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EDUCATIONAL PLANNING
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From the Editors

The scope of educational planning issues is diversified and multi-leveled. Typical examples of these issues are disclosed in this issue of Educational Planning. The five significant manuscripts selected for publication in this issue deal with current key issues of educational planning worldwide. Four of the manuscripts relate to K-12 and higher education in the United States and one refers to the out-of-field teaching situation in Turkey. These educational planning issues, regardless of their origins, have significant implications to the educational operation of all countries in the world.

The first manuscript by Coffey, Cox, Hillman and Chan is focused on identifying the current issues in elementary education in the United States. Based on the review of literature, the authors pinpointed the upcoming challenges elementary school educators would be facing in the future. Innovative strategies for meeting future challenges with the development of culturally responsive elementary schools that enhance student achievement are recommended.

The second manuscript by Thessin emphasized a school district planning approach to support teachers' work in professional learning communities. It reports on the work of one mid-sized urban district that attempted to implement and support PLCs in developing essential PLC characteristics, implementing an improvement process, and establishing an instructional goal. The author recalled research-based practices to facilitate school improvement.

The third manuscript presented by Cinkir and Kurum relates to the employment of out-of-field teachers in K-12 education in Turkey. The findings of this study showed that research participants disapproved the employment of out-of-field teachers. The manuscript raises educators' awareness of the issue by giving real life examples.

The fourth manuscript by Marable examines the environmental education curriculum that has been utilized within green schools in Virginia, U.S. The findings from the study indicated that teachers are employing practices that are consistent with current emphases on environmental education. Data also supported that educators take pride in their buildings and incorporate the facility as a teaching tool in a variety of instructional practices.

The fifth manuscript by Fleuriet and Williams reframes a university strategic planning process with communication as its centerpiece. A case study is presented that illustrates how communication centered strategic planning can lead to the most meaningful and successful plan, thus improving the internal and external credibility of the institution.

As a professional journal, the goal of Educational Planning is to provide a platform for scholars and practitioners to express their points of view on key educational planning issues. The editors believe that the five manuscripts in this issue well represent the complexity of the process of educational planning. Many questions remain unanswered and continued discussion is encouraged.

January 2015

About the Authors

Şakir Cinkir earned his PhD in 2001 from the School of Education, at Leeds University, through his engagement with the MoNE-WB Project for the Development of National Education. He was director of the Educational Research and Application Centre, at Ankara University, from 2006-2012, and since then, he has been teaching at its Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Educational Administration and Policy. Dr. Cinkir has also been a consultant for the MoNE, in a number of projects, including: (1) Teacher qualifications in general as well as in special domains; (2) Inspectorate performance management; (3) Development of teacher employment systems and strategies for MoNE. He is the co-author of the Turkish Education System and School Management and the author of Restructuring Educational Organizations and Capacity Building: Cases from EU countries. Dr. Cinkir has also published numerous articles in national and international journals in educational sciences. He has also participated in a numerous seminars hosted by public and private institutions

Tak Cheung Chan, Professor Emeritus of Educational Leadership, Kennesaw State University, is a graduate of the University of Georgia. He had been a school teacher and administrator in Hong Kong School System before he served as the key educational planner for three major school systems in southern United States. He started his career in higher education as an assistant professor at Valdosta State University, GA, and was then hired as Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. His areas of academic interest include educational planning, school facility planning, school business management, principalship and international education. Dr. Chan has published extensively in his areas of expertise in renowned national and international journals. He also presented in AERA and many other professional organizations in various topics in teaching and learning in educational leadership.

Debra Coffey is an Associate Professor of Elementary and Early Childhood Education with a doctorate in Literacy, Language, and ESL Education. She is the Vice-President of Research for the Kennesaw Mountain Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa and co-editor of the *Journal of Young Adult and Children's Literature*. As a Faculty Liaison at Kennesaw State University, she collaborates with students, faculty, and P-12 educators to promote transformative educational innovations. Her research is rooted in her innovative P-12 teaching experiences. She highlighted research-based literacy strategies in her chapters, articles, manuals, and five textbooks, which resulted from extensive collaborative experiences. She has established international networks to promote innovative literacy as a lead coach, Director of the Center for Literacy and Learning, Secretary of the Teacher Education Division for the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers, Georgia Coordinator for the International Alliance for Invitational Education, and State Field Council Representative for the Literacy Research Association.

Sandra Cox has been in education for the past 38 years – teaching in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and high school for 20 years, being an assistant principal and principal of an elementary school for 11 years and teaching pre-service education students reading and literacy classes at Kennesaw State University for seven years. She has two grown daughters, Kimberly and Kelsey, who have been her cheerleaders throughout all of her experiences. Sandy currently lives in Marietta, Georgia with her dog, Peanut. She enjoys reading and going to the beach.

Cathy A. Fleuriet, Ph.D., is Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Texas State University-San Marcos. In her current position she leads university initiatives related to planning, assessment, accountability, accreditation, and organizational excellence. Dr. Fleuriet also serves as the Texas State liaison for the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools.

Sherry Hillman is a former Iowa educator for Urbandale Public Schools, a professor at Drake University in the areas of Co-teaching and Early Childhood, and Educational Consultant for reading, writing, and school improvement across the country. She is currently teaching education classes at Kennesaw State University. She currently works with several schools in Georgia in the areas of language arts, reading, and STEM instruction.

Gül Kurum is a research assistant at Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Educational Administration and Policy at Ankara University. She is also a PhD student at Faculty of Educational Sciences, Educational Administration and Supervision. In 2013, she earned her MA degree from Trakya University's Educational Sciences Department, Educational Administration, Supervision, Planning and Economics program. Her research is about the relationship between academicians' organizational health perceptions and their level of organizational trust. In 2010, she received her Bachelor's degree from İstanbul University Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Languages, English Language Teaching Program. Her research area is about school management and supervision.

Steve Marable, Ed. D., is a school administrator with Virginia Beach City Public Schools. His school includes several specialty programs for a diverse student population in grades 6th-12th. Prior to assuming that role in 2008, he served as a secondary teacher and coach for Virginia Beach City Public Schools. In 2014, Steve received the Outstanding Dissertation Award from The International Society for Educational Planning. In addition, he presented the findings from his research on the implementation and practices of environmental education in Green School at ISEP's annual conference in Cyprus. He has also presented at the Virginia Educational Research Association in Charlottesville, VA, and the National School Plant Manager's Association in Myrtle Beach, SC.

Rebecca A. Thessin is an Assistant Professor of Educational Administration at The George Washington University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development. Prior to her current position, she served as the Chief School Improvement Officer for the Montgomery County, Maryland, Public Schools (MCPS) and as the Associate Superintendent for Professional Development and School Support for this same district. She has also served as the Director of School Improvement and Professional Development in Stamford, Connecticut; as the Aide to the Deputy Superintendent in the Boston Public Schools; as an administrative intern at a Boston high school; and as a high school Social Studies teacher. Thessin holds a doctorate in the urban superintendency from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She conducts research in the areas of instructional leadership, professional learning, school and district improvement, urban school reform and leadership preparation.

M. Lee Williams, Ph.D., is Professor of Communication Studies and University Distinguished Professor at Texas State University-San Marcos. His primary areas of teaching and research are in organizational communication, leadership and communication, organizational change, and persuasion. He has published articles in a variety of journals including MIT Sloan Management Review, Human Communication Research, Communication Monographs, Journal of Applied Communication, and Journal of Change Management.

INNOVATIVE PLANNING TO MEET THE FUTURE CHALLENGES OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Debra Coffey
Sandra Cox
Sherry Hillman
Tak C. Chan
Kennesaw State University

ABSTRACT

This article is focused on identifying the current issues in elementary education in the United States. In each of these issues, elementary educators are at the crossroads looking for solutions and directions. Based on the review of literature, the authors pinpoint the upcoming challenges elementary school educators will be facing in the future. Some of these challenges relate to ongoing current issues, and some are anticipated to emerge with the rapid changes in future trends. Innovative strategies for meeting future challenges with the development of culturally responsive elementary schools that enhance student achievement are recommended. A structure of action plan implementation is also suggested.

INTRODUCTION

Elementary education in the United States is presently at the crossroads with difficulties, challenges, and opportunities. This is a golden time that offers opportunities for consideration of positive changes for the continuing development of elementary education. Recent comparisons of international student achievement have indicated that students of the United States are falling behind the students of other advanced countries in some major academic areas. Voices calling for back-to-basics curriculum reform in elementary schools are so loud and clear that elementary educators need to address these issues with sensible strategies. On the other hand, rapid advancement of technology development is urging for innovative instructional approaches with technology integration in elementary education. At the same time, the change in ethnic organization of student populations is changing with increasing number of Hispanic students who come from families needing special assistance. Additionally, recent educational reforms are pressing for educational accountability of school administrators and teachers to generate student achievement. As a result of meeting the required state standards, schools have offered less time for humanistic subjects and extracurricular activities for elementary school students. In this great time of change, elementary educators need to carefully assess the current situation and the different factors that contribute to the confusion at the crossroad. Strategic planning has to be developed with specific goals established to guide the ways of meeting future challenges.

