for student outcomes impacts administrative training programs. University IAL programs have the responsibility to provide the coursework needed to prepare prospective principals for the enormous task of leading and managing a school. This includes aligning the coursework to the ISLLC standards, carefully selecting the participants for the program, and periodically seeing that the coursework supports the demands of the leadership position.

Other studies have analyzed how state requirements impacted leadership preparation. Hale and Moorman (2003) found that all states except Michigan and South Dakota required principals to have a state license, completing a certain number of credit hours from an approved university program. However, these programs tended to be too theoretical and disconnected from the daily responsibilities of managing a school. The recommendations included changing the leadership preparation to a focus on student instruction and community leadership. Hess and

Kelly (2007) also found that the curriculum within preparation programs was theoretical and lacked content in data analysis, use of technology, and how to hire and terminate personnel. The study was both a survey of current principals and a content analysis of 31 administrative programs course syllabi, a total of 210 documents. Analysis of the course syllabi showed the weight of instruction in the following areas: managing for results, managing personnel, and technical knowledge. Overall, managing for results was covered 15.7% of the time, managing personnel, 14.9%; and technical knowledge, 29.6%. Other areas of leadership preparation were covered less than 14% of the time. Although there were consistencies across the university preparation programs, the analysis showed that these programs were not adequately training school principals.

Levine (2005) was also critical of administrative preparation programs, stating that the training was inadequate and unable to produce leaders ready to transform schools into organizations that improved student learning. His report included 28 case studies of administrative training programs and departments of education along with four extensive surveys. These included a deans survey of U.S. education schools and departments (53% responded), a faculty survey of 5,469 (40% responded), an alumni survey of 15,468 (34% responded), and a principals survey of 1,800 (41% responded). Levine found that educational administration programs were the weakest of all programs within the nation's education schools. None were found to be exemplary. The most effective model was found in England, and it differed greatly from programs found within the United States. The rigor required to prepare school principals to transform an organization was missing from university programs.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, studies focused on the effective elements of leadership preparation claim there are several exemplary administrative training programs

available to potential school principals. Exceptional programs have qualities such as problem-based learning, cohorts, collaborative partnerships, extensive field experience, and technology (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). Six administrative programs were found to be effective in these areas. In comparison to traditional leadership preparation, these programs were found to be more demanding, have utilized a more selective admissions process, and established strong collaborative relationships with districts. Additional studies have recommended eliminating the self-selected pool of candidates to leadership preparation programs and restructuring program content to better align with the demands facing today's principals (Bottoms et al., 2003; Chenoweth, Carr, & Ruhl, 2002).

Davis et al. (2005) explained four key findings regarding effective leadership preparation. The first, elements of good leadership, aligned with Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004): the development of people (teachers) was essential. Secondly, leadership preparation required an effective program design that included curricular coherence, research-based content, the use of cohort groups, and a working relationship between the district and the university. The third finding recommended improving the pathway to school administration. Typically, the process for being accepted into a university leadership program was through self-selection. The last finding was that additional research was needed in the areas of policy reform and finance.

One of the issues hindering reform in the field of leadership preparation is a lack of research on effective leadership preparation. Murphy and Vriesenga (2004) reviewed the leading journals in school administration for an analysis of the research. They found that only 8% of the 2,000 articles published from 1975 – 2002 covered the topic of leadership preparation. Additionally, there was very little research conducted on how leaders were selected, instructed, and evaluated for leadership ability. Murphy (2006) explained that since 1990, “nearly 4% of

the articles in the four leading journals in our field have been given over to empirical studies of principal preservice training” (p. 63). Murphy recommended increasing the research on effective preparation programs, program outcomes, and alternative designs for leadership preparation. It has been the Wallace Foundation, in partnership with national organizations, who supported several research studies on the topic of leadership preparation (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007; Mitgang & Maeroff, 2008; Mitgang & Gill, 2012).

Leadership Preparation 2006 - 2012

The Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, in partnership with the Wallace Foundation, supported one of the first thorough investigations of leadership preparation programs. Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) began their study of eight pre- and in-service principal preparation programs in 2003. The programs were selected because they had a variety of approaches, worked closely with local school districts, and worked within a unique policy context. The data was collected over several years, the majority of it being interviews from the candidates, other principals, and program faculty. Some of the commonalities between the eight programs included program alignment with the ISSLC standards, curriculum with a focus on instructional leadership, integrated instruction with theory, practice and self-reflection, professional support from a strong cohort model, and a recruitment process to select strong teachers with leadership potential. The findings also showed that program principals felt well-prepared to lead professional development, guide instructional programs within the school, and promote a school-wide vision (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Shortly thereafter, Mitgang and Maeroff (2008) reported on the progress and challenges of principal preparation. At that time, 46 states had adopted leadership standards and were using them to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership preparation programs. Several states were

producing new accreditation guidelines in conjunction with the implementation of standards. The actions by the states influenced universities to redesign their leadership preparation programs. Mitgang and Maeroff summarized “lessons learned” from the body of research they explored. They noted that successful principal preparation programs were significantly different from other programs by how they recruited leadership candidates, worked closely with local school districts, and maintained a focus on preparing school leaders to improve instruction.

Additionally, leadership training should continue after the educator is in the position of school principal. Principals require ongoing professional development and support in order to be successful. But both the redesign of leadership programs and continued training come at a cost. Mitgang and Maeroff (2008) recommended channeling additional resources to quality programs. Their final suggestion was to address the leadership challenges facing school principals, noting that stressful working condition would undermine the most well-trained leader.

Other studies validated the improvements made from restructuring leadership preparation programs. This included an increased focus to improve teaching and learning, curriculum aligned with state standards, and the ability to implement a vision (Orr, 2006; Orr & Pounder, 2006). One study compared survey responses to determine the differences between program features and learning outcomes. The essential features of a quality university program consisted of meaningful school-based experiences, learning-centered leadership, and a relevant curriculum. These program attributes produced school principals who reported feeling well-prepared for the role of school principal (Ballenger et al., 2009).

Adding to the body of research regarding leadership preparation was the work of Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, and Orr (2010). Their handbook summarized the key elements of an effective leadership program. Similar to other studies, they recommended careful selection

of educators with leadership potential. The leadership programs included in this handbook actively partnered with local districts to recruit well-qualified candidates. In addition, the programs looked for under-represented populations to add diversity and improve the quality of future school principals. The coursework focused on instruction, school improvement, and developing transformational leaders. The principals from these programs reported a strong connection between coursework, field experience, and other learning activities.

More recently, studies have shown that candidates from exemplary preparation programs are able to influence student learning and the overall school climate (Drago-Severson, 2012; Orr & Orphanos, 2011). These studies strongly recommended a connection between coursework and internship experiences. School improvement indicators included establishing common school goals and working closely with teachers to make instructional decisions. Furthermore, the principals demonstrated the ability to use leadership as a method for improving the school. They used leadership skills to build a culture of collaboration with teachers, which positively influenced the school climate.

Mitgang and Gill (2012) provided an update from the 2008 report *Becoming a Leader: Preparing Principals for Today's Schools*. Based on their review of research, their executive summary offered five lessons learned:

1. A more selective, probing process for choosing candidates for training is the essential first step in creating a more capable and diverse corps of future principals.
2. Aspiring principals need pre-service training that better prepares them to lead improved instruction and school change, not just manage buildings.
3. Districts should do more to exercise their power to raise the quality of principal training, so that graduates better meet district needs.

4. States could make better use of their power to influence the quality of leadership training through standard setting, program accreditation, principal certification, and financial support for highly qualified candidates.
5. Especially in their first years on the job, principals need high quality mentoring and professional development tailored to individual and district needs (Mitgang & Gill, 2012, p. 2).

These five points, supported through numerous studies, are key elements of preparing educators for the complex role of being a school principal (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Drago-Severson, 2012; Young, Crow, Murphy, & Ogawa, 2009). Woven into the recommendations for improving the training for future principals are the ELCC standards, designed and adopted by several educational agencies, including the state of Oregon.

The ELCC Building-level Standards

In the mid-1990s, 32 educational agencies and 13 professional organizations formed the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) with the goal of establishing standards for leadership preparation programs. In 2002, the ISLLC standards were combined with the standards approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which then became the Educational Leadership Constituent Council standards (ELCC) (Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, 2005). These new standards were to be used for accreditation of university leadership preparation programs. The ELCC included many professional organizations such as the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) and the National Council for Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) (Ballenger et al., 2009). The ISLLC standards were revised in 2008, as were the ELCC building-level standards.

The ELCC standards used today for leadership preparation of school principals are the *Educational Leadership Program Standards, 2011 ELCC building-level (Educational Leadership Program Standards, 2011)*. The ELCC standards were based on several assumptions, including the belief that “improving student achievement is the central responsibility of school leadership” (p. 5). These standards represented research-based practices that improved student learning and are now the current framework from which to assess leadership preparation in Oregon (see Appendix A). Each of these standards included several elements describing the actual skills involved in effectively managing a school and improving the teaching and learning process.

Policy and Leadership Preparation

Policymakers who influence leadership preparation programs include both organizations and state-level entities, such as Oregon’s Teacher and Standards Practices Commission (TSPC). This section discusses the few agreements that policymakers have made regarding leadership preparation programs and the ways policy influences universities.

There are multiple agencies and organizations involved in the process of creating policies that influence leadership preparation. Bogotch (2011) provided a list of the organizations and explained their part in establishing the current system for leadership preparation at the university level. Some of these included the American Association of School Administrators, Council of Chief State School Officers, Educational Leaders Constituent Council, National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, and the National Policy Board of Educational Administration. Each of these agencies had a voice when it came to the policy and standards implemented by the universities. Bogotch argued that while some of these agencies have been critical of leadership preparation

programs, the same agencies have embraced the standards directly connected to leadership preparation.

Pounder (2011) also noted that policymakers were critical of university leadership preparation programs and were looking for evidence as to the effectiveness of the administrative training programs. According to Pounder, the ELCC standards “have had perhaps the greatest impact on state administrator quality policy, with these standards infused in preparation programs standards, candidate assessment and licensure, program approval or accreditation, and graduate mentoring and induction” (p. 259). Furthermore, the policies that guide the preparation of K-12 administrators have created a system that starts with the initial license and ends with ongoing professional development. Pounder noted that several more recent studies are now looking at the connection between leadership preparation, policy, and student achievement results.

One of the articles from *Education Administration Quarterly* investigated the trends of policy development for leadership preparation. Roach, Smith, and Boutin (2011) argued that the continuum of standards-based leadership preparation, increased accountability, tiered administrative licensure, and a link to school improvement would more than likely continue because those in control of policy simply follow one another instead of current research. This was referred to as institutional isomorphism. The implications from this research included very few changes to the policies that influence leadership preparation and suggested university accreditation might eventually be managed by NCATE (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education) and not by the state. They went on to explain that institutional isomorphism “is unlikely to generate new knowledge in the field and new forms of practice to meet the needs of an increasingly complex set of school and student factors facing educational

leaders in the United States” (p. 102). Recommendations included policymakers seeking out other stakeholders to provide input, higher education instructors requesting different types of policy, and helping policymakers understand the concept of institutional isomorphism.

State legislators are the key developers of policies that guide and influence leadership preparation programs. Shelton (2012) explained that legislators could improve quality leadership standards, develop rigorous program accreditations, evaluate program effectiveness, and allocate funding to the most effective programs. Similar to Mitgang and Gill (2012), this article listed the keys to a quality principal preparation program. These included coherent curriculum aligned to the standards, strong partnerships between districts and universities, and ongoing professional development for school principals. The article cited Oregon S.B. 290 (2011) and Oregon H.B. 3619a (2010) as examples of state legislators influencing the preparation programs for school leaders.

The Center for American Progress also supported state involvement in leadership preparation. Cheney and Davis (2011) provided a list of “lagging” states and “leading” states. The states noted as lagging had a misalignment between state policies and research about effective leadership preparation programs. The leading states were making dramatic changes to leadership preparation programs, which included better alignment to administrative standards. Two gateways to a principalship are controlled by the state: university program approval and the administrative licensure. Programs in this study were evaluated based on the core content of the program, method of delivery, and overall design. They were also evaluated on the requirements for attaining the administrative license. Some states did not have either gateway and were found to lack alignment between policies and state-adopted standards, suggesting dramatic inconsistencies between the university preparation programs. How a school leader attained an

administrative license varied greatly, depending on the state requirements (standards and policies) and the selected university program.

While the models vary between universities within the same state, the following elements were strongly recommended:

- Undergirding competency framework
- Strategic and proactive recruiting
- Rigorous selection process
- Relevant and practical coursework
- Experiential, clinical school-based opportunities
- Placement and on-the-job support
- Robust data collection and continuous learning (Cheney & Davis, 2011, pp. 10-11)

Model states had strengthened the review process and required principal preparation programs to align their curriculum and base program designs on current research, before reapplying for state approval. More states were considering the elements of an effective principal preparation program and had created policy that would enforce the necessary changes. They also looked more closely at the requirements for licensure and establishing outcome-based certification requirements (Cheney & Davis, 2011).

In Oregon, TSPC enforces the OARs (Oregon Administrative Rules) pertaining to the leadership preparation programs. TSPC program approval (OAR 584-018-0205) and educational leadership for administrator licensure standards (OAR 581-022-1725) provide the requirements for principal preparation programs. Oregon legislature has both gateways to the principalship for program approval and licensure (Cheney & Davis, 2011). There are administrative program and licensure requirements, as adopted by the State Board of Education. University administrator

programs in Oregon must follow the OARs to receive their program accreditation.

Administrative training programs offered in Oregon, including core content and practicum experiences, must be based on the ELCC building-level standards (see Appendix A).

Conclusions from the Literature

The role of school principal has changed significantly over the past 15 years. Principals are expected to transform schools for the purpose of improved student learning (Farkas et al., 2003; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2004). This requires specialized training to manage the school and improve the instructional process. Several studies prior to 2006 have documented that preparation programs are not aligned with the current job requirements of a principal (Farkas et al., 2003; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Levine, 2005). Universities, guided by the ISLLC and ELCC standards, have the responsibility to prepare education leaders for the role of school principal, and to do it in a way that matches present-day expectations for school leaders.

Driving the need to improve leadership preparation are studies proving a strong leader can be a catalyst for significant change within a school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2004). The principal is in a key position to retain, support, and evaluate teacher performance, manage resources, connect to the community and create a positive learning environment, all of which influence student learning. In fact, "...there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader. Many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds but leadership is the catalyst" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 4). Clearly, strong leadership is needed to improve student learning. This need has prompted over 32 educational agencies to work with universities to reform how educators are trained and certified for the position of school principal.

In 2005, Levine produced a nationally recognized report detailing the misalignment between leadership responsibilities of the principal and preparation programs (Ballenger et al., 2009; Bogotch, 2011). Since that time, many universities, with the support of educational agencies and professional organizations, have reformed their preparation programs to better align to the standards for school administration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Mitgang & Gill, 2012; Young et al., 2009). The past seven years have given the field a clearer picture of key elements of leadership preparation. These include a strong selection process, coherent and rigorous curriculum aligned to the standards, training and practicum experience with a focus on how to improve student learning, and collaboration between the university and the local school district (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Mitgang & Gill, 2012).

The reform process of university leadership preparation has been strongly influenced by standards. In Oregon, the ELCC standards provide a measuring tool as to the level of leadership preparedness and are used for university accreditation. Borne out of extensive research, the ELCC standards cover every element of building-level leadership known to improve student learning (Ballenger et al., 2009; Young et al., 2009). Given the weight of responsibility on universities to provide programs aligned to ELCC standards, it is important to look closely at that alignment for the ways it can inform university programs as its strengths and weaknesses.

Leadership preparation is an enormous task with the potential to not only influence how a school is managed and to what extent the school impacts student learning, but also the relationship of the school to the district and the community. Administrative preparation programs that are designed based on the more recent research will produce principals well-prepared to lead schools and influence practices at the district and community level.

CHAPTER 3

Method

Introduction

This qualitative study explored perceived leadership preparation by using self-reported activities from a small group of second-year Oregon school principals who completed their administrative training at Murray University. The ELCC building-level standards (see Appendix A), the basis for program coursework in Oregon, were used as a guide for analyzing the data. Data collection consisted of transcribed personal interviews with second-year principals and the survey results from 2002 and 2009 Oregon administrator training program evaluation. The survey results, provided to me by the university, contained quantitative and qualitative data based on the responses of Oregon school administrators throughout the state.

The qualitative analysis was conducted in two stages. The first stage was to align the transcribed interviews to the ELCC standards and then code the data, looking for similarities and patterns. This process of analysis led to four themes related to the first three ELCC standards, and addressed the first research question. Along with the four themes, I also examined the self-reported preparedness of the five participants, addressing the second research question. The second stage was to review the program evaluation survey results from 2002 and 2009, comparing the survey data to the four themes and the self-reported preparedness of the five participants to answer the third research question.

This exploratory study allowed me to learn about leadership preparation and how the self-reported activities of the participants in my study aligned with the ELCC standards. Stebbins (2001) explained that qualitative studies allow the researcher to discover the personal experiences of people and to thoroughly learn about a given subject. The process allows for

flexibility, open-mindedness, and could capitalize on the experience of the researcher. Berg and Lune (2012) described the value of conducting a qualitative study. They explained that qualitative procedures “provide a means of accessing unquantifiable knowledge about the actual people researchers observe and talk to or about, people represented by their personal traces” (p. 8). The qualitative research process allowed me to explore the experiences of novice school principals and their level of perceived preparedness from one university training program. It also provided the opportunity to discover how their daily activities and the four themes compared to the 2002 and 2009 program evaluation survey results regarding administrative training programs in Oregon. For this qualitative study, I investigated the following research questions:

1. In what ways are ELCC standards reflected in the self-reported activities of principals who recently completed an administrative preparation program?
2. What do second-year principals self-report about their preparation for the role of school principal from their administrative licensure program?
3. What commonalities and differences exist between the second-year principals’ perceived preparation and results from the 2002 and 2009 surveys?

The study included the personal stories of five participants, providing rich information as to the rewards and challenges facing today’s school principal. The comparison of the themes to the 2002 and 2009 survey results will potentially inform administrative training programs as to how the perceived leadership preparation of trained administrators has changed since 2002, and to what extent the ELCC standards are reflected in the self-reported activities of the participants.

Setting

The setting for this exploratory study was Murray University’s administrative preparation program. The training program began during the 1999 – 2000 academic year and since that time,

approximately 26 educators have earned their initial license each year. The program coursework and requirements for licensure were revised in 2007 to match TSPC requirements. Changes made at that time are still in effect today.

Participants in this research study completed the program between 2009 – 2011. As is true now, the coursework for the Initial Administrative License (IAL) was based on the ELCC building-level 2008 standards, one through six (see Appendix A). ELCC standard seven, the practicum experience, was not part of this exploratory study. This delimitation allowed me to focus on the coursework portion of the administrative preparation program. The coursework for the IAL included *Instructional Supervision*, *Leadership in Education*, *Managing Instructional Budgets*, *Ethical Perspectives on Educational Leadership*, and *Legal Perspectives on Educational Policy and Finance* (see Appendix B).

Murray University's program provided instruction through an online format, along with traditional classroom instruction. The participants were part of a cohort model, which included educators from all backgrounds and experiences. The university professors for the IAL courses had previous school principal experience and continue to work closely with Oregon school districts. The training program could be a stand-alone for certification or be part of a master's of education degree. For this university, approximately 15 – 20% of the educators combined their administrative preparation program with a master's degree in school administration or a related field.

In Oregon, after earning the IAL, school administrators have a window of time to complete their Continuing Administrative License (CAL). The CAL coursework is more in-depth and focused on district level leadership. For the purpose of this exploratory study, only the

IAL coursework and the first six ELCC standards were considered. This delimitation allowed me to focus on the leadership actions of school principals new to the role, and how those actions reflected the ELCC standards.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was used for this exploratory study, based on the pre-established delimitations. Murray University provided a list of 116 potential participants who completed their IAL from 2009 – 2012. Those who completed their IAL in 2012 were eliminated because if those individuals were employed as a school principal, this study would have been conducted during their first year of administration. As previously explained, I intentionally selected second-year principals who had recently completed their IAL. This allowed for participants who were new to the position and could still recall the coursework.

The remaining 88 names were crosschecked with the Oregon Department of Education's 2012 – 2013 District and School Directory to verify employment and location. One name was removed from the list because I was familiar with the participant and his/her experience. Of the remaining potential participants, six were found to be in their second-year as a school principal. Some were literacy coaches or had other positions, such as TOSA (Teacher on Special Assignment). I assume that the remaining 82 educators had either not found employment as a school principal or had decided against pursuing an administrative career. This may be a result of the economy on schools (schools closing and educators not retiring). The five selected participants were within a reasonable traveling distance from my place of residence.

The five participants were each contacted by multiple emails and phone conversations in order to schedule the personal interview. Three of the five were reluctant to participate because

of the many time constraints on their daily calendar. However, once I spoke with them directly and explained the purpose of the study, they were willing to schedule an interview.

The participants for this exploratory study were five school principals who completed their administrative preparation program from Murray University within the last three years. They were in their second year as a school principal. Two of the principals were at middle schools, the other three were at elementary schools. Student populations at each school ranged from 350 to 700 students. The participants brought to the role of principal previous teaching and leadership experience, along with the coursework and practicum experience of the administrative preparation program. All of the participants had more than one year of experience as a TOSA. The TOSA experience ranged from instructional coach at one school to central office leadership experience at multiple schools. Pseudonyms were used for participants in order to maintain confidentiality. For clarity, Table 1 identifies the characteristics of the participants and their corresponding schools.

Table 1: Participants

Participant	Gender and age	Level	Prior leadership experience	Prior education	School demographics
Carmen IAL: 2011	Female 45 – 50	Middle school	TOSA, AP, and elementary principal	IAL and Master's combined	670 students, grades 6 – 8 One AP 19% free/reduce lunch
David IAL: 2009	Male 30 – 35	Middle school	TOSA and two years AP	Master's in Curriculum & Instruction	700 students, grades 6 – 8 One AP 44% free/reduce lunch
Amanda IAL: 2009	Female 35 – 40	Elementary school	TOSA for six years	Master's in Curriculum & Instruction	350 students grades K – 5 Non-Title 53% free/reduce lunch
Sarah IAL: 2010	Female 35 – 40	Elementary school	TOSA for six years	Master's in Curriculum & Instruction	640 students, grades K-5 70% free/reduce lunch Title I school ELL program
Matthew IAL: 2009	Male 45 – 50	Elementary school	TOSA and then AP at two elementary schools	Master's of Teaching	600 students, grades K-5 60% free/reduce lunch Title I school ELL program

Role of the Researcher

I am a graduate student completing this exploratory study to meet the requirements of the Doctor of Education degree from George Fox University. I am also an elementary principal aware of the rewards and challenges of the position. Having completed my IAL in 2005, and with over 20 years of experience in education, I am familiar with the process of leadership preparation and the daily demands facing school principals.

Previous to pursuing my administrative license, I earned my bachelor's degree in 1989 and my master's degree in 2005. I taught at the elementary level for six years followed by another six years in a TOSA position. Between the years of 2005 – 2009 I served the district where I am currently employed in a variety of district-wide positions. These included serving as math coach, writing and managing several grants, supervising after school programs, and various family literacy projects. I have been principal of my current school for three years, and have 16 teachers and 25 staff under my supervision.

In addition to my role as principal, I provide support at the district level for ELL (English Language Learners) program improvements. It has been my responsibility to write and submit the ELL program plan and the plan for improvement; both were approved by the Oregon Department of Education without revision. Currently I am being trained to implement an inclusion model of the required ELD (English Language Development) instruction.

Along with formal coursework, I also received training in Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Positive Behavior Instructional Support (PBIS), and Credit by Proficiency Grading. Given these experiences and additional training, the interpretation of the results will be influenced by my teaching background and my understanding and expertise of leading a school.

I believe this, in combination with the data analysis, will strengthen the final results of the exploratory study.

Professionally, I am interested in this topic because of having observed new principals struggle to manage the school and meet the challenge of ongoing school improvement. It is my belief that both coursework and field experience prepare leaders in education for the role of school principal. However, the coursework for any preparation program is a foundational piece to effective school leadership. Universities and districts have the task of implementing the ELCC standards into the licensure, ongoing professional development, and evaluation of school principals. Therefore, it is my hope that this study will inform administrative training programs the extent the ELCC standards are evident, along with the current training needs for school principals.

Research Ethics

Approval to interview and study the school principals was obtained from Murray University's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix C). Following IRB approval, a letter of consent explaining the exploratory study and requesting participation was given to the director of the Murray University's IAL program (see Appendix D). Following that letter, I contacted the participants by email with a letter of consent, explaining the purpose and process for the exploratory study (see Appendix E). I collected the signed consents from the director of the university and each of the participants.

Once the participants agreed, I worked with them to schedule the personal interviews. The participants for this study were kept confidential. This means that all participant names and any identifying information were not allowed on the recordings of the interview. The transcripts of the interviews did not include names or any identifying information. In addition, pseudonyms

were used in chapters four and five to maintain confidentiality of the participants. All research documents were locked in separate, secure locations for a period no less than five years. I will be the only individual who has access to these materials. After five years, I will personally destroy all relevant materials and delete audio recordings.

The one university administrative preparation program selected for this study is also confidential and is referenced by a pseudonym. I worked with the director of the administrative preparation program to gather the list of potential participants and attain the 2002 and 2009 survey data. This study was not intended to be an evaluation of a training program, but instead to explore leadership preparation for a small group of new principals. In chapter 4 of this study, the results will explain how the ELCC standards were reflected in the self-reported activities of the participants and how the responses compared with the 2002 and 2009 survey results. There is also the potential to inform policy-makers as to how the ELCC standards are reflected in the self-reported activities of school principals. The findings communicate the personal stories of the participants, as well as the rewards and challenges of being a school principal. This information will inform IAL programs as to the current demands of the job and the preparation needed for future school principals.

Research Design

The research design was an exploratory study of leadership preparation, using the results of program evaluation surveys conducted in 2002 and 2009 and personal interviews conducted in 2012. The ELCC building-level standards were used as a guide for analyzing the transcribed personal interviews. Data from the transcribed personal interviews were coded and resulted in emergent themes, which were aligned with ELCC standards. The themes and the participants' perceived preparation were then compared with the 2002 and 2009 survey results.