CURRENT ISSUES OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION TODAY

Some critical issues have emerged in elementary education in the United States. They are increasingly pressing and are the expressed concerns of elementary educators. These issues are related to technology development, diverse student populations, curriculum organization, and instructional approaches of elementary schools.

Technology Impact

Due to increasing use of technology in everyday life, parents of elementary students have urged that the school curriculum include more technology for innovative teaching and learning opportunities. Appropriate computer hardware and software need to be purchased and installed for student advancement in schools (Straub, 2009). Integration of technology in the elementary school curriculum has to be carefully sudied for implementation. Technology training sessions need to be scheduled to prepare teachers to use technology effectively. Special technology support teams have to be established to help teachers with technology integration.

Diversity Issues

Reports indicate that the ethnic structure of population in the United States is rapidly changing (Restuccia, 2014). The Hispanic population is rapidly increasingly and is projected to become the largest minority population in fifteen to twenty years. Meanwhile, elementary schools nationwide have been experiencing a continued increase in Hispanic student enrollment. Schools need to be prepared to receive this large population of minority students by understanding their cultural backgrounds, educational needs, and immergence into the mainstream culture. Curriculum specialists and Spanish speaking teachers are involved in planning educational programs that can meet their special needs.

Inclusive Approach

The inclusive approach, with students in special education and students in general education studying in the same classroom, requires innovative procedures to adequately meet the needs of all students. The special education teacher and the general education teacher who work in a classroom with this range of needs and interests need to be well prepared with innovative technology and a wide range of research-based strategies to adequately challenge and meet the needs of all students. The rationale of the inclusive approach is to include students in special education in a family-oriented, positive learning environment (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 2000). Questions have been raised by parents who are doubtful of how well this approach works and the impact of this approach on student achievement. Educators need to provide solid data to demonstrate the effectiveness of the approach (Lindsay, 2007). Inclusive education presents meaningful opportunities for students with disabilities. It is important to adequately prepare teachers who work in inclusive environments, so they will challenge all students appropriately and provide the wide range of opportunities that students need for a balanced and fulfilling educational experience.

Departmentalization

In most of the elementary schools in the United States, one teacher typically teaches all subjects in the classroom, including language, social studies, mathematics, science and reading. This one-class-one-teacher approach is designed to achieve a family environment that facilitates student learning. Since teachers may not be experts in all academic areas, students may not have the opportunity to learn from the best teachers of specific subjects. Departmentalization in some elementary schools gives teachers opportunities to teach only in their areas of expertise, and this idea has been encouraged to increase student achievement (Chan & Jarman, 2004). Although departmentalization offers extensive

benefits for students, this approach may limit the ways teachers can provide support over time through familiarity with individualized needs and interests. While experts in a subject area are highly beneficial role models, the time limitations for changing classes through departmentalization may impact opportunities to differentiate instruction and personalize opportunities across the curriculum.

The Impact of Educational Reform

While national educational reforms emphasize student academic achievement in language and mathematics, studies in other core subject areas such as social studies and sciences in elementary schools are often not given equal attention. Additionally, other exploratory curricula such as art, music, and physical education also suffer from limited allocations of instructional time in the full elementary school curriculum (Elementary education: Current trends, 2014).

WHAT ELEMENTARY EDUCATION WILL FACE TOMORROW

Future challenges are anticipated in the development of elementary education in the United States. Some of these are continuations of current issues, and some are new. Strategic planning has to be designed to meet these future challenges to enhance student achievement and the quality of the curriculum.

Increased Technology Use in Daily Instruction

Increased technology integration in elementary school instruction demands that students are able to use technology to meet the expectations of class assignments (Cromwel, 1998; West, Waddoups & Graham, 2007). This raises concern about the digital divide and the equity issues of student access to technology. It is the basic goal of American education to provide equal opportunities for all students irrespective of their family backgrounds. Much has to be done to ensure that no child is left behind because of the use of technology in elementary school instruction (Moser, 2007).

Diversity of Pupil Populations

The Hispanic population in the United States, as mentioned previously, is rapidly expanding in size. As immigration creates demographic shifts in the population of the United States, it is important for teachers to design a culturally responsive curriculum that matches the interests and meets the needs of a wide range of ethnic groups. It is particularly important to design educational experiences with sensitivity to the needs of disadvantaged families (Reddy, 2011). This is an absolute challenge to educators, and they need to consistently provide equal educational opportunities to all the ethnic groups. It is important for Hispanic children and the children of families from various ethnic groups to have equal opportunities for academic success, so they can reach their full potential. Of all the academic subjects in school, learning English as a second language is becoming one of the most significant.

Increased Teacher Collaboration

Teachers today cannot manage the rigorous expectations of daily teaching all by themselves. With anticipated innovations in educational philosophy, classroom technology,

instructional strategy, and curriculum redesign in the future, teachers will need to depend more and more on team efforts in which they share their knowledge and skills with others to achieve common goals. For tasks like program redesign and assessment of learning outcomes, teachers almost have to count on close collaboration and division of labor to accomplish their goals.

Diversity of Teaching Approaches

The recent call for diverse educational programs to meet the diverse student needs has drawn much attention of educators and community leaders to equal educational opportunity issues. While educators have worked diligently to maximize opportunities with shifts in demographics and trends of immigration, the waves of change are gathering momentum and require new innovations on the educational shore. It is anticipated that the demand for diversity planning in elementary education will become more and more critical.

High Demand for Basic Curriculum

Studies have indicated the need for school curriculum that focuses on science and technology to meet the market demand of the future. However, the academic achievement of American students keeps being ranked behind that of many advanced countries in the world. Parents and community leaders are beginning to press their elementary schools to switch back to a "three Rs" curriculum (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2014) to make sure that their children can fulfill the basic expectations, which are essential for success with science and technology in the upper grades.

Need for Specialization in Academic Areas

As mentioned previously, most elementary teachers today are expected to teach all the subjects in a class. With increasing expectations for student achievement, the call for departmentalization in elementary schools is gaining strength. Elementary educators need to seriously consider balancing between the one teacher "family style" of learning environment and the subject expertise school organization based on expertise in subject areas (Chan, Terry & Bessette, 2009). Some schools are departmentalized for math and reading, so teachers have the opportunity to concentrate on their areas of expertise. A balanced program is important as teachers develop relationships with their students and scaffold instruction to provide needed support. Time to build a quality relationship is important as teachers demonstrate ways to learn using innovative strategies. When teachers use research-based strategies, students are equipped to explore and gain ideas with teacher guidance and independent exploration. When teachers use innovative technology and creative pedagogical approaches, they are often surprised to see the ways students gain insight through independent exploration of certain topics.

Student Interest Driven

Elementary education futurists (Barseghian, February 4, 2011; Cromwel, 1998) have started to explore new approaches to the delivery of instruction at the elementary school level. A new idea is focused on teaching students to learn in areas that they have expressed keen interests in. Innovative elementary educators believe that students need to be encouraged to learn in area in which they are highly motivated and learning activities

need to be designed around their interest to be most effective (Hanover Research, 2012). This new instructional strategy for elementary education is receiving more and more support nationwide. Elementary schools in many states have started trying it out to see the student learning outcome.

Skills vs Facts

While the last century of elementary students learned with emphasis on facts and figures as a basis for analysis and further studies, in this new century, students have been taught to learn all the basic skills of academic work. With the advancement of technology, information stored in websites can be retrieved at any time in any format with high level of accuracy. Instead of memorization, the focus of elementary education tomorrow is the master of learning skills with which students can study independently (Barseghian, February 4, 2011).

Core Curriculum - Standardization

While the national movement of core curriculum calls for curriculum standardization, the pros and cons of standardization continue to be points of dispute among elementary educators (Khrais, 2014). There are definite educational advantages of core curriculum (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2014). However, this is certainly not a one size fits all situation. Should individual school districts be allowed to retain uniqueness of curriculum development at the elementary level? Many questions about the future of core curriculum remain unanswered.

INNOVATIVE PLANS TO MEET THE FUTURE CHALLENGES

Since educators are pushed between current issues and future challenges, elementary educators need to carefully evaluate the direction in which elementary education is heading. Innovative ideas and practical strategies have to be implemented to resolve current issues and to meet anticipated future development. Careful consideration has to be made to ensure that the launching of one strategy does not set back the development of other aspects of elementary education. Students need variety and unique opportunities to develop critical thinking skills and zest for new insights.

Redesigning the Elementary Curriculum and School Organization

The elementary school curriculum needs to be redesigned to focus heavily on the learning of the basic 3Rs, so that students develop basic competence as they seek to meet expectations of the Common Core State Standards and various curriculum components (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2014). Studies have evidenced that children's solid learning experiences in reading, writing, and arithmetic in elementary schools help lay the foundation of their successful academic performance as they move up to higher levels of learning. At the same time, elementary schools need to be reorganized to form teaching teams or departments to assign teachers to teach the subjects they teach most effectively. Redesigning curriculum and reworking school organization are unique ways to enhance the quality of elementary education (Barseghian, February 4, 2011).

Redesigning College Teacher Preparation Programs

Major strides are being made on the educational landscape as administrators and faculty collaborate to redesign college teacher preparation programs in response to issues in elementary schools. In some universities teacher practitioners have the opportunity to choose the subject areas they intend to teach and undergo course preparation to be expert teachers in specific academic areas before they launch into pedagogical training. Only quality teachers will support quality programs (Hardman, 2009). To encourage higher levels of expertise and collaboration, special preparation workshops offer general education teachers and special education teachers opportunities to explore innovations and exchange ideas. These collaborative sessions equip teachers, so they are better prepared to work together in inclusive classroom environments. Simultaneously, student teaching is being enhanced, and teacher education programs are being redesigned to reflect the corresponding course and curriculum changes. Co-teaching and yearlong teaching opportunities prepare teacher candidates to walk into the classroom with greater confidence, expertise, and innovative pedagogical understanding as they face challenges in the classroom.

Forming Professional Learning Communities

To meet the need for increasing teacher collaboration, elementary educators offer professional learning communities as a possible solution (Dufour & Dufour, 2008). In addition to academic planning, the community members can enrich one another by sharing their knowledge, skills, and experiences as part of the professional development activities.

Working with Parents and Communities

While parents and community members continue to expect more of the performance of teachers and administrators, golden opportunities in elementary education now allow teachers and school administrators to build strong working relationships with parents and community members. During innovative programs parents in many elementary schools enthusiastically support school functions by participating in school activities (Bagin, Gallagher, & Moore, 2007). Winning parents and communities is the key to success in elementary education.

Tightening the Teacher Accountability System

Elementary teachers are increasingly aware that the national movement of educational accountability is gaining momentum (Chan, Crain-Dorough & Richardson, 2012). This makes teachers at all levels aware of their own responsibilities as professionals and the importance of demonstrating their teaching ability and learning outcomes. The system of educational accountability calls for teachers to reflect on their own performance and take responsibility for their actions and reputations as they serve as role models for the next generation.

Identifying Factors of Teacher Motivation

The best way to keep a strong team of elementary teachers is to examine the factors that motivate teachers to stay in the teaching profession. Recent studies have identified two significant factors that contribute to teacher sustainability: professional honor and compensation (Boyle, 2014; Thoonen, Sleegers, Oort, Peetsma & Geijsel, 2011). While most elementary schools have established cultures of teacher recognition, salaries of the

teaching profession are still averagely low. State and local school systems need to work hard on improving the monetary and fringe benefits of the teaching profession to keep their best teachers in place.

Providing Educational Opportunities for All

Equal opportunity of education for all is more than an American dream. It is an educator's commitment to the profession (McClure, Wiener, Roza, & Hill, 2008). While we come up with innovative ideas like peer tutoring opportunities to build empathy and teamwork in inclusion classes, we need to continue to follow up with observation and evaluation to check on the implementation issues and achievement outcomes. For many educational innovations, much revision has to be made after implementation to make them work efficiently and effectively. Elementary educators are encouraged to be creative and at the same time to boldly experiment with innovative programs or strategies to make sure that they are achieving their goals.

IMPLEMENTING THE INNOVATIVE PLANS

School district administrators need to assume the leadership to achieve consistency and continuity as they implement plans to meet future challenges of elementary education. A step by step approach has to be taken so that teachers and site administrators can follow the process systematically. The components of plan implementation are identified as follows:

Committee

A district office committee can be formed to take the overall responsibility of directing the implementation process. The committee can consist of the district office curriculum director, elementary school administrators, and lead teachers. The major task of the committee is to take a participatory planning approach to carefully implement the plans to address elementary education challenges. It starts from assessment of planning needs and ends in the evaluation of the planning effort.

Needs assessment

Committee members need to put their heads together to identify the future challenges of elementary education with reference to the situations of their individual districts. What needs to be done to meet future challenges has to be examined. Before determining the needed actions to take, the committee needs to evaluate all available options to see the advantages and disadvantages of different options.

Prioritizing Needs

When all the needed actions have been identified to address future challenges, the committee is ready to explore the urgency of each of the needed actions. This is particularly important when the implementation resources are tight. All the needed actions can be prioritized to reflect the different stages of the plan implementation.

Required Resources

Any action determined to be taken to address future issues in elementary education

has to be supported by human and financial resources to be successful. The committee needs to seek advice from the human resource directors and the financial directors of school districts to decide on the timing and possibility of plan implementation. The amount of support from human and financial resources could change the priority and timeline of plan implementation.

Timeline

After prioritizing the needed actions to be taken and securing the resources needed for plan implementation, the committee needs to take a practical approach to determine on a preliminary time table for plan implementation. The time table is particularly important because it calls the attention of all the stakeholders to prepare to take actions by playing their required roles in the determined actions. This is also time to decide on concurrent actions and coordination of actions.

Procedures

As part of the procedures, the committee needs to submit its proposed action plan through the superintendent to the school board for approval. School board approval will give the committee a free hand to start implementing the action plan. Some of the components of the action plan may need to be tried out in pilot projects to test if the plan works before full implementation in the entire school district.

Evaluation

An evaluation activity has to be included in the action plan to solicit feedback on the action plan implementation. Before the final phase of plan evaluation, an interim evaluation of the action plan is highly recommended to determine whether the plan is carried out on the right track. Anything detected going the opposite direction can be duly corrected before running to the end of the action plan. Interim and final evaluation feedback will be forwarded to the committee for improving the implementation of the action plan.

CONCLUSION

Elementary education forms the basis of other higher levels of education. It is important that elementary education programs are solid so that children learn in ways that benefit them for the rest of their lives. At the same time, elementary education programs need to be designed and delivered with innovations that attract the attention and motivation of students. New educational philosophies, teaching concepts, and strategies have emerged to add complexity to the upcoming issues in elementary education. Elementary educators need to work together collaboratively as a team to carefully examine the foci of these issues and discover alternative ways to address them. They are encouraged to always look to the future of elementary education and explore new innovations to meet these future challenges. The authors would like to end this paper by citing the Total Quality Management Theory by Deming (1982). The theory focuses on seeking improvement by continuously exploring new ways of getting things done. It is through the spirit of Total Quality Management that we see the prospect of the future development in elementary education in the United States.

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LEARNING FROM ONE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: PLANNING TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS FOR TEACHERS' WORK IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Rebecca A. Thessin
George Washington University

ABSTRACT

Numerous districts are implementing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as a part of reform efforts to improve student achievement to meet external accountability mandates. Few districts, however, have considered the essential supports and components that teachers working in PLCs require for these teams to result in instructional improvement. This study reports on the work of one mid-sized urban district that attempted to implement and support PLCs in developing essential PLC characteristics, implementing an improvement process, and establishing an instructional goal, research-based practices shown to facilitate improvement. This district also provided professional development to teachers and administrators in the implementation process.

Findings from this study affirm the research-based practices on which this district's implementation plan was based, while suggesting that additional school-based conditions also needed to be in place: (1) the provision of school-based professional development on PLCs; (2) a school culture focused on collaboration; and (3) a readiness by school leaders to engage in and communicate expectations for PLC work. The study concludes by recommending that districts consider providing differentiated supports and targeted professional development to schools during their first years of PLC work to ensure growth among all PLC teams

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the current accountability movement in education have resulted in frequent student testing and, subsequently, large amounts of available student assessment data. In this face of increased accountability, many schools and districts are implementing professional learning communities (PLCs) to support teachers in collaboratively analyzing assessment data and student work. PLCs provide the opportunity for teachers to work interdependently to identify students' learning needs, make progress to achieve collective goals and common understanding of practices, and improve instruction in the classroom (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2004; DuFour, 2004; DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Elmore & Consortium for Policy Research in Education, n.d.; Hord, 1997; O'Neil, 1995; Pappano, 2007; Schmoker, 2004; Stoll & Louis, 2007). However, in some cases, the term "professional learning community" has come to refer simply to time for teachers to meet in teams, the newest quick fix in education for lagging student achievement results.