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) explained that qualitative studies are “suited to promoting a deep understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants. This approach implies an emphasis on exploration, discovery, and description” (p. 518). In the case of this research design, I investigated the participants’ perspectives of leadership preparation and then set out to describe how their self-reported activities reflected their training and integrated with the ELCC standards.

Similar to case study methodology, I first identified the subject (leadership preparation), used purposeful sampling to acquire the participants, determined what data to collect, and then analyzed the data using three stages of coding (Creswell, 2007). Unique to this exploratory study, I was provided the data and analysis from two previously conducted statewide surveys. The surveys provided university administrative preparation programs throughout Oregon with information regarding the perceived preparedness of school administrators and recommendations for improvement. The final stage of data analysis was to create a detailed narrative of perceived leadership preparation stemming from the personal interviews and the comparison of themes to the program evaluation survey results.

Yin (2011) described several key characteristics of qualitative research. These included flexible research designs, “field-based” data such as personal interviews, analysis of non-numeric data, and the challenge of interpreting the data without generalizations. This study of leadership preparation used personal interviews of school principals, representing five different schools in five different districts in Oregon. I also used previously conducted program evaluation surveys, as a way to determine changes in leadership preparation. The interpretation of data included a comparison of the perceived preparedness of school administrators in 2012 with those who completed a survey on the same topic in 2002 and 2009.

Procedures

For this exploratory study I selected the participants, conducted personal interviews, transcribed the interviews, reviewed results from the 2002 and 2009 surveys, analyzed the content from the interviews, compared the data, and created a narrative of the administrative preparation program. The final narrative is based on how the self-reported activities of the participants reflected the ELCC standards and how the emerging themes compared with the 2002 and 2009 survey results.

The first stage of the analysis consisted of coding the transcribed interviews, using the six ELCC standards. For the initial coding I categorized the participant's statements from the transcribed interviews with each corresponding ELCC standard. For example, statements regarding any type of professional development were aligned with the second ELCC standard, instructional improvement. This process continued until I had placed every statement with a corresponding ELCC standard.

After I grouped the statements with each ELCC standard, I began to combine them into major categories, keeping them aligned with the specific standard. During this part of the analysis, also referred to as focus coding, I used the common wording among the statements to create themes. It was at this stage that I realized the first three ELCC standards were heavily discussed by all of the participants, which led to the four themes. The ELCC standard, instructional improvement, was reflected in much of the content of the interviews, leading to two themes for this one standard.

The second stage of the analysis compared the four themes with data from the 2002 and 2009 surveys. The 2002 data, provided to me by Murray University, was both quantitative and qualitative. One of the questions on the survey requested recommendations for program

improvement. The data for this question was in the form of a brief narrative summary. Similarly, the 2009 survey included a narrative response for program improvement. I used only the questions and responses of the 2002 and 2009 surveys that directly related to the initial administrative program. This process allowed me to compare the differences and commonalities between the participants' perceived preparation with the results of the 2002 and 2009 surveys to answer the third research question.

Based on an analysis of the data, the final step was to write a detailed narrative about experiences of second-year principals. I described each of the themes in the order of frequency, along with the self-reported activities of the participants. I also revealed how the ELCC standards, those not matched with the themes, were reflected within the activities of the participants. Within this process I focused on the three research questions as I shared the experiences of the participants in regards to their perceived preparation for the role of school principal.

Instrumentation/Materials

Interview guide questions were used to discover the perceived leadership preparation of the participants (see Appendix F). I designed the questions to be open-ended and invited each participant to share about their school, successes, challenges, and experiences of being a second-year principal. Part of the interview also included questions regarding the coursework provided by Murray University. This allowed the participant to discuss what they remembered from their courses, how they currently use any of the materials, and how the content prepared them for the role of school principal.

Other methods for data collection used during this study included my field notes and a research journal. I maintained field notes to record my observations during each personal

interview. This included the location of the interview and the behavior of the participant before, during, and after the interview. I noted what information or documents were handed to me and if the participant referenced any documents or charts during the interview. I also kept a research journal during the course of the study. This became a running record of my daily activities with regards to the research. I used this spiral notebook to keep track of my progress, note any questions that needed to be answered by my dissertation chair, and to maintain the list of next steps. I found this tool to be invaluable for my organization and learning process.

Additional instruments for this study included the program evaluation survey results from 2002 and 2009, used by universities in Oregon to improve administrative training programs (see Table 2). Both surveys included information regarding employment status, expected preparedness, and perceived preparedness of those participants who currently held an Oregon administrative license.

Table 2: Sources of Data Collection

Year collected:	2002	2009	2012
Type of instrument	Survey of Oregon administrative licensees conducted for the Oregon University System	Survey for new administrative licensure standards (ELCC standards) conducted by ORPEA)	Personal interviews transcribed and analyzed by the researcher, using the ELCC standards
Participants	228	392	5
Years participants completed the administrative licensure program	1972 - 2002	392 who self-reported that they completed their IAL 1976-2009 28 of the 392 completed their IAL 2005-2008	2009 - 2011
Type of data used for this exploratory study	Quantitative data; summary of qualitative data	Quantitative data for all participants; Qualitative data regarding the administrative preparation program	Qualitative data

The analysis of the 2009 survey gave university preparation programs valuable information about their graduate's perceptions concerning the impact and relevance of the administrative preparation program they attended. The survey data included both quantitative and qualitative results. I used two questions from the survey that specifically related to administrative preparation: "How important were the following standards to your learning?" and

“How adequate was your preparation in the following standards for your current role?” The data from both of these questions is presented in chapter four.

The qualitative data from the 2009 survey resulted in a set of narrative comments that I used in my study. Participants responded to the question “List any changes you recommend to improve the IAL preparation coursework.” For this data I made the decision to only use those administrators who self-reported completing their IAL 2005 – 2008 and who provided suggestions related to the coursework. By disseminating the data to this time span I created a smaller group with more recent memory of their IAL coursework. This group of 18 administrators provided information regarding the IAL program coursework, as it related to their current role of school administrator.

The 2002 survey also contained quantitative and qualitative results, with participants from all over Oregon who reportedly completed their administrative training program between the years of 1972 – 2002. These participants reported how prepared they felt for school administration in a variety of management areas, such as instructional programs, student safety, and personnel issues. This survey was conducted prior to Oregon adopting the ELCC standards for administrative licensure, and therefore was difficult to compare with the 2009 survey and the four themes.

In the end, I had three distinct sets of data providing information about the perceived leadership preparation in Oregon: educators from all over Oregon who completed their IAL 1972 – 2002, a small group from 2005 – 2008 who supplied narrative responses specific to the IAL program, and interview data from five participants for this exploratory study who completed their administrative preparation program at Murray University between 2009 – 2011. The analysis of the three data sets proved challenging, given the date range and type of data.

However, by comparing the data I was able to answer the three research questions and create a narrative regarding the perceived leadership preparation of the five participants.

Data Analysis

The design of an exploratory study permits the use of multiple sources of data, which in this study included personal interviews and quantitative survey results conducted in two different time periods. The analysis of multiple sources of data potentially increases the credibility of a qualitative study (Creswell, 2007). Triangulation, which is the process of utilizing and analyzing multiple sources of data, was used as a validation strategy. Creswell (2007) explained that triangulation involves additional evidence from multiple sources for the purpose of supporting the final conclusions. The data analysis for this exploratory study involved triangulating transcribed personal interviews with the program evaluation survey results from 2002 and 2009.

The content of the personal interviews was analyzed with three stages of coding: initial, focus, and thematic coding, using the ELCC standards as the guide for the categories (T. Huffman, power point presentation, July 2011). Within each stage I began to look for patterns and similarities in the responses to the interview questions. By coding the data I was able to combine the responses from the participants into major categories or themes.

The initial coding of the data included highlighting the transcribed interviews for statements corresponding to the ELCC standards. I used six colors, one for each standard, to indicate from the interviews the statements relating to the role of the principal and the perceived preparedness. This process helped me organize the 100 pages of data into multiple categories, using the six ELCC standards.

In the second step, focus coding, I grouped the original statements into clusters aligned with the six ELCC standards. To accomplish this task, I reviewed the data multiple times,

looking for common wording and topics. I kept the common statements together, with the appropriate ELCC standard. Some statements could easily relate to more than one standard. When this occurred, I reviewed the ELCC document to determine which standard was a better fit, also considering the context of the interview at that time. I made a decision based on my understanding of the ELCC standards and my interpretation of the participant's statement (see Appendix G for an example of the results of my focus coding).

Creswell (2007) suggested reading and rereading the transcripts of the interviews several times. The process of transcribing the interviews, highlighting for each of the standards, and then creating individual statements to be placed under each category accomplished this task. I was able to read and reread the content of every interview multiple times. This procedure helped me identify major themes and repeated patterns between the interviews. Taking notes while reading the transcripts was also part of the data analysis. I considered the participant, the context of the statement, and what areas of the ELCC standards were not mentioned during the interview.

The end result became four themes reflecting the first three ELCC standards. The second ELCC standard, instructional improvement, was reflected in most of the interview content and resulted in two themes. I then compared the content of the transcribed interviews with the results of the 2002 survey. This survey was taken prior to the adoption of the ELCC standards, therefore it was a challenge to compare the two data sets. In addition, the participants of the 2002 survey reportedly completed their IAL between the years of 1972 – 2002. The survey results provided a range of opinions regarding perceived leadership preparation.

The 2009 survey results were more manageable than the 2002 survey, and more easily compared with the transcribed personal interviews and the four themes. There were 392

participants who reportedly completed their IAL between the years of 1976 – 2009. Given this date range, and keeping in mind the delimitations of the exploratory study, I made the decision to analyze only the narrative responses from those who reportedly completed their IAL 2005 – 2008. From this group of 18 participants I read their responses to the statement, “List any changes you recommend to improve the IAL preparation coursework.” The administrative preparation program for this group of participants was based on the ELCC standards. I compared the results of the 2009 survey to the four themes and self-reported preparedness of the five participants.

The last stage of data analysis was to compare the four sets of data: 2002 narrative summary, the 2009 narrative responses and summary, the four themes, and the self-reported preparedness of the participants. I compared the four themes, which reflected the first three ELCC standards, with the summary the 2002 survey. I also compared the four themes to the summary of the 2009 survey. By comparing the data, I began to see the differences and commonalities between the results of the 2002 and 2009 surveys and the perceived leadership preparation of the five participants, addressing the third research question.

After conducting an analysis of the data, I used that information to write a detailed narrative explaining the perceived preparedness among the participants, noting the commonalities and differences between the transcribed interviews and the program evaluation survey results from 2002 and 2009. Creswell (2007) referred to this final step in an exploratory study as the lessons learned. This narrative illustrated how educators were being prepared for the role of school principal, using the ELCC standards as a guide. The findings not only included the perceived preparedness of the participants, but also their stories of being a second-year school principal.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Introduction

This exploratory study examined leadership preparation by using personal interviews to discover administrator perceptions of their former administrative licensure program. The participants were second-year school principals, all receiving their coursework from Murray University. The participants shared about their daily activities at school, which were then aligned with the ELCC standards. In connection with their role, they recalled the university program coursework and how prepared or unprepared they felt for the role of school principal. Each one discussed in detail the culture of the school, their vision for school improvement, and how they provided for the professional development of their staff. They also explained the changes they made within the school system.

Each of the five participants responded in ways that directly connected to all six ELCC standards, which were foundational to the coursework of the university program. However, three of the six standards were discussed far more deeply and resulted in four major themes: leading professional development, time in the classroom, a vision with collaboration, and effective school management. The themes were then compared with Oregon program evaluation survey results from 2002 and 2009. The comparison of the data helped me explore leadership preparation with the following research questions:

1. In what ways are ELCC standards reflected in the self-reported activities of principals who recently completed an administrative preparation program?
2. What do second-year principals self-report about their preparation for the role of school principal from their administrative licensure program?

3. What commonalities and differences exist between the second-year principals' perceived preparation and results from the 2002 and 2009 surveys?

Each of these questions was investigated based on the coding of the transcribed interviews, comparison of the perceived preparedness of the participants to the 2002 and 2009 survey data, and my interpretation of the data as a researcher and educator. The exploratory analysis was completed in two stages. The first was to code the transcribed interviews, which produced four themes. The second stage was to compare the four themes and the perceived leadership preparedness of the participants with the survey results from 2002 and 2009. The four themes are explained in this chapter along with a comparison of the 2002 and 2009 survey results. The participants each had unique stories to share, which added to the complexity of the role of school principal and the many demands they address every day.

Initial and Focused Coding

During the initial coding stage, I highlighted the transcribed interviews to discover that all of the ELCC standards were discussed, although not all to the same extent. The color-coding, one color for each of the six standards, showed that ELCC standard one (visionary leadership), ELCC standard two (instructional improvement), and ELCC standard three (effective management) were discussed far more deeply than the other standards (see Appendix G for an example of the coding process). When talking about their schools, the participants spoke of their vision, issues around school improvement, and the challenge of managing the school climate. Each of these themes will be explained in depth in this chapter, in order of how frequently each one was mentioned. The final three ELCC standards: inclusive practice, ethical leadership, and social-political context were not as deeply discussed as the other standards. The process of focused coding helped me find patterns, similarities, and differences between the five transcribed

interviews. It was at this stage that I grouped the common wording within each corresponding category of the six ELCC standards. I started to notice common language such as “collaboration,” “student engagement,” “professional development,” and “managing change.” From there I was able to develop four themes, using the ELCC standards as a guide to discover the perceived preparedness of the participants.