Providing time for teachers to meet and work together certainly is new, considering the traditional, isolated, self-contained classroom model in which most school teachers have worked independently for the last century (Elmore, 2004; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). However, time is not all that is necessary for teachers in PLCs to truly affect the instructional core, the relationship between the student, the teacher, and content in the classroom (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009; Elmore, 2004). In particular, the essential supports that educational leaders must provide for PLC teams to effectively work to improve instruction are often overlooked in the process of reform.

In initiating this study on PLC work, I sought to discover the impact of the provision of specific research-based supports on teachers' collective work in PLCs. The key supports I identified in the research included: (1) the establishment of professional learning communities as defined by eight research-based characteristics (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2004; Curry & Killion, Winter 2009; DuFour et al., 2008; Hord, 1997; Kanold, 2006; Little & McLaughlin, 1993; O'Neil, 1995; Pappano, 2007; Schmoker, 2004; Stoll & Louis, 2007); (2) the use of an improvement process to guide teachers' work (Armstrong & Anthes, 2001; Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2005; Easton, 2004; Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, March 2008; Holcomb, 2001; Love, Terc, & Regional Alliance for Mathematics and Science Education Reform, 2002; Pappano, 2007); and (3) the provision of professional development (Corcoran, 1995; Curry & Killion, Winter 2009; Hord, 2009). One mid-sized urban district in the process of initiating PLCs districtwide strove to provide the supports that I had identified as essential for effective PLC work.

Findings from this study revealed that despite the provision of consistent supports districtwide, PLC growth varied greatly across the district at the end of two years of work in PLCs. Data gathered from both high-functioning and struggling PLC teams made it clear that additional preconditions needed to be in place before the guidance of an improvement process and the provision of professional development would foster collective work to improve instruction. Therefore, in planning to implement PLCs districtwide, districts should first preassess schools' readiness to engage in PLC work and then provide supports to schools that are differentiated according to leaders' and teachers' PLC learning needs.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

A significant body of research exists on professional learning communities and on teachers' work within these communities. A professional community, otherwise defined as a community of practice, might consist of a cohesive group of teachers that engages in a process of working together to deepen teachers' expertise on a particular topic and to discuss common challenges, thereby exemplifying elements of the learning organization (Stoll & Louis, 2007; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Stoll and Louis (2007), however, distinguish that professional *learning* communities have an agreed-upon objective of improvement. Yet, in order to achieve improvement goals, PLCs need specific supports to be in place.

In its second year of PLC work ("Year II"), one mid-sized urban district identified as "in need of improvement"[1] under NCLB aimed to provide the essential supports for PLC work that I had identified in the literature. During this district's first year of implementation, Year I, administrators across the district gained some knowledge of PLC

1 Schools are identified as "in need of improvement" when they have not made the annual gains in student achievement required under NCLB for two years in a row.

work in professional development sessions focused on this topic. At the same time, many teachers throughout the district sat together in PLC teams with little knowledge of what they should be doing and no clear goals for their work.

In response to this confusion and frustration among teachers, the district's PLC Steering Committee drafted a Year II PLC Plan that included two specific elements to provide guidance in the implementation of effective PLCs: use of an improvement process to facilitate teachers' work in teams and the identification of an instructional goal to guide the teams' work. The improvement process included the elements of Inquiry, Analyze Data, Look at Student Work, Examine Instruction, Assess Student Progress, and Reflect, with the guidance that PLCs should engage in all six elements of the process but that there was not one specific starting point at which to begin. Instructional goals were established by grade level teams at the elementary level and by content area teams and department teams at the middle and high school levels respectively. These goals were identified to align to schools' overall goals for improving instruction in a particular area. Additionally, teachers and leaders were supported in implementing these elements of the Year II plan with focused professional development in PLC Facilitators' Trainings.

At the end of Year II of PLC work, I interviewed twenty-eight teachers at six schools and observed thirteen PLC teams in action. Since the premise of this study was based on some initial evidence that both the provision of professional development and use of an improvement process are necessary in order for teachers to be able to improve instruction, schools at which the greatest number of teachers had attended the PLC Facilitators' Trainings were the most likely places to test this proposition. I divided the district's schools into high-, mid- and low-participation groups based on the number of teachers at each school site who had elected to participate in these professional development sessions. Participation ranged from 2 - 36% of faculty attending across the district's schools. Among the district's elementary schools, I chose two schools with a reasonably high level of participation (Middlefield and Hillside[2]), one mid-level participation school (Countryside), and one low-level participation school (Hall) for inclusion in the study. At the middle school level, I conducted interviews and observations at one high-participation school (Fielding) and one mid-level participation school (Ridgeway). I then employed purposeful sampling to select teachers from within the six school sites to participate in interviews and PLC observations, contacting two teachers who had participated in the PLC Facilitators' Training and two teachers who had not participated at each school.

In preparation for my observation of PLC teams in action, and so that I might be able to identify PLCs that would be likely to yield instructional improvements, I isolated the eight PLC characteristics most frequently cited in the literature as essential for the success of professional learning communities. I determined that high-functioning PLCs should demonstrate: an ongoing nature; an emphasis on context; alignment with current reform initiatives; collaborative work; shared vision and purpose to improve student learning; evidence of student learning; supportive and shared leadership; and the presence of certain structural and cultural conditions (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2004; Curry & Killion, Winter 2009; DuFour et al., 2008; Hord, 1997; Kanold, 2006; Little & McLaughlin, 1993; O'Neil, 1995; Pappano, 2007; Schmoker, 2004; Stoll & Louis, 2007). In most cases, I was able to obtain minutes and other documents from a few months of a team's PLC meetings to further corroborate my observations.

2 Pseudonyms have been used for all school and teacher names.

As a final source of information on the effect of the district's provision of supports as described in its Year II PLC Plan, I triangulated my findings at the six schools at which I had conducted interviews and observations by utilizing and analyzing data from a survey that was authored by the district and administered in the Spring of 2009. The data from the survey also assisted in providing me with a complete picture of the work and characteristics of PLCs across all twenty schools in the district and an understanding of the district's impact on PLCs across all schools. Overall, 939 teachers, or approximately 67% of the district's teaching staff, responded to the district-wide survey.

FINDINGS

As demonstrated by disaggregated results of the district-wide teacher survey, my observations of PLCs across the district, and teachers' own accounts of PLC work that were gathered for this study, the practices engaged in by teachers working in PLCs varied considerably in this mid-sized urban district at the end of Year II of PLC implementation. Teachers in high-functioning PLC teams confirmed that PLCs benefited from the supports provided by the district, including professional development on PLCs and the use of an improvement process, both components of the district's Year II PLC plan. While some professional learning communities progressed, however, others struggled to engage in work that would lead to improved classroom instruction at the end of two years of PLC work.

Data gathered from both high-functioning and struggling PLC teams made it clear that additional preconditions needed to be in place before the guidance of an improvement process and the provision of professional development would foster collective work to improve instruction. Specifically, teachers in high-functioning PLCs and in struggling PLCs identified the presence or absence of certain conditions as influential on their work: (1) the provision of school-based professional development on PLCs; (2) existing school practices and a school culture focused on collaboration; and (3) the readiness of school leaders and the communication of expectations by school leaders for PLC work. These findings, and the variation in PLC growth observed in this mid-sized urban district, suggest that the district's PLC implementation plan might have been more effective had it provided differentiated supports to account for schools' readiness to engage in PLC work in Year I.

Learning from High-Functioning Teams

This mid-sized urban district's Year II PLC Plan positively contributed to teachers' collective work to improve instruction in a number of PLCs across the district. Summary results of the district-wide teacher survey indicated that PLCs were providing teachers with time to determine how best to meet all students' needs. As shown in the survey results provided in Table 1, 78% of elementary teachers and 67% of middle and high school teachers who responded to the survey stated that their PLC focused on supporting every student to a high level of achievement (Office of Performance Management and Accountability, 2009). And, after my interviews were completed, teachers expressed to the superintendent and to other Central Office administrators that they believed PLC work contributed to improvements in student achievement observed on the 2009 state test results.

Table 1

Q18D. My PLC focuses on supporting every student to reach a high level of achievement.

School Level	Percent of Teachers who Responded "Often" or "Almost Always"
Elementary Schools	78%
Middle and High Schools	67%

Moreover, during interviews and PLC observations, teachers in high-functioning PLCs confirmed the necessity of the research-based supports I had identified: (1) the establishment of professional learning communities as defined by eight research-based characteristics, (2) the use of an improvement process to guide teachers' work, and (3) the provision of professional development. Additionally, teachers in high-functioning PLCs pointed to their use of an instructional goal as a component of the improvement process, as defined by the district's Year II PLC plan, as another important influence on their collective work to improve instruction.

First, high-functioning PLCs that I observed demonstrated many of the eight PLC characteristics that I had identified in the literature: (1) an ongoing nature; (2) emphasis on context; (3) alignment with current reform initiatives; (4) collaborative work; (5) shared vision and purpose to improve student learning; (6) evidence of student learning; (7) supportive and shared leadership; and (8) the presence of certain structural and cultural conditions (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2004; Curry & Killion, Winter 2009; DuFour et al., 2008; Hord, 1997; Kanold, 2006; Little & McLaughlin, 1993; O'Neil, 1995; Pappano, 2007; Schmoker, 2004; Stoll & Louis, 2007). While I had identified leadership as one of the eight essential characteristics of PLC work, in interviews, teachers repeatedly emphasized the powerful impact that school administrators had on their work in PLCs, raising this characteristic to a level of importance above the others. Beyond providing time and space for teachers to meet in teams, supportive school leaders offered continued onsite professional development in PLC work and established accountability for teams' work, such as by supporting and expecting the establishment of an instructional goal by each PLC team.

Second, members of high-functioning teams engaged in aspects of this district's PLC improvement process and cited the process as supporting their work, confirming research that the use of a process facilitates instructional improvement (Armstrong & Anthes, 2001; Boudett et al., 2005; Easton, 2004; Garvin et al., March 2008; Holcomb, 2001; Love et al., 2002; Pappano, 2007). PLC teams were observed looking at student work, inquiring into research, analyzing data, and debriefing classroom observations, as a few examples. Results of the district-wide survey also confirmed that PLCs across the district engaged in particular components of the district's PLC process. However, I observed only one team engage in an ongoing process of improvement. This team of teachers engaged in an iterative process of analyzing data, planning next steps for instruction, and assessing student results. This finding suggests that teams must first engage in and learn to implement specific PLC process steps as a precursor to engaging in a continual, ongoing process of

improvement, a goal that may require more than two years of PLC work.

Third, in interviews, teachers in high-functioning teams indicated that participation in the district's PLC Facilitators' Training sessions and in other professional development sessions on PLCs had a significant impact on their work. As Corcoran (1995) states, "The implementation of systemic reform requires . . . a system of professional development that helps teachers learn, develop, use, and maintain the knowledge and skills required to meet this goal" (p. 2). Like many other teachers, Mike, a teacher at one of the elementary schools selected for this study, attributed the tremendous difference he saw between PLC work in Year I and Year II to the professional development that teachers received in the PLC Facilitators' Training sessions:

> Honestly speaking, I don't think anyone really knew what to do last year. Didn't know if it was just another kind of common planning time or exactly what was supposed to be done . . . This year, I think all the teachers in the PLCs have more of a focus and a better understanding of what it should look like, and what it does and does not look like. I think the framework of looking at data within our PLCs is much stronger, which then helps the PLC become more focused on the work that needs to be done.

Other districts considering implementing professional learning communities as a key component of school improvement efforts should establish clear plans as to how teachers will learn to engage in this process, a realization that this district strove to address by providing professional development directly to teachers in Year II.

Finally, as described in the district's Year II PLC Plan and as also supported by research, high-functioning teams utilized an instructional goal to guide their work to improve instruction and student achievement (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004; Stoll & Louis, 2007). The majority of the district's survey respondents, 66% of elementary teachers and 54% of middle and high school teachers, indicated that their instructional goals guided their work in PLC teams (please refer to Table 2). However, as reported in interviews at one elementary school, in some cases, goals were established but not utilized to guide teams' work. Therefore, while the guidance of an instructional goal should certainly be considered an important component of PLC work, the establishment of a goal was not sufficient to propel a struggling PLC to become high-functioning if other essential PLC characteristics were not in place.

Table 2

Q17A. My PLC's instructional goal guides our work as a team.

School Level	Percent of Teachers who Responded "Often" or "Almost Always"
Elementary Schools	66%
Middle and High Schools	54%

Learning from Struggling Teams

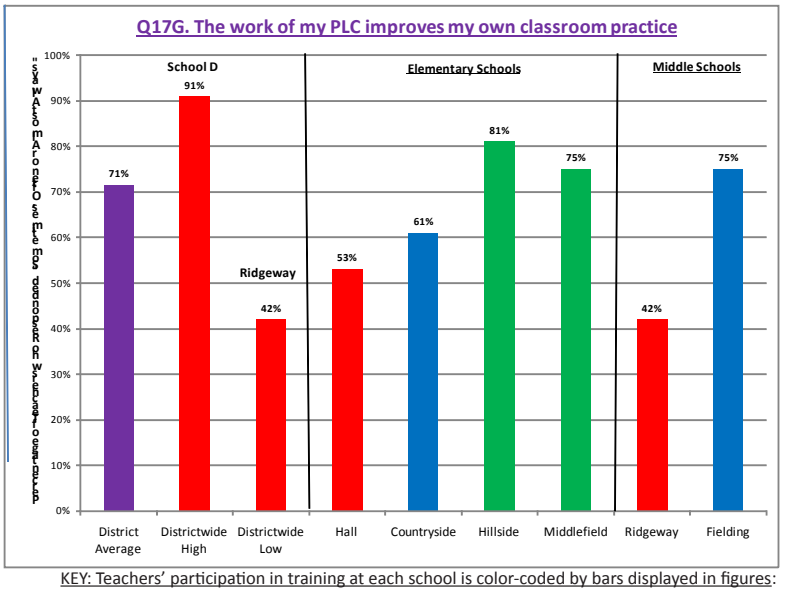
Teachers in many professional learning communities across the district were still struggling to engage in collective work that would lead to improved instruction at the end of

Year II. Struggling PLCs lacked most of the eight PLC characteristics that I had identified in the literature; failed to engage in aspects of the district's improvement process; generally had few, if any, team members participate in the PLC Facilitators' Trainings; and in some cases, had not established an instructional goal. These PLC teams lacked the necessary preconditions identified in data gathered by this study as essential to effective PLC work: (1) the provision of school-based professional development on PLCs; (2) existing school practices and a school culture focused on collaboration; and (3) the readiness of school leaders and the communication of expectations by school leaders for PLC work.

(1) School-Based Professional Development on PLCs

Teachers in high-functioning PLCs were both encouraged to attend the optional district-wide PLC Facilitators' Trainings by their school administrators and provided with additional training in PLC work at their school sites. At Middlefield Elementary School, where 36% of the faculty (the highest proportion district-wide) elected to participate in the district-initiated PLC professional development sessions, teachers also participated in Data Team trainings offered by the state that were scheduled by the principal. Furthermore, school leaders assigned a teacher specialist who had attended both the district and state trainings to attend all of the school's PLC sessions, thereby providing continued professional development to team members. At School D, where 91% of survey respondents indicated that PLC work improved their classroom practice on the survey (see Figure 1), teachers remembered participating in an astounding eight to ten school-based training sessions on PLC work. Finally, at both Fielding Middle School and at School D, administrators regularly observed or participated in PLC meetings, providing, as Jill at School D described, the right amount of support to teachers in PLCs.

Figure 1



KEY: Teachers' participation in training at each school is color-coded by bars displayed in figures:
High-level of participation Mid-level of participation Low-level of participation

[3]School D was not originally selected as a study site. The high teacher survey resoponses led me to conduct interviews here in the Fall of 2009 to explain this discrepant data.

In contrast, teachers in struggling PLCs pointed to a lack of training as a primary reason for their teams' lack of effectiveness and their own confusion with how to utilize PLC time. Dana, a teacher at Hall Elementary School, indicated that even though PLCs were formally initiated in the Fall Semester of 2008, little information was shared with teachers on PLC work until June of 2009. Similarly, at Ridgeway, teachers stated that onsite professional development consisted of administrators placing articles in teachers' mailboxes, a practice that offered no concrete PLC training to teachers.