All of the participants discussed how frequently they planned and implemented professional development for staff, developed a school vision with collaboration, conducted informal classroom observations, and managed the school climate. They elaborated on conducting “walk-throughs” or “instructional rounds,” a process used by school principals to gather data about teaching and learning. Other common phrases included “sit and get,” which referred to poorly design professional development, and “operational,” a term used to cover management aspects of the job. All of the participants spoke of protecting staff meeting time against “operational” tasks and using the time to lead professional development based on their observations during the walk-throughs.

The remainder of this chapter presents the findings to answer the three research questions. The four themes, based on the self-reported activities of the participants, are prioritized by the frequency with which each was discussed. Following the themes, the second research question is addressed through an explanation of participants’ perceived levels of preparation. Lastly, the themes and the perceived leadership preparation are compared with the program evaluation survey results from 2002 and 2009 to address the third research question.

The Four Themes

Leading professional development. All of the participants discussed their involvement in planning and implementing professional development for their school staff. The ability to

provide ongoing training to staff is one of the elements under the second ELCC standard, instructional improvement. The participants discussed how they changed the pattern of staff meetings from issues such as school events, field trips, and other non-instructional activities to professional development. The non-instructional items were referred to as “operational.” Instead, the time was protected as professional development for the licensed staff. The participants shared that professional development, if effective, was to be embedded, structured, and collaborative. Professional development not connected to daily instruction was referred to as a “sit and get” by several of the participants.

Carmen, principal of a middle school, explained that her professional development was aligned to the district goals and the training received at the district level. She also coordinated professional development based on her walk-through observations and the professional goals of the teachers. Carmen explained,

We have been doing professional development in our staff meetings, it is the end of the day, it is 30 minutes, and people are thinking, 'Are you kidding me?' It'll seem like one more thing unless you make the connection to what they are doing in the classroom already.

In this part of the interview Carmen stressed the importance of listening and developing relationships in order to be effective in leading professional development. It was important to her that the staff not perceive her as judging them, but instead caring and open as to how things were going within the school. She also talked about transparency and the value of taking the time to get all of the teachers on board with the changes. Carmen discussed her involvement with professional development, moving the teachers to implement the common core state

standards, and credit by proficiency grading. She was very articulate about the school goals and determined to align the district and school goals.

Matthew elaborated how he worked to protect staff meetings and used the time for professional development. Similar to Carmen, he clearly described his observations of classroom instruction and the professional development needs of his staff. Matthew explained, Overall I've tried to change my staff meetings away from the nuts/bolts and always have a professional development focus as much as possible. I try to pattern how I am presenting information in a way that they can present information to their own kids and not just a sit and get. Like the staff meeting last Wednesday, we looked at the Smarter Balance [new state assessment] and had a fourth grade performance task that they actually completed together. They exchanged them and scored them on the scoring rubric. Then we talked about things kids would need to know to successfully complete the task and what the teachers would need to know to successfully teach the task.

The Smarter Balance assessment, soon to replace the Oregon Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (OAKS), will be a significant change for teachers and students. Matthew planned and provided professional development to give the staff experience with items related to the Smarter Balance assessment. Along with this example, he explained the alignment between professional development, instructional rounds, and teachers' professional goals. Matthew provided several examples of how he works closely with the teachers to provide professional development.

David, a middle school principal, felt it important to work with the staff in a collaborative manner to plan professional development. He used the Professional Learning Communities

(PLC) process. Teams of teachers worked together to plan, assess, and monitor student learning.

When asked if he leads professional development, David responded,

Yes, quite a bit. We own that. This year they gave us more control over our Title II funds...watch what you wish for...because last year was more of a sit and get; now we are trying to shift towards embedded, structured, and collaborative...so they gave us some Title II funds this year and we are doing some peer observations related to our instructional essentials.

David went on to explain that the district will eventually be using a studio model of instruction with a resident teacher, group planning of math lessons, and the opportunity for teachers and the school principal to work on lessons together. The studio model allows administrators and teachers to observe and debrief a lesson taught by a master teacher. David was looking forward to this opportunity, acknowledging that it would add another layer of professional development for the staff.

Amanda also used the PLC process to work collaboratively with teachers, along with student achievement data. However, Amanda explained that she had to work to change the structure of the PLC process.

They didn't really have a strong culture of PLC. They said that they were doing them but they were meeting once a month and doing a lot of field trip talking so we did baby steps. We did some professional development about what is a PLC and then my non-negotiable this year was to meet every week and turn in notes.

The combination of making improvements to the PLC process and classroom visits helped Amanda plan and implement professional development for the staff. She also discussed how she

protected staff meetings for the purpose of professional development. Some of her planning for this time occurred when she met with other principals to observe classroom instruction.

Matthew and Sarah, both elementary principals, described using videos as part of their professional development. These videos, created by the principal, were being used to discuss instruction and the level of student engagement. Matthew and Sarah encouraged their teachers to critique a video of the principal teaching a lesson to a group of students, sharing and developing their own ideas as to how to improve instruction. During professional development time, Matthew showed the video and then led the staff in a discussion about the differences between effective instruction and non-effective instruction. He was able to facilitate their conversations back to the school goal of active student engagement.

Time in the classroom. A second theme, also under the ELCC standard involving instructional improvement, was time in the classroom. All of the participants discussed the amount of time they were spending in classrooms, some at the encouragement of their superintendent. Classroom time was spent in the context of informal walk-throughs (brief visits of 10-15 minutes in length), a more formal time labeled “instructional rounds,” or substituting for classroom teachers so they could observe their colleagues. The participants recognized their IAL leadership and instructional supervision coursework, along with their ongoing training from the corresponding district, as preparing them for this task.

One principal collaborated with the staff to design the school’s walk-through guide. David explained his process of developing an agreement regarding the essentials of classroom instruction:

Each of my staff individually wrote down the essentials of instruction and then in partners came to a consensus on seven, and then in groups of four agreed with eight.

Then I had them vote with dots [on the chart paper] and it was really interesting to see what they came up with...active engagement came up, differentiation, SIOP [strategies] and so we turned this into our own walk-through guide.

David now uses this guide while informally visiting classrooms, with the staff aware and in agreement with, the elements of good instruction. Teachers who work with preservice teachers also use this guide as a way to provide feedback. This collaborative process encouraged the entire staff to focus on their common beliefs about instruction. David credited his IAL coursework along with his previous work experience as a TOSA for his ability to lead this collaborative process.

Carmen shared that all administrators in the district were encouraged to conduct classroom visits at least 50 times in a month. At the monthly administrative meeting for Carmen's district, each administrator shared about his or her classroom observations, noting what areas of instruction needed additional professional development. These discussions were part of the alignment between district and school goals, along with the professional development for the entire district. Amanda also talked about visiting classrooms. She shared how she drops into classrooms for short visits and then leaves a note or sends an email. By doing so, she felt very connected to the instructional process and worked closely with the teachers on the development of posted learning targets. However, this year the district was requiring her to conduct seven formal observations for every teacher. This new process, she felt, was actually limiting her time in classrooms. Amanda expressed concern that she was so heavily involved in the paperwork of formal observations that she was unable to informally visit classrooms and have meaningful conversations with teachers.

Instructional rounds, a process for observing classroom instruction with the intent of collecting data around the “problem of practice,” was discussed by four of the five participants. The problem of practice for one school was student engagement, as evidenced by student talk. The walk-throughs conducted by the principal focused on data collection addressing this problem. Sarah shared that the school goal was 50% oral language output by students during a lesson. She went on to explain that she visited classrooms to gather data regarding to what extent the instructional time was student talk. Another participant, Carmen, shared that her school was not yet ready for instructional rounds stating, “I know that’s where we need to head, but we are just not there yet.”

Time in the classroom also included administrators putting themselves in instructional positions so their teachers could observe them. Matthew, on the same day as the interview, taught music for 1.5 hours, kindergarten for 35 minutes, and co-taught a fourth grade math lesson. He went on to comment about the joy of working with teachers, not just struggling teachers, but all teachers. Matthew and David both commented on active involvement with instruction, co-teaching lessons or creating videos to be used for discussion during staff meetings. Both participants discussed how their time in the classroom influenced the amount of collaboration among the licensed staff. They felt that being visible throughout the school day increased the amount of collaboration among the staff.

The participants also discussed the challenge of managing their time so that they could visit classrooms more often and create a collaborative school culture. This involved, and was tied to the other ELCC standards, visionary leadership and effective management. Sarah discussed this in the context of how she replaced a principal who did not visit classrooms very

often. She had to establish positive relationships with the staff first, before conducting informal classroom visits. In her words,

The previous administrator didn't do any classroom visits, so my being in there is very uncomfortable for people. And it is uncomfortable to make people uncomfortable. So I spent last year getting in there, sending emails, little notes. This year I'm going in more; I'm going in with a purpose more now. Our building goal is 50% oral language output so they know that I'm collecting data on that but there is not a formal form.

All of the participants made an extra effort to visit classrooms every day. Some used a calendar to schedule the classroom visits so that they could see a variety of subjects being taught. They also set the stage for the visits by collaborating with staff and tying classroom observations to their vision for the school.

A school vision with collaboration. The common theme that emerged in relation to the first ELCC standard was communicating a shared vision with a great deal of collaboration. Many of the schools were in the middle of district-initiated top-down change, some in literacy instruction. Others were being told how second language learners should receive their English language development lesson. The participants discussed top-down decisions and the challenge of implementing the vision of the district. All of the participants shared concerns about program changes and how they impacted the school's improvement plan and goals. One participant noted learning to balance when to make a decision, when to get input, and how to get all of the stakeholders on board. There was also discussion around acting as a filter between district-level decisions and what gets communicated to the teachers.

The idea of collaboration with school vision developed as a theme because of what seemed to be a very flat organizational leadership model among the five participants' schools.

They were all very clear about the importance of establishing positive relationships and working closely with the classroom teachers to bring about change. While each discussed vision and school goals, they were quick to include the role of the staff.

All of the participants, when asked about their school, shared specific goals for increasing student achievement. Although they did not mention NCLB or state testing of students, they talked about increasing student engagement, collecting data on the amount of student talk in the classroom, and getting into classrooms to observe instruction. They were all very explicit about student engagement as a critical aspect to learning, and their role as an instructional leader to support teaching and learning. When asked about communicating vision and mission Amanda explained,

We know that 20% [of the students] are struggling and part of the challenge here...you look at our report card and it says we are doing well, but it doesn't hit that 20% that might not be doing as well as they could and it is really about using data.

Amanda went on to explain the challenge of creating a sense of urgency for the teachers, how to best instruct lower-achieving students. Other participants shared similar challenges with collecting data, communicating a vision, and getting the staff to move forward.

David was very descriptive and animated when describing his vision for his school. "It would be like becoming the coach of a team that maybe has a lot of potential but finished last in the conference. I was drawn to that because I saw the opportunities." To better direct the staff with his vision, the school has a theme each year. Last year they watched and discussed the video "Celebrate What's Right with the World" (<http://www.celebratetraining.com/>) and started each staff meeting with celebrations. This year he engaged the teachers in the idea of the "Fish

Philosophy” (<http://www.charthouse.com/content.aspx?name=home2>), taken from Seattle Pike Place Market. David explained,

This year, the Fish Philosophy, it comes out of Pike Place Market and they throw fish. There’s a lot of energy there, just throwing fish and basically...[it’s about] being there, playing, choosing your attitude... They [Pike Place Market employees] made a goal to be the best in the world. We actually brought in fish and had a fish-throwing contest. We carve out time to do that stuff and I think the staff really appreciates and celebrates what’s right, choosing what is right. I’m trying to do with the staff what I expect them to do with kids.

Effective school management. The fourth theme, effective school management, was evident in the many statements about school climate, the importance of making adjustments to schedule, and student supervision. The participants discussed student behavior, school schedules, and managing the overall climate of the school.

Reflecting on effective school management, the participants shared about changes they made to the school schedule in an effort to lessen the supervision duties for classroom teachers or to improve student supervision. In only their second year, they had made changes to improve the dismissal time, supervision of students during lunch, and adjustment of the master schedule. All of the participants shared stories of managing larger systems within the school to protect instructional time. Sarah commented, “...but I’m also a manager in that I try to control the details for people so that they can do the hard work...so you don’t have all of these roadblocks and things will move smoothly.” Part of the management role included protecting staff meetings from operational tasks. All of the participants felt that being strong in management led to more time for professional development.

Effective management of a school can also encompass other elements of the ELCC standards such as inclusive practice or ethical leadership. David provided an example of managing an all-school field trip to Oregon State University to watch a women's basketball game. He tells the story with the following words:

Having the whole school go to OSU, all of that stuff stresses me out and takes a lot of time. But I do love it because the day after I had an African-American female student come up to me and say that she saw a lot of kids at the OSU game who looked like her and had hair like her. OSU played Cal State Bakersfield and I think for her, school is mostly White and some 15% Latino...so you realize that all of that work made an impact in a student and they see kids are in college and they are basketball players. That kind of stuff is really fun, to know that my efforts made a difference that day. Lots of kids saying that they had never been on a college campus or that they had never been to a basketball game.

David also shared the positive experiences of working with students, playing dodge ball with students, and organizing assemblies. These types of activities benefited the school climate and improved student behavior.