(2) Existing School Practices and School Culture Focused on Collaborative Work

The extent to which school leaders had already established a school culture focused on learning and collaboration seemed to correlate with the likelihood that a PLC became high-functional by the end of two years of PLC work. At some school sites, teachers openly inquired about how other teachers taught certain concepts or utilized specific instructional strategies in their classrooms. This type of inquiry into one another's practice was observed in high-functioning PLCs at Middlefield and Hillside Elementary Schools and at Fielding Middle School. At Fielding, one teacher, Kristin, suggested that the existing culture of working collaboratively in grade level teams led teachers to be willing to contribute to PLC work. Additionally, as scheduled by administrators, teachers at this school met in two PLCs weekly, one with grade level members and one with subject department members, demonstrating the school's commitment to collaboration. Teachers at School D suggested that their existing familiarity with teamwork, specifically by meeting in adult communities through the Responsive Classroom model, led them to be ready for PLC work. They added that an established trust between school administrators and staff contributed to this school's high results on the district-wide survey.

At both Hall and Ridgeway, while teachers were provided with time to meet, administrators did not put any additional structures in place to facilitate teachers' learning in teams. Without the knowledge of how to engage in PLC work or the understanding of how their work could lead to improved student achievement, many teachers at Hall and Ridgeway focused their PLC discussions on student behavior issues and on problems with school and district administrators. At Countryside Elementary School, I observed teachers share student work samples, but multiple teachers commented that certain students were not capable of high level work, acknowledging, "Well, since you have the low class. . .". Even though this PLC was engaging in an element of the district's improvement process, teachers blamed the kids or the external assessment for students' poor performance instead of examining their own instruction.

(3) Readiness of School Leaders and Communication of Clear Expectations by School Leaders

School leaders had a much greater impact on teachers' work in PLCs in this district during the 2007-2009 school years than one seven-hour PLC Facilitators' Training session could. Teachers in high-functioning PLCs specifically identified the support of school leaders and the provision of direction and clear expectations by school leaders as a key factor in their work. At many school sites, school leaders reinforced the PLC process designed by the district's PLC Steering Committee and assisted teachers in establishing norms, using protocols, and working toward achievement of an established instructional

goal. Mary, a teacher at Hillside Elementary, gave the credit for her school's PLC work to her new principal, stating, "They are effective PLCs now because of our new leadership." Mary and other teachers at Hillside indicated that their principal's expectation that they follow the district's PLC process to establish an instructional goal, as well as draft an action plan to guide them in reaching that goal, focused their work.

In contrast, at other schools, leaders provided little structure or guidance for PLCs, and some directed teachers to engage in activities that actually took their time away from instructionally-focused PLC work. At Hall Elementary, teachers indicated that administrators assisted them in writing an instructional goal, but then teachers weren't provided with time to work to achieve them. At this school, administrators actually set the agendas for PLC work each week. One teacher at Hall stated that teachers' lack of ability to influence their PLC agendas resulted in teachers not being able to discuss classroom challenges that were of importance to them. As described by teachers in struggling PLCs, this absence of clear understanding of PLC work and of communication on the purpose and expectations for PLC work by school leaders contributed to PLCs' lack of progress at some school sites.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLCS

The variation in the growth of professional learning communities that was observed in this district after two years of PLC work suggests that districts planning to initiate PLCs should design a differentiated implementation plan that correlates with schools' and school leaders' readiness to engage in this work. Prior to sharing PLC practices with schools, a district should determine schools' readiness to engage in the four essential elements of a PLC implementation plan, including: (1) the establishment of the eight essential characteristics of PLCs; (2) the use of an instructional goal to guide teams' work; (3) the design and implementation of a PLC improvement process; and (4) the provision of professional development. Next, districts should support school teams in establishing and utilizing the elements of PLCs that are found in high-functioning teams through the provision of targeted professional development.

In order to determine each school's readiness for PLC work, a district might follow the guidance of this mid-sized urban district's PLC improvement process (please see Figure 2). While the process was developed to assist teachers in understanding challenges of student learning for the purpose of adjusting and improving instruction, the six steps of the PLC process could also be used to guide a district in designing a differentiated implementation plan for PLCs: (1) Inquiry; (2) Analyze Data; (3) Look at Student Work; (4) Examine Instruction; (5) Assess Student Progress; (6) Reflect.

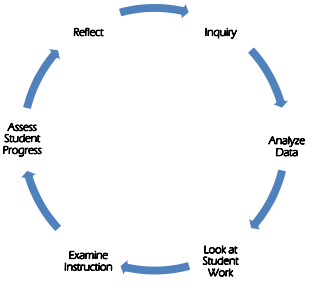


Figure 2

1) Inquire:

School and district leaders, both administrators and teachers, should be involved in the PLC development and implementation process. It is important to begin this collective learning about what a PLC *is* and *does* prior to the first year in which teachers begin meeting in PLCs. In the district studied, the PLC Steering Committee designed the district's improvement process and served as a valuable source of knowledge for school representatives who served on the committee and for Central Office representatives who were supporting schools in the implementation process. These representatives determined the district's next steps and brainstormed solutions to everyday challenges with PLC work. Additionally, Committee members assisted in gaining teacher support for PLC work at their own school sites.

2) Analyze Data:

The district should survey teachers and administrators to determine schools' readiness to engage in PLC work. By designing and administering a short survey to pre-assess schools' readiness to engage in this learning, a district planning to implement PLCs can gather information on the extent to which the eight essential characteristics of PLC work already exist in each school. The survey should include questions about existing practices and professional development opportunities, school culture, and the readiness of school leaders and staff to engage in PLC practices. Asking teachers questions such as, "How frequently do you work in teams?" and "What other professional development sessions may have prepared you to collaborate with other teachers?" will assist a district planning for implementation to determine which schools are ready to begin this work. A district may consider piloting PLC work at certain ready-to-go school sites, while other school leaders are supported in preparing their faculties with skills to engage in PLCs in subsequent school years.

3) Look at Teachers' Collective Work:

If responses from the survey indicate that schools already have many of the eight characteristics of PLC work in place, and may even have engaged in aspects of an improvement process prior to the initiation of PLCs, the next step is to triangulate the data by following up with a visit to the school. As found at one of this district's schools, teachers may believe that they have been doing PLC work for years, while not realizing what a PLC actually *is*. By observing a few examples of teachers working together, such as during existing time for professional development, district leaders can assess teachers' familiarity with collaborative work. If no opportunities to observe teachers engaging in collective work are available, teachers and school leaders at this site may first need support in establishing structures for teamwork prior to establishing the eight PLC characteristics as a component of team functions.

4) Examine the Culture of Instruction:

Prior to implementing PLCs, consider a school's culture by looking for initial indicators of a learning organization – Are classroom doors left open during instruction? Is student work displayed in the hallways? Do teachers have time dedicated to meet and plan for instruction? Are conversations in the teachers' room focused on sharing instructional strategies? Reflecting on a school faculty's readiness to begin to learn together prior

to instituting PLCs may help district leaders better prepare a school to engage in this challenging work.

Teachers who have never before shared the instructional work that takes place inside their classrooms with one another should first learn how to organize for collaborative work by receiving support in establishing norms, utilizing protocols, setting goals, and writing agendas to guide their collaborative work. Then, as PLCs are formed at a school site, teachers working in PLCs should receive feedback on their work as it aligns to the eight essential characteristics of PLCs and to the district's improvement process through regular observations. Observations of PLC teams in action should be part of the larger district-initiated data-gathering process that is necessary to assess and support continued growth in PLC teams.

5) Assess School Progress and 6) Reflect:

As the PLC implementation process gets underway, districts should continue to gather data, make adjustments, and differentiate support to PLC teams. An effective classroom teacher is constantly collaborating with colleagues to analyze student work and assessment data to determine which students need additional support and which students are ready to move on. In the process of implementing a new initiative, a district should also revisit school and individual team needs and subsequently provide differentiated support to assist PLC growth at each school site. Through the administration of annual surveys and the analysis of those results, observations of PLCs across the district, and the feedback provided by a representative committee, a district can make adjustments to its own PLC model to continue to improve its effectiveness. This work is best done collaboratively, in conjunction with teachers and administrators who are engaging in PLC work across the district.

CONCLUSION

In considering cost-efficient ways of providing differentiated professional development, districts might consider grouping schools together into Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3 schools based on the results of data gathered and triangulated prior to implementation. Teachers at Stage 1 schools might participate in professional development focused on establishing basic components of collaborative work, such as creating norms, using protocols, and working toward a simple goal, while teachers at a later stage of growth might be supported in initiating the practice of peer observation. As school-based professional development would be most applicable to school teams' work, district administrators might also collaborate with school leaders in designing professional development sessions on PLCs to be led and held at individual school sites. Through gathering data and visiting a school to observe teachers' collaborative work prior to planning professional development, this training could be developed with a particular school's needs for PLC growth in mind.