Additional system changes under effective management directly influenced student behavior and the number of behavior referrals sent to the office. Amanda noted that prior to her coming, the school did not have a consistent behavior referral process. During the first month of school, 37 students were sent to the office without any documentation. To improve the process, Amanda involved the staff and implemented a new student behavior program which greatly decreased the number of referrals and created a system that tracked student behavior referrals. David shared that he made changes for student supervision during lunch, added monthly

celebration assemblies, and added school-wide student behavior expectations. These changes in management decreased the number of student behavior referrals in a year from 6000 to 5000 (in a school of 700 students).

The analysis of the transcribed interviews produced four themes discussed above, reflecting the first three ELCC standards. The remaining ELCC standards, not as deeply discussed by participants, are referenced in the next section.

ELCC Standards Four, Five, and Six

While the first three ELCC standards were reflected in the content of the interviews, the final three standards were not as deeply discussed. The participants, as second-year principals, focused on leading professional development, instructional improvement, and managing the school. Inclusive practice, the fourth ELCC standard was mentioned when asked about communicating mission and vision with the staff, parents, and the community. Elements of standards five and six, ethical leadership and socio-political context, were discussed within the topic of school management and addressed inappropriate behavior among the staff.

The primary topic discussed under inclusive practice, the fourth ELCC standard, was the challenge of involving parents in the educational process. The participants all had various parent groups with whom they met to share the school improvement plan and other school information. They also organized special information nights for parents and sent out monthly newsletters. The participants noted changing demographics over the years and how that impacted the attempts by the school to better interact and inform parents. The middle school principals, both implementing a new grading/assessment system, discussed the opportunities they had to explain grading and assessment with parents.

Several of the participants openly shared about the issues they addressed when they became principal of the school. All had confronted inappropriate staff behavior, spending issues, and various degrees of cultural competency. For example, Amanda shared about the staff water cooler dispenser and that it was a mystery to figure out which account paid for the water dispenser. She discovered that it was paid for out of ASB (associated student body) funds. Regulations for that funding stream state that monies are to be used for students, not staff. Amanda suggested that the teachers pay for the water cooler, but when they refused, she made the decision to remove the water cooler.

Other staff issues included professional dress and use of leave time. Matthew confronted his staff with the lack of professional dress.

I did a culture change first where I said, 'I don't think we should wear t-shirts to work.' Our parents, they are coming from poverty and they dress up because they respect you and when you wear a t-shirt and jeans to work and the person over at the GAP counter is wearing the same thing, and I think our families from the Hispanic culture look at that as weird.

Amanda and Matthew both confronted what they felt as offensive practices around the holiday season. School traditions such as a Christmas carol sing-along and Santa Claus visiting the school were felt to be offensive to those who chose not to celebrate Christmas. Amanda explained that to continue those traditions would make some people feel marginalized and in the context of an inclusive school culture, it was not worth it.

The sixth ELCC standard, social-political context was briefly mentioned by two of the participants. This standard pertains to the ability of the school principal, on behalf of the staff, students, and families, to advocate for the school and influence decision-making at the district,

local, and state level. The elements under this standard are complex and take a very experienced school administrator in order to accomplish this level of community leadership. At a minimum, the school principal can begin to advocate for the needs of the school at the district level. This type of leadership was discussed by several of the participants.

The participants shared their experiences as the “middle manager” between the school staff and district office leadership. They also talked about their responsibilities of central office committees and the overall stress of the job. There was a tension expressed, in trying to balance the expectations of the district office with the needs of the school. Sarah told of her reaction to one of the many meetings at the district office and the stress of the job.

There are days where I don't know if I can face it, and that is hard. There are so many things I love about it [this job]. There was one administrator meeting where I left and just sat in my car and cried. And then you come back to here knowing what I would face when I got here from being gone. It is just hard right now. You sit there and go ‘Can I do this? Can I endure this much stress?’ I go to acupuncture every Friday [laughing].

So that's one thing I can tell you that helps.

Sarah also discussed advocating for her school at the district office. She also talked about regulating the amount of change so that her teachers were not so overwhelmed. Sarah, the only administrator in an elementary school of over 600 students, worked to balance the many responsibilities of being a school principal.

Matthew also talked about being out of the school and the extra stress of district responsibilities. He explained,

The days I go home and think, ‘What am I doing?’ are the days when I am not in the building and I'm stuck at the district office...I'm on the contract negotiations team so

when I come home from those meetings I just go, ‘Dude, this is not what I thought it would be!’

The only example from the interviews that aligned strongly with the sixth ELCC standard, socio-political context came from Matthew. He shared about the number of setbacks within federal program funding at the district level. During his first year as school principal he took steps to advocate for the funding stream to change, giving more federal title dollars directly to the school to impact student learning. With the support of colleagues Matthew was able to advocate for the change and increase the amount of money available directly to the school. This year his school has increased additional federal monies to use in support of teaching and learning.

Five districts were represented within this study and all five were facing significant changes to instruction. The participants, facing top-down decisions from the district office, expressed concern over the amount of change and how overwhelmed their staff was feeling. As the school principal, they advocated for their school, monitored the amount of change the staff could handle, and determined what action steps were needed to reach the district goal.

The four themes, based on the self-reported activities of the participants, reflected the ELCC standards that are foundational to the administrative preparation program. The explanations of these themes addressed the first research question. The second research question looked more closely at the participants’ perceived leadership preparation and what the self-reported about university coursework.

Perceived Leadership Preparation

Coursework for the IAL program included *Instructional Supervision, Leadership in Education, Managing Instructional Budgets, Ethical Perspectives on Educational Leadership,*

and *Legal Perspectives on Educational Policy and Finance* (see Appendix B for course descriptions). These courses, along with the practicum experience, made up the IAL program in this study. However, for the purpose of this exploratory research, only the coursework was considered and discussed during the personal interviews.

Throughout the personal interviews, the participants shared about specific courses, the professors, and how prepared they felt for the role of school principal. When asked if they felt prepared to lead professional development and if so, by what coursework, the participants talked about a combination of work experience and IAL coursework. All of these components added to the preparation for leading professional development and the role of principal. However, the participants felt that just one program (the IAL program) could not adequately prepare anyone for such a complex position. Matthew stated, “You are fooling yourself if you think that any program can give you what you need to hit the ground running.” Carmen commented, “Some things you can’t learn until you are neck-deep in it.”

However, the participants acknowledged the foundational aspects of school leadership addressed in the administrator preparation program coursework with the following statements:

“The IAL program forced me to consider what I really value.”

“The IAL program brought the different views of other educators with a variety of backgrounds and experience – enriched the program and ultimately the discussions.”

“I think it was good, it [IAL program] prepared me very well. It forced me to think about a vision, and it forced me to think about mission, and what that would look like when I had my first building.”

David credited the IAL program and the professors for some of his ideas to build collaboration. He explained that he felt prepared for the job and credited the professors at

Murray University. When talking about the IAL program and his preparation, he shared the following:

All of those folks [professors] had been pretty recent administrators so they were not life long professors. They said this is what you deal with in the building...they had a lot of research and that was really helpful, just spending time with those folks that were in the trenches. We did simulations, we did activities, scared you at times, but they really understood the reality. I felt that it was pretty connected to the real work.

Other participants credited the *Leadership in Education* course of the IAL program, along with their previous TOSA experience, with preparing them to communicate vision and implement a process for school improvement. Sarah, during her interview, continuously looked to the course notebooks sitting on the shelf in her office. She acknowledged referring to these resources or sharing them with her teachers and/or co-administrators.

The participants also referenced additional training they were receiving from their district. They all attended at least one district professional development meeting a month that was specifically for school principals. At these meetings they received support from colleagues and were able to share and gain ideas for better ways to manage change and influence learning at the building-level.

The participants credited the legal perspectives course and the ethical perspectives course within the IAL program as foundational to their decision making process. Matthew attributed his IAL course, *Ethical Perspectives on Educational Leadership*, with establishing his belief about teaching and learning. He explained:

That [course] defined my leadership more than any other class, which is odd because it is not at all practical. The ethical framework that came out of that...I wrote a paper around

humanistic approach to RTI and PBIS approaches, so more of the behaviorist approach versus the humanistic approach. I gave that paper to our superintendent and it created a lot of really good discussions around the misgivings with those systems and the positives with those systems. It really helped me, so I lead with that a lot. We have these really strong systems that are data based but that doesn't speak to the heart and soul of why we are here and why kids are here. I still think about it [that course] more so than any of my other classes.

Matthew was the only participant to discuss the benefits of *Ethical Perspectives on Educational Leadership* course. However, that course was significant to his development as a principal. He shared that as a learner, he was at a place where discussing ethical perspectives made a tremendous impact on his thinking and influenced his practices as a school principal.

All of the IAL coursework was mentioned and discussed by at least one of the participants. Overall, the participants felt that the IAL coursework, in combination with previous work experience, prepared them for the role of school principal. These findings show that previous work experience, IAL coursework, and professors well connected to the role of school principal are all essential aspects of leadership preparation. The second stage of the exploratory study involved comparing the perceived leadership preparation and the four themes with the program evaluation survey data from 2002 and 2009. This information added to the complexity of leadership preparation and addressed the third research question.

Survey Data from 2002 and 2009

The survey data from 2002 and 2009 provided to me for the purpose of this exploratory study, contained open-ended responses, quantitative analysis, and narrative summaries of the overall data. The 2009 survey included some individual responses, which I was able to

disaggregate, whereas the 2002 survey was only a summary of the open-ended responses. Both surveys contained some information about the IAL coursework and the perceived preparation of participants. It should be noted that the participants from the 2002 survey reportedly received their Oregon administrative license 1972 - 2002. There were 228 participants completing that survey. The results of the 2002 survey summarized the narrative responses and percentages for how prepared the participants felt for the role of school principal (see Table 3 for a summary of the 2002 survey data).

Table 3: Summary of Data from the SAELP 2002 Survey

General Observations:

There was a high agreement (92%) that the knowledge and skills learned during the preparation program are very valuable to the respondents in their present job.

While the respondents rated the 55 attributes for administration as “important,” the majority reported that their adequacy of preparation fell short of what was desired.

Related to Coursework:

Recommended emphasis in the areas of special needs students, cultural diversity within the school, utilizing data-based improvement strategies, and developing and managing teachers and staff.

Additional Preparation Needed: 137 reporting (multiple responses possible)

Leadership, knowledge, program issues	31%
Budget issues	28%
Staff issues	20%
Legal issues	15%
Time and organization management	10%

Biggest Challenges: 151 reporting (multiple responses possible)

Leadership and knowledge issues	38%
Time management	25%
Staff issues	25%
Parent issues	8%
Budget issues	8%
Superintendent, district, board issues	7%
Student issues	6%
Legal issues	5%

The 2009 survey data included 392 participants who reportedly completed their IAL between 1976 – 2009. While working with the 2009 survey data, I analyzed comments from the participants who received their IAL from 2005 – 2008 and stated that they were school principals. By eliminating the participants who finished prior to 2005, I increased the likelihood

that their responses were more strongly connected to the university administrative preparation program and the role of school principal. There were 82 participants with an IAL completion date of 2005 – 2008. Of those 82, there were 18 who responded to the question “List any changes you recommend to improve the IAL preparation coursework.” The responses included topics such as closer alignment between the real job and the coursework, increased instruction for school law and finance, and adding special education as a course. Within these responses, there were a few comments related to the themes of this exploratory study. These responses were disaggregated from participants who self-reported completing their IAL between the years of 2005 – 2008 (18 of 392). Not all of the responses were from graduates of Murray University (see Table 4 for the list of narrative responses).

Table 4: Data from Question 21, ORPEA 2009 Survey

List any changes you recommend to improve the IAL preparation coursework:

Having the school resource officers be guest speakers

My only suggestion would be to have the finance course required toward the end of the program and to have a bit more practical application.

There was not much in being an instructional leader in the specific content area. Professional Learning Community training.

Utilize case studies rather than role plays.

Students earning an Ed.D. and an IAL should be required to take the same classes as other IAL students. There were many topics they miss out on, and their research-based courses are not a good substitute.

Include coursework on consistent discipline for students as well as communication skills in dealing with difficult parents and teachers.

More special education law for those of us who do not have a SpEd background.

With small schools and charter schools, many new administrators are entering these roles without experience in a vice-principal role, as was typically the case in the past. Being a small school administrators or a charter school administrator requires many more skills in working with board of directors, finance, fund-raising, marketing, and community organizing than were even mentioned in my administrative program.

Teach a course in cultural competence and what it means or looks like to be accepting of other cultures, give strategies to help analyze the curriculum to make sure that it is culturally competent.

Coursework needs to focus on specific roles in supporting building and district administration.

A bit more requirement for finance/budgeting coursework would be beneficial

SpEd coverage

Training for how to cope with difficult parents and staff conflict.

The budget portion placed more emphasis on what to budget for than how to budget and where funds come from. As beginning administrators we have little opportunity to make decisions about what to budget for, but we desperately need to know more about the nuts and bolts of basic budgeting in school, programs, districts. We also need to know more about where the money comes from and how it flows.

Make sure the professors/instructors have current administrative experience or knowledge. It's very difficult to learn "new" research based practices from someone who is boring to listen to, or isn't current in their practices

More coursework/info on working with diversity. More info on evaluation for teachers within an instructional framework.

More training on the socio-political context of the job.

More work with interpreting data and school based budgeting.

The third research question was, “What commonalities and differences exist between the second-year principals’ perceived preparation and results from the 2002 and 2009 surveys?” I compared the perceived preparedness from the transcribed interviews with the narrative responses from the 2002 and 2009 surveys. I also noted from the 2002 survey what the participants rated as important for their role as school principal. The responses from that survey, quite different from the 2009 survey, illustrated what was significant at that time for IAL coursework. In this process, I discovered more differences than commonalities between the perceived preparedness of the participants and the survey results.

The commonalities between the perceived preparation of the participants and the survey data from 2002 and 2009 included overall satisfaction with the coursework, and that the coursework provided important foundational skills for the role of school principal. There were also similar responses between the perceived preparedness of the participants in this study and the 2009 survey data, more so than with the 2002 survey data. However, all three data sources recommended a course for special education in the area of school law, additional preparation for making decisions during special education meetings.

To be more specific, the summary of the 2002 survey data recommended additional emphasis in the area of special needs students. The narrative responses (132 reporting) from the 2009 survey, also included additional coursework related to the field of special education. In addition, the participants self-reported the need for increased training in the area of special education. Both Matthew and David shared their experiences of attending special education meetings as the district representative and feeling unprepared to make decisions.

Differences existed between the content of the 2002 survey, the perceived preparedness of the participants, and the 2009 survey data. The 2002 survey, when aligned with the perceived

preparedness of the participants, emphasized areas of effective school management instead of professional development or school vision. Some topics, such as managing transportation and food service, were not mentioned in the perceived preparedness of the participants in this study. Other topics not part of the preparation of school principals today included CIM (Certificate of Initial Mastery), CAM (Certificate of Advanced Mastery), both initiatives in the late 1990s by the state of Oregon to reform K-12 public education. The survey also included working with school boards, which was a topic not discussed by the participants of this study.

The 2009 survey, which was based on the ELCC standards, showed that within all six standards the participants felt either mostly prepared or very prepared. Less than 29% of the respondents felt somewhat or not prepared in any of the six standards. These results show a stronger alignment with the perceived preparedness of the participants of this study than that of the 2002 survey, possibly due to the fact that the ELCC standards were not part of the 2002 survey (see Table 5).

Table 5: Data from Question 16, ORPEA 2009 Survey

How adequate was your preparation in the following standards for your current role?					
	Not prepared	Somewhat prepared	Mostly prepared	Very prepared	Response count
Standard 1: Visionary Leadership	1.4% (6)	21.6% (90)	46.3% (193)	30.7% (128)	417
Standard 2: Instructional Improvement	3.4% (14)	24.9% (104)	42.4% (177)	29.3% (122)	417
Standard 3: Effective Management	1.7% (7)	22.1% (92)	51.0% (212)	25.2% (105)	416
Standard 4: Inclusive Practice	3.1% (13)	27.1% (112)	47.9% (198)	21.8% (90)	413
Standard 5: Ethical Leadership	1.2% (5)	16.1% (67)	43.2% (180)	39.6% (165)	417
Standard 6: Socio- Political Context	6.0% (25)	29.0% (120)	43.0% (178)	22.0% (91)	414

When asked about the importance of the ELCC standards to their learning, the respondents from the 2009 survey rated the first five standards as very important. The sixth standard, socio-political context was rated as mostly important. This corresponds to the content of the interviews in that the elements under socio-political context were not fully mentioned by

all of the participants. The three ELCC standards rated as very important in the 2009 survey were visionary leadership, instructional improvement, and effective management. These results were very similar to the perceived preparedness of the participants and four themes (see Table 6).

Table 6: Data from Question 15, ORPEA 2009 Survey

How important were the following standards to your learning?						
	Not important	Somewhat important	Mostly important	Very important	I am not aware of this standard	Response count
Standard 1: Visionary Leadership	0.2% (1)	7.7% (32)	26.2% (109)	65.4% (272)	0.5% (2)	416
Standard 2: Instructional Improvement	0.0% (0)	3.1% (13)	17.7% (74)	78.7% (328)	0.5% (2)	417
Standard 3: Effective Management	0.0% (0)	4.6% (19)	27.0% (112)	68.0% (282)	0.5% (2)	415
Standard 4: Inclusive Practice	0.5% (2)	10.8% (45)	35.3% (147)	52.0% (217)	1.4% (6)	417
Standard 5: Ethical Leadership	0.2% (1)	5.8% (24)	22.0% (91)	71.3% (295)	0.7% (3)	414
Standard 6: Socio-Political Context	1.4% (6)	13.0% (54)	43.0% (179)	40.1% (167)	2.4% (10)	416

The narrative responses from the 2002 and 2009 surveys, when compared with the four themes, showed several differences. There were very few narrative responses that pertained to developing a school vision, leading professional development, or time in the classroom. In fact, the summary from the 2002 survey and the narrative responses from the 2009 survey indicated a need for additional training in the areas of overall school management, time management, and budgeting.

The strongest commonality among data sets was the need for additional training in the area of special education. Both surveys mentioned that principals felt unprepared to deal with issues regarding special education law. The participants communicated that they lacked the training to make decisions during IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) meetings.

The data analysis for this exploratory study consisted of three groups; survey results from those who reportedly completed their IAL between 1972 – 2002, survey results from those who reportedly completed their IAL between 2005 – 2008, and interview data from five participants who completed their IAL 2009 – 2011. The themes which emerged from coding the transcribed interviews emphasized instructional leadership, school improvement, and school climate. This contrasted with the summaries from the 2002 survey, which stressed issues of management. However, while the participants of the three groups felt prepared for the role of school principal, the themes did not correspond with the summaries of the 2002 and 2009 data. This difference, along with the gradual change from a school management focus to an instructional leadership focus, is discussed in chapter five.

This chapter presented the findings to the three research questions. The first research question was addressed by aligning the self-reported activities of the participants to the ELCC standards. The second question pertained to the university coursework and the perceived

leadership preparation. The final research question involved a second stage of analysis and compared the themes and perceived leadership preparation to the program evaluation survey results from 2002 and 2009. A summary of the answers to the research questions is presented in chapter five, alongside the research surrounding leadership preparation.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

Through the use of qualitative exploratory methodology I examined administrative preparation to learn how the self-reported activities of novice principals reflected the ELCC standards. In this process, I used personal interviews of second-year principals, the ELCC 2008 building-level standards as a guide for the data analysis, and previously conducted survey data. The personal interviews provided an opportunity for newly trained principals to reflect on how well the university administrative preparation program prepared them for the role of school principal, and the extent to which their daily activities aligned with the ELCC standards.

Analysis of the exploratory study was conducted in two phases; the first was to use the ELCC standards as a guide for coding the transcribed personal interviews. Currently, the ELCC standards are foundational for Murray University's IAL program, with the first six ELCC standards directly connected to the coursework for the IAL and the last one connected to the practicum experience. The personal interviews also included statements regarding how well the administrative preparation program prepared them for the role of school principal. The second phase of analysis was to compare the data gathered from the personal interviews with the program evaluation survey results from 2002 and 2009.

The participants for this study had completed their administrative preparation program between the years of 2009 – 2011, and were from the same university program explored in this study. In order to learn about leadership preparation for the role of school principal, I created three research questions:

1. In what ways are ELCC standards reflected in the self-reported activities of principals who recently completed an administrative preparation program?
2. What do second-year principals self-report about their preparation for the role of school principal from their administrative licensure program?
3. What commonalities and differences exist between the second-year principals' perceived preparation and results from the 2002 and 2009 surveys?

Once I transcribed and coded the interview content, I found four themes from the self-reported activities of the participants. Leading professional development, time in the classroom, school vision with collaboration, and effective school management provided evidence as to the changes within the role of school principal since the time of the 2002 survey. The four themes also aligned with the literature reviewed in chapter two, regarding the key areas of being an effective school principal. These themes demonstrated how Murray University's training program, with additional outside factors, had prepared the school principals. The outside factors included TOSA experience, a master's degree prior to the IAL program, continuous professional development, and support from the participant's district. As noted by the participants, Murray University provided foundational training, which formed their beliefs and values about leadership in public education, and prepared them to influence the school culture and the amount of collaboration within the school setting.

The following section answers the research questions and shares my reflections regarding the content of the personal interviews. Writing the reflections in this chapter was a valuable experience for me and will influence my own practice as an elementary school principal. Following that section, I conclude with what I specifically learned by conducting this exploratory

study and make recommendations for future research. Finally, I discuss the implications for future studies, based on the findings.

Discussion

Research question one. In order to answer the first research question, I transcribed and coded the personal interviews of the five participants. Given that the guide questions for the interviews were open-ended, I was able to learn about their daily activities and then compare those responses to the ELCC standards. What I found was that the first three ELCC standards, visionary leadership, instructional improvement, and effective management, were heavily discussed during the interviews. The majority of the activities centered on providing professional development, getting into the classrooms, and establishing systems for a safer and more effective school environment. The participants also discussed in depth their challenges with building a culture of collaboration around their vision for the school.

The first interview was with Carmen, a middle school principal. I left the interview very impressed with how she aligned the school goals to the professional goals for the teachers. She also remarked several times about the district level of support and that there was consistency and focus for her throughout the entire district. Carmen was challenged by the superintendent to conduct 50 classroom visits each month. During monthly administrator meetings, the discussion focused on teaching and learning, not on the operations within the district. Carmen clearly conveyed a deep understanding of leading a school with the collaboration of teachers.

Amanda was the participant for the second interview, an elementary principal for a large school district. Amanda's school was not a Title I school, yet there had been an increase in the number of students who qualified for free and/or reduced lunch. This gave Amanda the challenge of addressing teachers' attitudes regarding the influence on learning of students living

in poverty. Amanda was also implementing a new teacher evaluation system that required seven formal observations for every licensed teacher during the school. Amanda and I talked at length about what this requirement was doing to her calendar and the impact it was having to the relationships she had built with teachers. She wondered if the new teacher evaluation system would provide teachers with the necessary feedback to improve student learning.

David was my third interviewee, a high-energy middle school principal. David was the only participant who got up from his chair to show me things that he had either implemented or created with the teachers. He was also the only one to put into practice a theme for the school year. David, out of all of the participants, talked more about the climate of the school than did the others. He found it very important and motivational for teachers to spend time celebrating. I left this interview with new ideas for building collaboration with classroom teachers and about the importance of building time to celebrate.

The interview with Sarah also proved to be encouraging and motivational. Sarah faced the tension between the expectations of the district office and her belief regarding what was best for teachers. She referred to herself as a “nudger,” working closely with the teachers to make changes, but also aware as to how much change they could reasonably handle. Sarah also openly discussed how overwhelmed she felt as the only administrator with over 600 students. At one point during the interview I thought we would both laugh and cry over the amount of stress she dealt with on a daily basis. During the interview, Sarah discussed the importance of maintaining a balance between school principal and her personal life, and discussed the benefits of monthly massage and acupuncture. When I left that interview, I was inspired to use my classroom observations to collect data that would benefit the instructional process. I highly admired Sarah and the courage she had to lead a large school in the midst of so many changes to instruction.

The interview with Matthew included other aspects of leadership not discussed by other participants. Matthew was the only one to specifically mention the value of his *Ethical Perspectives on Educational Leadership* course. He was also the only one to describe the process he used to advocate for the school at the district level. When asked what changes he had made, he laughed and said, “probably too many!” Matthew had placed two teachers on improvement plans his first year, and both ended up leaving the school. He also confronted teachers on professional dress for work and the use of leave time. I could relate to what he said, having experienced similar things the last couple of years.

By the time I reached the final interview, I was in awe at the level of leadership conveyed by the daily activities of the participants, given that they were second-year principals. They were heavily involved in the instructional process, substituting for teachers so that they could observe their colleagues, planning professional development based on classroom observations and the goals for the school, and working closely with teachers to improve instruction. There was a great deal of collaboration taking place, along with major changes to how each of the schools operated. These principals had adapted quickly to the culture of the school and met the challenges of leadership head-on.

The first three ELCC standards were heavily discussed during each of the interviews. The last three ELCC standards (inclusive practice, ethical leadership, and social-political context) were discussed by the participants, but not as extensively. I believe this is due to the fact that the interviews focused on the daily activities within the school, and were conducted with a limited amount of time. I do not make the assumption that since these ELCC standards were discussed less than the first three standards, that they were non-existent in mind and training of the participants. There were glimpses of daily activities related to ethical leadership and

advocating for the school at the district level, but these areas of leadership were not as deeply discussed. The primary focus for the participants centered on the first three ELCC standards.

Research question two. The second research question examined what participants self-reported about their administrative preparation program. During this portion of the interview I felt that the participants were very candid with me regarding their program coursework. Overall, the participants believed they were well-prepared for the role of school principal. In addition to their university program, they also gave credit to their previous TOSA experience and the coursework or degree completed prior to the IAL program. This was to be expected, given that the role of school principal is a complex position, requiring a variety of experiences in addition to the coursework.

Two of the participants discussed more deeply the benefits of Murray University's administrative preparation program. David acknowledged that the professors at Murray had all spent time as school administrators. He explained that this added credibility to the coursework and in his mind, improved the connection of the IAL program to the daily tasks of managing a school. Matthew discussed how the course regarding ethics in leadership transformed his belief about teaching and learning. Both of these participants discussed unique situations of how the IAL program met their training needs. Based on the content of interviews, it was clear to me that the Murray University program (professors and course content) was well connected to the current role of a school principal. This was a surprise, given that research cited in the literature presented in chapter two found most training programs disconnected to the daily responsibilities of a school principal (Bottoms et al., 2003; Levine, 2005).