In preparation for Year III of PLC work, this mid-size urban district also began to offer differentiated supports to schools to further PLC work as a result of an analysis of survey data, school visits, feedback from the PLC Steering Committee, and other data gathered in Years I and II. By gathering data on school readiness for PLC implementation across school sites prior to Year I of PLC work, however, districts in the process of initiating PLCs can design a differentiated plan to provide professional development and support to schools engaging in various stages of learning in professional learning communities.

While the results of this study suggest that specific supports are essential to the growth and development of PLC teams, findings also indicate that not all schools may benefit equally from such supports without the presence of certain preconditions. Through careful observations and analysis of survey data, district administrators can plan to provide supports to establish the conditions needed to further PLC development at all school sites, regardless of school starting points.

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DISCREPANCY IN TEACHER EMPLOYMENT: THE PROBLEM OF OUT-OF-FIELD TEACHER EMPLOYMENT

Sakir Cinkir
Gul Kurum
Ankara University

ABSTRACT

Enacting changes without considering essential educational components such as number of teachers, non-teaching staff, and classes can lead to problems in education systems. One common problem is an inadequate number of teachers. In response to this, policy makers often create out-of-field teacher employment to meet the teacher shortages. While this practice meets the teacher shortages quantitatively, it decreases the quality of education. The purpose of this study is to identify the problems associated with out-of-field teachers and to make recommendations for overcoming these problems. In this study, a qualitative research method and phenomenological research design were used. The study group consisted of 20 participants (8 principals and 12 teachers) from public schools in Ankara. The data were collected with interviews and analyzed using content analysis technique. According to our research findings, participants do not approve out-of-field teacher employment. The reasons for their disapproval vary and have been grouped into themes such as "Lack of subject knowledge, teaching experience and professional specialization." The findings also show that out-of-field teachers have troubles with issues such as commitment, job satisfaction and motivation, subject knowledge in teaching, and adaptation to the job. On the other hand, out-of-field teacher employment provides advantages such as meeting the teacher shortages, decreasing unemployment and providing different perspectives on teaching. Despite these advantages, out-of-field teacher employment as a means of meeting the teacher shortages must be put to an end. Participants generally think that this practice can be prevented by means of collaboration between Ministry of National Education [MEB] and Council of Higher Education [YÖK]. The findings of this study could contribute to discussions about out of field teaching and help educational stakeholders to increase their awareness about out of field teaching by giving real life examples. Permanent employment policies must be created in order to provide better and more consistent system of education in which each teacher is employed in his or her own field of study.

INTRODUCTİON

Human capital is an important resource for countries as well as for organizations. In order to use human resources efficiently, human resource planning is necessary. Human resource planning means projecting the number and quality of needed employee shortages in each department of the organization, determining available categories of human resources, revealing the differences between human resource shortages and available human resources, and deciding on how and where to seek for the required human resources. In this process, with the help of action plans, human resource planning aims at developing human resources by increasing their effectiveness, meeting the organization's human resource shortages, and determining the recruitment of permanent staffing (Karakütük, 2012). However, human resource planning is a difficult process because it depends on many ambiguous and changeable structures of the unforeseen future (Başaran, 1985).

In developing countries like Turkey, educational policy makers face problems of closing the gap between teacher supply and demand because well-qualified experts on statistical research methods are lacking (Karakütük, 2012). Indeed, human resource planners reveal the framework of teacher supply and demand for the employers. In this planning process, the demand for human resources subtracted from their supply gives information about the current state of employment (Adem, 1987). In order to meet the demand for teachers, human resource planning is necessary in Turkey. Many problems have appeared in the management of human resources in different sectors of the business of education (Çınkır, 2013). Thus, education is not a puzzle game as it may not be compensated with anyone who is unqualified in teaching profession.

Teachers' educational background is a significant component of teacher quality. In the 21st century, all business professionals are expected to demonstrate expertise in their areas of specialization. According to Nagle's (2010), ten factors have been identified as professional qualities such as attitudes, interpersonal, critical thinking, job specific technical, computer/technology and communication skills, drug testing issues, academic preparation, appearance and previous experience, and academic preparation or degree of certification.

TEACHER TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT IN TURKEY AND ABROAD

Many variables like family, friends, school administration, environment and teachers can be responsible for students' achievement. However, teachers have direct responsibility to grow academically successful students up and they are one of the most important school-based factors affecting students' education (Rockstroh, 2013). However, in Turkey prospective teachers have preferred to be a teacher, because of their interest in teaching, their wish for serving the public, their role models, job security, long holidays, less working hours, and examination system. Some of the prospective teachers chose the teaching profession because their university admission exam score was not high enough to be selected by the faculty of law, medicine or business etc. (Çınkır and Kurum, 2014). However teaching requires dedication, devotion, and is "more than picking up a bag of instructional tricks at the schoolroom door or learning to mimic the actions of another educator—even a very good one" (Imig, 1996, p. 14A; as cited in Roth and Swail, 2000). For these reasons, qualified and internally motivated teachers may be called as a resource for good education and teaching

Wright, Horn and Sanders (1997) have stated that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher. Moreover good teaching is mostly the product of a highly qualified teacher. Surely some teachers have a gift to help students to learn, but knowledge of the learning process, child development, and academic content are all important components of good teaching (Roth and Swail, 2000).

Teacher training is a process that can be different from country to country. In Turkey, teacher training practice has been based on Darülmuallimin, which was established in 1848 as a teacher training school (Aydın & Baskan, 2005). After Turkish republic was founded, rural and urban teacher training schools were opened in 1926 so as to train primary school teachers. In those times, the number of citizens living in villages was much more than those living in urban areas. For this reason, village institutes were established

in 1940s in order to train teachers who were accustomed to live in villages. However in 1956, village institutes were turned into a primary school teacher training institutes. In 1974, two-year education institutes were established and finally in 1982 teacher's training responsibility was passed from MEB to YÖK. Since then, high school students who can attain the required scores from higher education entrance exam have been accepted as potential teachers to be trained in four-year BA level programs (Karslı & Güven, 2011). In 2008, MEB (2008) grouped teacher competencies in six main categories: individual and professional values-professional development, knowing and understanding students, learning and teaching processes, monitoring and assessing learning and development, school-family and community relationships, and program and content knowledge. These competencies are not fully functional since teachers are neither trained nor employed according to these teacher competencies.

On the other hand, in England, teachers have been trained according to two main models. The first one is school-based/apprenticeship model, which was dominant in the 19th century. Throughout the first 50 years of 1800s, teacher training colleges emerged to meet the growing demand for qualified teachers. Following that, college or university based model has been practiced in the 20th century. At the end of the 20th century, standards for teacher training were determined and university and college-based courses have been replaced with greater emphasis put on relevant practical classroom skills and techniques and professional values (Robinson, 2006).

In the USA the practice of teacher training differs from state to state (Harmancı, 2007). In general, prospective teachers complete the courses (including student teaching) at an institution authorized by the state. After meeting the standards of the teaching profession, candidates are licensed to teach in that state. Despite the differences among the states, most authorities agree that prospective teachers should have at least a bachelor's degree received from an accredited education program with a major or minor in education and a major in a subject area they plan to teach. Hence, future teachers must pass either a state test or the widely used Praxis exams which are a series of tests that measure teacher candidates' knowledge and skills for licensing and certification in the USA (Roth & Swail, 2000).

In Finland, those who pass the required exams cannot work as teachers because prospective teachers are selected in two stages. In the first stage, candidates are evaluated according to their exam results and high school diplomas. In the second stage, they complete a written examination on pedagogy, and engage in a clinical activity in which they use their communication and social interaction skills. Then the top ones are asked about why they want to become a teacher. After this evaluation, the highly capable candidates complete a teacher training program (Sahlberg, 2010). The differences in teacher training practices can be seen in teacher employment processes. The steps in employment processes often operate independent of each other and are specific to each school organization to meet the needs of the student population, schools, and districts and to satisfy the expectations of law by operating in compliance with non-discriminatory practices (MacKenzie, 2011). In Finland, education providers are responsible for employing their educational staff and determining the types and number of posts in need. The recruitment is an open process and the vacant posts are advertised in newspapers, professional journals and relevant websites. Each education provider decides who is responsible for appointing new teachers. It may be the education committee or another equivalent committee, the municipal board, the school

board or the principals themselves who complete this hiring process. Teachers are required to have a master's degree and pedagogical training, but education providers set some other criteria as well. The aim is to select a person who is both qualified and suitable for both the position and the school community (Lönnqvist, 2013). It is possible to see the similar process in the USA and England; but in the USA there is a second recruitment type, in which teacher recruiters interview and screen all candidates. Successful candidates are placed into a pool for principals who may choose to interview the candidate. In this process, teachers are asked about their work history, current licensure, university transcripts, standardized test scores, letters of recommendation, and references (MacKenzie, 2011). Apart from these, teachers are also expected to have a master's degree in Finland (Lönnqvist, 2013).