In addition to acknowledging the benefits of Murray University's IAL program, participants provided recommendations to improve the coursework. The training need discussed

most amongst all of the participants was in the area of special education. The participants felt that additional training, maybe even its own course, would have greatly benefited their leadership ability in this unique field. This suggestion was also documented in the 2002 and 2009 survey data.

I believe the training in special education was recommended because of changes in the economy and trends in special education. These changes have placed more-high need special education students in public schools. Programs that used to serve special education students at a site other than the public school have closed. Students who need additional support in order to access education are now served in specialized district programs housed at the public school. These programs include life skills for medically fragile students and emotional growth centers for behaviorally challenged students. It is not uncommon for schools to have a padded calming room used for monitored seclusion; this is one example of the increased demands placed on schools. The shortfall of school funding, along with the increase in medically fragile and behaviorally challenged students, has placed the school principal in a position to make decisions at an IEP (Individualized Education Program) meeting as the district representative. The participants in this study felt unprepared to make such complex decisions without additional training.

While I did not expect participants to raise the issue of special education, I did anticipate that participants would recommend additional training for school finance and budget management. This is often a topic for principals who lack exposure and experience. However, this did not come up as a need for additional training. I believe this is because of the drastic changes in Oregon school budgets since 2008. Due to a lack of state school funding, districts across the state have greatly reduced their budgets, several of the larger districts experiencing

significant shortfalls. For example, during the 2011-2012 school year the Beaverton school district needed to cut \$40 million, North Clackamas School District \$15 million, and Salem-Keizer \$54 million (<http://www.salkeiz.k12.or.us/content/school-districts-across-oregon-face-deficits>). This change impacted the role of the school principal and the need for additional training around budgets. Today, a district budget has very little money to spend that would be left to the discretion of the principal.

Research question three. The third research question was the most challenging aspect of this exploratory study to address. I found that the survey data from 2002 included participants who had completed their administrative program long before there were any standards to the IAL coursework. In addition to this issue, the participants of the 2002 survey had several years of administrative experience. I wondered if this was more like comparing apples to oranges. As part of my analysis, I questioned the relevancy of using the 2002 survey data as a comparison to the data I had collected. The participants for the 2002 survey represented a different group of school administrators and I was unable to separate the responses of newly trained school principals from those who had years of experience.

To address this issue, I compared the questions and results of the 2002 survey to the ELCC standards. I found that the 2002 survey contained more of a focus on school management rather than student learning. This finding aligned with research regarding the changes taking place within the role of school principal. Prior to the standards movement in the 1990s, principals were prepared to manage their school (Marks & Nance, 2007). During this time period, it was unlikely that a principal would lead professional development or conduct regular classroom visits, as was the case for the five participants of this study.

In addition to numerical data, the 2002 survey also contained a summary of narrative responses from those participants. Overall, they reported they felt prepared for the role of school principal. It is my belief that while the role of school principal changed dramatically between 2000 and 2012, the survey questions also changed. Surveys used for research reflect the needs and issues pertinent to that time. The 2002 survey more heavily focused on school management because during that time period, the role of school principal involved mostly school management. Contrasting those results with the five participants of this study, their role had changed, along with the implementation of ELCC standards. Therefore, I believe that while both sets of data revealed a feeling of being prepared for the role of school principal, each participant reflected the expectations (management or instructional leadership) for the role of school principal during that time period.

Along with questions and results of the 2002 survey, I also used the interpretations and recommendations summary from that survey. What surprised me most from the 2002 survey was the degree to which the participants felt their administrative preparation program had prepared them. There was a strong agreement (92%) that the content of their preparation program was valuable to the present day job. I had anticipated participants would report a division between the course content and the role of school principal, similar to the research of Hess and Kelly (2007). That study found that administrative programs were too theoretical and lacked the content necessary to prepare educators for the role of school principal.

The 2009 survey data, which were based on the ELCC standards, more closely aligned with a self-reported sense of preparedness of this exploratory study. The participants from the 2009 survey reported feeling prepared for the role of school principal but also recommended additional training in the area of special education, instructional technology, and cultural

competency. In addition, this survey data connected with the four themes of professional development, time in classrooms, vision with collaboration, and effective school management. These four areas and the related three ELCC standards, had received positive responses from the 2009 survey.

The comparison of both surveys to the transcribed interviews and the four themes was an arduous task. I found that the 2002 survey, now over 10 years old, was difficult to understand and compare with the 2009 survey results and the four themes. The 2009 survey data lacked a final summary of the results, but the data was listed in a large Excel workbook. One of the things I could extrapolate from all three data sources was the recommendation for more training in special education. I also discovered that overall, the participants from both surveys felt that their leadership program prepared them for the role of school principal.

Personal reflections. While I found the focus to the research questions a valuable experience, there were many things I learned from this study that extended beyond those questions and subsequent answers. The information shared during personal interviews has already influenced my practice as a school leader and caused me to wonder about several key points related to the data. These included:

- The literature review listed the key elements to an effective administrative training program. How do those research articles compare with the perceived leadership preparation of the five participants?
- How do the four themes (professional development, time in the classroom, vision with collaboration, and effective school management) align with the research regarding an effective school principal?

- The five participants, selected with purposeful sampling, projected a high level of school leadership in only their second year as a school principal. Was this "luck of the draw" or a sign of a program producing leaders who can effectively manage the role of school principal?

The above questions are discussed based on the findings, the literature review, and my knowledge of current circumstances within the field of education. I will also elaborate on what I learned from conducting this exploratory study.

The research discussed in chapter two included studies that explained the key elements of an effective administrative training program (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Mitgang & Maeroff, 2008). The research found that effective programs had the following in common:

- Aligned coursework to the ISSLC or ELCC standards
- Curriculum with a focus on instructional leadership
- Ongoing professional development for new principals
- Strong working relationship between the university and the local school district
- Integrated instruction with theory, practice, and self-reflection
- A recruitment process to select strong teachers with leadership potential

Orr and Ponder (2006) also found that effective leadership preparation programs focused on teaching and learning, the ability to implement a vision, and curriculum aligned to the state standards.

Based on the content of the personal interviews and the strong connection between the daily activities of the participants and ELCC standards, I offer that this IAL program contained many of the key elements of an effective leadership preparation program. The transcribed personal interviews and the four themes supported the fact that this IAL program was well

aligned with the ELCC standards. In addition, the participants self-reported that the content of the coursework was both theoretical and practical. The only item that did not come up in the collected data was a recruitment process.

The five participants of this study explained the benefits of their administrative preparation program, which included their ability to lead professional development for faculty and staff. This theme, along with time in the classroom, school vision with collaboration, and effective school management, was supported in the research as critical to effective school leadership. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) found that the school principal has the potential to impact student learning by efficiently managing the climate of the school and professional development. Several other studies also supported positive outcomes when the principal leads professional development (Graczewski, Knudson & Holtzman, 2009; Hallinger, 2003; Youngs, 2007).

Effective management of the school impacts staff attitude and student learning. This includes managing student behavior and maintaining a safe learning environment (Drago-Severson, 2012). Improving school climate can influence the ability of teachers to teach at high levels (Flores, 2004). The participants for this exploratory study discussed the combination of managing systems to improve student behavior and free up teachers to work together for the benefit of improved student learning. Activities, such as celebration assemblies and changing how students were supervised, greatly reduced the number of student behavior referrals for one middle school.

The participants for this study communicated high levels of instructional leadership and knowledge of best instructional practices. However, they were not consumed with state reports and high stakes testing. They seemed confident that by providing for and aligning professional

development, students would learn at high levels. In addition, they acknowledged the balance between school management and instructional leadership. All of the participants discussed the many benefits of being in classrooms and attending to the school culture and climate. I wondered, as I proceeded with the interview process, if the high caliber of these five school leaders was fortunate, or had the IAL program, in conjunction with outside factors, managed to support and produce a high level of school leader?

While the question above is not easily answered with one exploratory study, it is valuable to recognize the high caliber of leadership that was evident in the content of the interviews. The participants each had a significant depth of understanding regarding their role as a school principal and the steps they had taken to build a collaborative school culture. I left each interview amazed at the issues they had addressed in only two years and especially the level of their involvement with the daily instruction of students. For example,

- Carmen was attempting to make 50 classroom visits each month and used the collected data to lead professional development. She had aligned the school goals with district goals, leading the licensed staff to change how they used technology. She had also recorded the academic progress of students.
- Amanda was addressing issues of school culture, organization and use of PLC time, and ongoing promotion of learning targets for classroom instruction. She was leading professional development based on her classroom observations.
- David was throwing fish and creating a school culture that used the energy of middle school students to their benefit. He had created systems to better supervise students, added celebration assemblies, and worked tirelessly to promote an attitude of celebration throughout the school.

- Sarah was also creating systems within the school to lessen the load for teachers. She was getting into classrooms more often and collecting data regarding the oral language output of students.
- Matthew was teaching for teachers, leading professional development, collecting data on the problem of practice, and advocating for a better use of federal funds at the district level.

Each of these changes takes a tremendous amount of energy, knowledge, and courage to implement. The participants had a solid understanding of change management and how to transform a school culture. While this level of ability cannot come from one preparation program, I do believe that this is further evidence as to the quality of instruction in the IAL program at Murray University. The self-reported activities of the participants reflected the ELCC standards, which demonstrated the level of preparedness of the participants for the role of school principal.

Teaching can be such an isolated task, yet these participants were able to build their vision for the school around collaboration, so much so that their teachers were comfortable observing each other. Not only that, but the principals in this study were able to manage their time so that they also could be in classrooms. They were highly skilled individuals, willing to take risks. Over time and with the combination of IAL coursework and previous experience, they had developed the ability to influence learning for both teachers and students.

Conclusions

The purpose of this exploratory study was to explore perceived leadership preparation for a small group of new principals from Murray University's administrative preparation program. From this research I have gained new insight into the system of preparing school leaders. I also

better understand the ELCC standards and the impact these standards have on the administrative preparation program explored in this study. Creswell (2007) referred to the reflective aspect of a qualitative study as the lessons learned. My lessons learned included the importance of leading professional development, visiting classrooms on a regular basis, and aligning the school vision and goals with that of the district.

I was greatly impressed and influenced by the participants in this exploratory study. I left each interview session inspired to improve my own practice as a school leader, leading professional development, and visiting classrooms more often. My goal now is to visit 50 classrooms each month for 10 – 15 minutes each visit. I also plan to better align the professional development plan with the classroom observations. Similar to the participants in this study, I want to expand my involvement at the district and community level, accomplishing many of the elements in the sixth ELCC standard, social-political context.

If I had the opportunity to conduct another study on the subject of leadership preparation, I would interview more principals in small groups and with various degrees of experience. I think it would be valuable to compare the responses of principals with two to three years of experience with those who have five or more, seeking to understand the IAL program and its long-term impact.

It would also be beneficial to investigate several districts of similar size, to see how each one provides for the growth and development of leaders. In addition, I would like to compare the perceived leadership differences between school principals coming from a TOSA position and those who did not. Each of the participants in this study had the advantage of a TOSA experience, which more than likely added to their leadership skills and abilities.

Recommendations

Based on this study, there are several recommendations for school districts. Similar to the school districts of the participants in this study, district level meetings need to be less operational and instead focus on teaching and learning. Principals need ongoing professional development, much like teachers. This need is often overlooked as district office personnel dominate meetings with topics that could be shared in writing or limited to a shorter amount of time.

As a result of this study, I also suggest a stronger alignment between district goals and school goals, with documented topics for professional development at all levels of the organization. Instructional rounds and studio model professional development are also excellent ways to align and learn about the instructional needs of principals, staff, and students. District leaders participating alongside principals can support instruction and remain connected to the challenges facing classroom teachers.

District level leadership also needs to be aware of the trends in education and have the training and experience to filter what are good practices to implement and what are not. Time is a valuable commodity for all district employees and should not be wasted on topics that lack valid and reliable research. Instead, time away from schools should be used for discussing classroom observations, collaborating on professional development, and determining better ways to support teaching and learning.

Educators going into the field of school administration would benefit from increased training regarding special education, laws, and policies. In addition, central office should also see that school principals are kept up-to-date with policies and regulations within this specialized

field. An incorrect decision by a principal during an IEP meeting could be costly to the district and the student.

As evident in this exploratory study, the administrative preparation program serves a valuable purpose. However, it is also important that universities and districts work closely together, as supported by the literature. Districts, even in the midst of state funding cuts, should continue supporting professional development and the growth of school leaders within the organization. TOSA positions are an excellent opportunity for classroom teachers to gain more experience towards becoming a school principal. Districts that provide growth opportunities for school leaders, work closely with university preparation programs to train and certify school principals, and continue to support the growth and development of current school principals give principals the best opportunity to be effective school leaders.

Implications for Future Study

Leadership preparation is a broad and complex topic. The field would benefit from future studies in several areas. First, the Continuing Administrative License (CAL) in Oregon is another layer of administrative training. The CAL program was not investigated as part of this exploratory study. It would be beneficial to universities and school districts if the CAL program were examined to discover school leaders' training for central office administration, including the superintendent position.

Secondly, future studies could investigate the practicum experience, ELCC standard seven, to determine how the coursework of the first six standards is applied or not applied to the practicum experience. Thirdly, it could be beneficial to research the leadership styles of transformational and instructional leadership within the role of school principals, and in comparison to the IAL program.

Finally, the evaluation of school principals must now include a connection to student achievement results (Oregon Senate Bill 290). This is an area that needs further research, connecting the ELCC standards to the principal evaluation system, and determining in what way school principals directly and indirectly impact student achievement results.

Conducting this exploratory study allowed me to closely examine leadership preparation and discover to what extent the ELCC standards were reflected in the experiences of new principals. The benefits to my learning and practices as a school principal are numerous. As previously stated, I admired the leadership abilities of the five participants, their knowledge, and how they conducted their role at school. These were school leaders who believed they could influence teachers and have an impact on the teaching and learning process. From this exploratory study I have a better understanding of the ELCC standards, the need for ongoing professional development, and the benefits of collaboration within the school culture.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

The ELCC building-level standards

ELCC Standard 1.0 - Visionary Leadership

A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by collaboratively facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a shared school vision of learning through the collection and use of data to identify school goals; promotion of continual and sustainable school improvement; and evaluation of school progress and revision of school plans supported by school-based stakeholders.

ELCC Standard 2.0 – Instructional Improvement

A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning through collaboration, trust, and a personalized learning environment with high expectations for students; creating and evaluating a comprehensive, rigorous and coherent curricular and instructional school program; developing and supervising the instructional and leadership capacity of the school staff; and promoting the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning within a school environment.

ELCC Standard 3.0 – Effective Management

A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by ensuring the management of the school organization, operation, and resources through monitoring and evaluating the school management and operational systems; efficiently using human, fiscal, and technological resources in a school environment; promoting and protecting the welfare and safety of school students and staff; developing school capacity for distributed leadership; and ensuring that teacher and organizational time is focused to support high-quality instruction and student learning.

ELCC Standard 4.0 – Inclusive Practice

A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources on behalf of the school by collecting and analyzing information pertinent to improvement of the school's educational environment; promoting an understanding, appreciation, and use of diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources within the school community; building and sustaining positive school relationships with families and caregivers; and cultivating productive school relationships with community partners.

ELCC Standard 5.0 – Ethical Leadership

A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner to ensure a school system of accountability for every student's academic and social success by modeling school principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior as related to their roles within the school; safeguarding the values of democracy, equity, and diversity within the school; evaluating the potential moral and real consequences of decision making in the school; and promoting social justice within the school to ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling.

ELCC Standard 6.0 – Socio-Political Context

A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context through advocating for school students, families, and caregivers; acting to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning in a school environment; and anticipating and assessing emerging trends and initiatives in order to adopt school-based leadership strategies.

Appendix B

IAL Program Course Descriptions

500 Instructional Supervision

3 hours. This course is designed to help educational leaders understand key ideas central to ongoing research on teaching and learning to establish educational policy and transform educational practice at their institutions. The course emphasizes ways in which cultural, social, and organizational contexts influence learning. Students will learn to use the clinical supervision model and other tools for supervising and evaluating teacher performance based on best practices. The course will examine the leader's role in establishing and maintaining an environment that is conducive to student and adult learning.

640 Leadership in Education

3 hours. Students participate in discussions and/or activities dealing with site-based management, decision making, mentoring, management of human resources, and issues dealing with professional leadership in education.

646 Managing the Instructional Budget

1 hour. This course is designed for those who want to understand how to manage the school budget successfully in a school. The day-to-day budget issues, including prioritizing, monitoring, and approving expenditures, will be discussed as well as the underlying framework of public budgets, Oregon State Chart of Accounts. This course provides practical knowledge and skills needed to read budget documents with understanding. Practices that encourage ethical care, goal oriented spending, and knowledgeable monitoring are explored and developed.

671 Ethical Perspectives on Ed Leadership

3 hours. This course examines how belief structures undergird the methods educators use to motivate people to learn. Through the light of ethical theory, students examine how organizational leaders respond to the situations they face. Students also reflect on and apply their own values and ethical understanding to shed light on case studies that represent situations they often face as educational leaders.

682 Legal Perspectives on Ed Policy & Finance

3 hours. This course focuses on legal issues that arise in elementary, secondary, and collegiate institutions. The course provides educators with knowledge and analytic skills needed to apply legal frameworks to educational policy including the statutes regulating financial policy. The course investigates creative ways in which law can be used to help address current problems in schools, and helps educators think through questions of ethics and policy that legal disputes raise but do not resolve.

Appendix C



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School of Education

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Oct. 30, 2012

Ms. Dorie Vickery
Ed.D. Student
Department of Educational Foundations & Leadership
George Fox University

Dear Ms. Vickery:

This letter is to inform you that as a representative of the GFU Institutional Review Board I have reviewed your proposal for research investigation entitled "Exploring the Preparedness of School Administrators: A Case Study of One University Initial Administrator License Program." The proposal is approved.

Best wishes as you complete your research investigation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Huffman'.

Terry Huffman, Ph.D.
Professor of Education
Human Subjects Research Committee
George Fox University
(503) 554-2856

Appendix D

October 2012

Dear [REDACTED], Program Director,

My name is Dorie Vickery and I am a doctoral student at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. As part of completing my Ed.D., I am conducting research regarding leadership preparation as reported by school principals. This exploratory study will include Initial Administrator Licensure (IAL) program, personal interviews with second-year school principals, and the program evaluation survey results from 2002 and 2009.

I plan to randomly choose six to eight principals who have graduated from your program in the last three years and are currently in their second-year of school administration. I will visit their school and conduct personal interviews with each of them regarding their perceived level of preparedness. The data analysis will include personal interview transcripts, previous survey results, and observation notes. I will use the ELCC building-level standards as a guide to develop a profile of the IAL program. It is my hope that the study will inform the IAL program as to how the reported preparedness of the school principals compares with the program evaluation survey results from 2002 and 2009.

The risks associated with this research are minimal. Should you choose to have your program participate I would need the names of potential participants. The results of this study will only be used for research purposes and may be used for presentation and/or academic publication. Information will be analyzed and presented in a confidential fashion and no university programs will be identified. I affirm to keep any personal information and identities confidential.

All research materials (i.e., audio recordings, transcriptions, and signed consent forms) will be locked in separate, secure locations for a period of no less than five years. I will be the only individual who will have access to these materials. After five years, I will personally destroy all relevant materials and delete the audio recordings.

Thank you for your time and for considering this project. If you choose to have your program participate, please be aware that you are making a contribution to educational research. If you have any questions regarding this research, please contact me at (503) 606-0787. If you have any additional questions you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Ginny Birky at (503) 554 – 2854.

If you understand the use of this research and agree to participate, please sign below.

IAL program director signature: _____

Researcher signature: _____

Appendix E

October 2012

Dear Professional Educator,

My name is Dorie Vickery and I am a doctoral student at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. As part of completing my Ed. D., I am conducting research regarding the leadership preparation. You are invited to engage in about an hour-long personal interview regarding your perceptions of your Initial Administrative Licensure (IAL) program and your current role as school principal. The questions will be about your leadership preparation experience based on the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards.

The content of the interview will be compared with program evaluation survey results from 2002 and 2009 regarding leadership preparation. It is my hope that the study will inform the IAL program as to the commonalities and differences between the 2002 and 2009 survey results and perceived preparedness of the participants.

The risks associated with this research are minimal. The personal interview questions are general and should not create any distress. Nevertheless, please be aware that your participation is completely voluntary and you may decline to continue at anytime or decline to answer any question at your discretion.

The results of this study will only be used for research purposes and may be used for presentation and/or academic publication. Personal interviews will be audio recorded and later transcribed. Information will be analyzed and presented in a confidential fashion and no individual will be personally identified. I affirm to keep any personal information and identities confidential.

All research materials (i.e., audio recordings, transcriptions, and signed consent forms) will be locked in separate, secure locations for a period of no less than five years. I will be the only individual who will have access to these materials. After five years, I will personally destroy all relevant materials and delete the audio recordings.

I thank you for your time and for considering this project. If you choose to participate, please be aware that you are making a contribution to educational research. If you have any questions regarding this research, please contact me at (503) 606-0787. If you have any additional questions you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Ginny Birky at (503) 554 – 2854.

If you understand the use of this research and agree to participate, please sign below.

Participant signature: _____

Researcher signature: _____

Appendix F

Interview Guide Questions

1. Tell me about your school.
2. How would you describe your leadership style?
3. How do you communicate mission and vision to the staff? Parents?
4. What are your strengths as a leader?
5. To what extent do you feel your IAL program prepared you for school leadership?
6. What changes have you made since arriving at this school?
7. What do you do as a building leader to improve instruction?
8. What are the most challenging aspects of being a school principal?
9. To what extent do you feel your IAL program prepared you for these challenges?
10. What do you love most about your job?

Appendix G

Focus Coding:

ELCC1: Visionary Leadership

Carmen	Amanda	David	Sarah	Matthew
Empowering our students	Changes in school culture, increase in poverty	Went to work on advisories and school culture	Big systems thinker, nudge the staff forward	Religious fervor almost, mission driven
Students meeting a growth target in reading, writing & math	Developing a vision for people	Inspire & engage	PD is the focus for school improvement	Use of instructional rounds (problem of practice)
We are not really in a place where we can dive deep into instructional rounds, but that's where I want to get to	Wanting to be visionary and impact change	Instruction is my passion, working on systems	Systems improvement	Working on active engagement
A vision this year is around a community of learners	Value teacher input	Collaborative staff meetings	Building goal of increased oral language output	Strong vision for what needs to be done
Getting all stakeholders on board with decisions	Balance between student needs and teacher needs	Build community	Maintained sense of family	Collaborative up to the decision being made
Provided staff with three different goals	Using data to make decisions	Servant leadership style	Care deeply about the staff	Staff set two goals around active engagement or rigor
Facilitating/ establishing the staff learning from each other	Learning targets – explaining to teachers how LT impacts the learning of the student	Take the time to celebrate	Authentic, strong inner personal relationship skills	
Three district goals: CBP, CC, instructional technology	District goals Managing change Use data to create a vision	Involve the staff in the mission/vision	Trying to implement change and getting resistance	
		PD is embedded, structured & collaborative		

ELCC2: Instructional Improvement

Carmen	Amanda	David	Sarah	Matthew
<p>50 walk-throughs in a month, district goal</p> <p>Teacher feedback via an iPad app</p> <p>District level meeting to report/discuss observations</p> <p>Coaching opportunities with the staff as it relates to student engagement</p> <p>Providing PD during staff meetings, aligned with the district PD</p> <p>Coaching conversations</p>	<p>Focus on learning targets during walk-throughs</p> <p>Conducting walk-throughs with other administrators at other schools</p> <p>Conducting six observations for every teacher</p> <p>20% of students are struggling, need to create a sense of urgency among the staff</p> <p>Strong culture of PLC</p> <p>Providing PD, making videos</p> <p>Working with teachers on learning targets</p> <p>Systems change to support instruction</p>	<p>Conducting walk-throughs with other administrators at other schools</p> <p>Moving into a studio model with a resident teacher</p> <p>Using an iPad for walk-throughs</p> <p>Use Danielson Framework for formal observations</p> <p>Strong culture of PLC</p> <p>Providing PD for the staff – not a “sit & get”, instead embedded, structured, collaborative</p> <p>Developed with teachers a list of “essentials of good instruction”</p>	<p>Conducting walk-throughs and looking for oral language output</p> <p>Concern for what’s coming in the way of teacher evaluation</p> <p>The staff was not use to a principal visiting classroom – working on helping them to be feel more comfortable PLC, grade level teams</p> <p>Leading/planning PD with the site team</p> <p>PD around math CC</p> <p>RTI, 20% meetings, 100% meetings</p> <p>Focus on student engagement and oral language output</p>	<p>Conducting walk-throughs with other administrators at other schools</p> <p>Student engagement is the goal</p> <p>Teaching for teachers to observe other</p> <p>Two teachers on plan for improvement last year, both left</p> <p>District focus on instructional rounds and RTI</p> <p>Changed ELD model</p> <p>Creating videos for PD</p> <p>Staff goals aligned to building goal, providing feedback to teachers to improve instruction</p> <p>Heavily involved in the instructional process</p>

ELCC3: Effective Management

Carmen	Amanda	David	Sarah	Matthew
Addressing issues around harassment and bullying	Student behavior management	Developed advisories	Rely on support staff	Addressing issues around staff dress, use of sick leave
Rely on HR, registrar and other support	School culture/climate	PBIS Student behavior	Scheduling, student supervision	PBIS, teachers manage student behavior
Budget is an area that rely on others	Safe/civil school committee	Spec Ed management	Manage the details, big systems thinker	Rely on office staff and district staff
Scheduling – school and admin	Developed school-wide behavior management program	School celebration assemblies	Tough to let go of things	Personnel issues are challenging
Time management at challenge	Rely on office manager for budget	Reduction in the number of referrals		
Distributive leadership	Used general fund for sub time	Community fund raising		
Teacher evaluation begins with coaching	Ended the water cooler	Used Title II funds for teachers to observe others		
	Management takes up a lot of time	Budget cuts		
	Learning to prioritize Master schedule change	Scheduling, student supervision		
		Weekly staff note		
		Managing school culture		
		Staff meeting with an agenda		
		Collaborative, flat organizationally, rely on others		