Teacher employment processes are much more different in Turkey than these countries. Turkey has a centralized education system covering almost 90% of the students from pre-school education to high school study at public schools. In pre-school education, there are totally 1.059.495 students and 87% of them attend public schools (MEB, 2014a). The percentage is almost the same in the primary, secondary, and high school education. These statistics show that 90% of the teachers are expected to be appointed to public schools. To be appointed as a teacher, each teacher candidate has to take Public Personnel Selection Examination for Teachers 121 (Öğretmen Adayları için Kamu Personeli Seçme Sınavı [KPSS]). Around 30% of the examinatioin score comes from general culture, 20% of it comes from educational science test, and 50% of it is from professional teaching knowledge test. KPSS is conducted annually by the Student Selection and Placement Center (Öğrenci Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi [ÖSYM]), a government agency that also conducts the nationwide annual university entrance examinations. KPSS results are valid for one year in applying for a teaching job with MEB (Çınkır, 2012). As a result, teachers meeting the teacher qualifying requirements are ranked in each teaching field according to the exam scores from high to low. For example, in 2014 almost 6000 quotas were assigned to primary school teachers and the first 6000 candidates were appointed according to their score order (MEB, 2014b). The rest had to wait for the second appointment from MEB or could apply for a job at private schools although private schools' requirements are different from those required by MEB (TED, 2014).

As population increases, more students suffer from teacher shortages. Because of temporary teacher training and employment policies, different practices such as training teachers through long distance courses in 1974-75, by means of pedagogical formation courses (Özoğlu, 2010), and hiring teachers from other fields (Çınkır, 2013) have been used to meet such teacher shortages. In the past, the number of qualified teachers was less and policy makers established regulations like out of field teaching to meet the teacher shortages. But this out of field teaching practice cannot be a permanent educational policy for employment of teachers, since there are almost 300,000 teachers who have been waiting to be employed (Eşme, 2014).

QUALITY OF TEACHER AND OUT OF FIELD TEACHING IN TURKISH CONTEXT

A strong relationship exists between qualified teachers and student achievement (Santiago, 2002). According to the World Bank (2011) report on the quality and equality of basic education in Turkey, qualified teachers can narrow the academic achivement gap between students from high and low income groups. In their research with 4th through 7th

graders in Texas, Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005) found that having qualified teachers was a more important factor than school organizations, management or opportunities offered at school. According to this research, teachers have a strong effect on student achievement, especially in math and reading.

In Turkey, critiques against the poor quality of education are increasing day by day. Student achievement on higher education entrance examinations in Turkey has fallen below the required levels. In 2014, of the nearly two million candidates who took the higher education entrance examination, over fifty thousand received a zero (ÖSYM, 2014). Internationally, according to data from Turkey Education Map (Türkiye Eğitim Atlası) (2012-2013), results from the Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] 2012 pointed out that Turkey's average scores in math (448), reading (475) and science (463) were lower than the OECD average (math 494, reading 496 and science 501). These figures and international examination results is a reflection of qualified teacher shortages in Turkey.

Teachers play an important part in determining the quality of teaching activities at school. Without teachers, school organizations do not fulfill such responsibilities as introducing culture and transfering it to new generations, equipping students with current knowledge and skills and increasing their awareness (Özoğlu, 2010). The main purpose of the teaching profession is to provide good education by guiding students and society towards learning (MEB, 2011). According to Tedmem (2013), graduates from the faculty of education score higher in public personnel selection examination for teachers in the fields of physics, chemistry, math, biology, history, geography, English and religion than the graduates from the faculty of arts and science. There is no doubt that high-quality education is best provided by qualified teachers, graduated from the faculty of education.

Various studies have been carried out to determine how the quality of teachers affects student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Harris & Sass, 2007). Good education means that students can achieve measurable objectives in literacy, math, science and life skills (UNESCO, 2014). At this point, teacher qualifications play a vital role in reaching those objectives. According to Santioga (2002), while indirectly observable features of teacher quality consist of communication, group work, classroom management skills, flexibility, creativity and mission-based behaviours, directly observable features of teacher quality consist of subject knowledge, teacher certification, academic achievement, experience and seniority. Based on this second kind of features, a qualified teacher can be an expert in his or her respective subject. Darling-Hammond (1999) also provided evidence of a positive relationship between student achievement and teacher quality (teacher certification, subject knowledge). The research of Harris and Sass (2007) also found a positive relationship between the academic development of teachers and the math achievement of secondary and high school students.

The instability of teacher demand and supply is a significant problem in Turkey as well as in other countries. There are over 700,000 teachers in Turkey, and the number of students per teacher is generally 20 at primary school, 19 at secondary school and 16 at high school (MEB, 2013a). About 300,000 teachers are currently employed at public schools (Eşme, 2014). While there is a teacher shortage in counselling (16,900), English language teaching (12,857) and preschool education (6,848), there is a teacher surplus in the subjects of physics and chemistry (MEB, 2013b). According to regulation No. 80 (07/07/2009) of the Board of Education and Discipline (Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu [TTK]-

MEB, 2009), out-of-field teachers have been employed to meet teacher demand in specific subjects like counselling or English language teaching. For instance, those holding a degree in English language and literature, translation or interpretation and who acquire a teaching certificate can be employed as English teachers. The issue of instability in teacher supply and demand was assessed in the National Teacher Strategy Draft workshop (MEB, 2011), the Attempt for Education Reform (Eğitim Reformu Girşimi, 2012) and the project of Human Resources Teacher Projections (İnsan Kaynakları Öğretmen Projeksiyonları [İKOP]) (Çınkır, 2013). According to İKOP (Çınkır, 2013) data covering 600,000 teachers, 45.5% of them are teaching out-of-field, 12.1% are teaching minor subjects and 7.5% are teaching in unknown fields. Only 34.9% of teachers have taught in their own field (Çınkır, 2013).

Out-of-field teaching is defined in different ways by different researchers. Hobbs (2013) states that out-of-field teaching occurs when teachers teach a subject for which they are not qualified. According to Ingersoll and Curran (2004), it happens when principals assign teachers to teach a subject for which they are not qualified. Out-of-field employment is a function of staff selection. Furthermore, Ingersoll and Gruber (1996) express that out-of-field teaching results from the inconsistency between teachers' field of study and their field of assignment. According to another researcher, out-of-field teachers can be grouped into four categories according to their role and phase assignment (Sharplin, 2014): *role displacement*, in which the skills and qualifications of the teacher do not match the role to which he or she is appointed; *role stretched*, in which the skills and qualifications of the teacher match some aspects of the appointed role while including additional roles for which the teacher has no prior experience or qualifications; *phase displacement*, in which the skills and qualifications of the teacher do not match the appointed sector (primary, secondary or tertiary); and *phase stretched*, in which the skills and qualifications of the teacher match the appointed sector but also include placement in part of the sector for which he or she has no prior experience. In ideal circumstances, of course, a teacher's role and phase are congruent with his or her area of expertise.

Out-of-field teaching is a common practice throughout the world, from the USA to Australia to Korea. In 1990-91, out-of-field teacher employment had a high percentage in the USA. Basic subjects such as math were taught to 7th through 12th graders at public schools by teachers who were qualified neither in math nor in teaching (Ingersoll & Gruber, 1996). According to research in the USA by Ingersoll (2003) examining the 1999-2000 school year, 38% of teachers in 7th through 12th grade math were qualified neither in math nor in minor subjects. According to McConney and Price's (2009) research in Western Australia, 24% of the participating teachers were out-of-field teachers. Furthermore, these out-of-field teachers had at least 20 years of experience. Ee-gyeong (2011) also found that in Korea, out-of-field teachers were more common in the fields of science and math at public schools.

Many reasons lead to the employment of out-of-field teachers. Hobbs (2013) has noted that teacher shortages, especially in basic subjects like math and science, have led to out-of-field teacher employment. Darling-Hammond and Berry (1999) also have stated that, in high-poverty urban and rural locations, schools have reported difficulties in recruiting qualified teachers in critical subjects such as physical science, mathematics and special education. When schools have difficulty in finding qualified teachers, educational administrators suggest three ways to resove these difficulties: hire less-qualified teachers,

assign teachers trained in another field or grade level and make use of substitute teachers (Ingersoll, 1998). Each of these coping strategies results in out-of-field teaching. This practice occurs either through managerial decisions or through recruitment procedures (Du Plessis, 2013). In Ingersoll's (1998) view, society lacks respect for the complexity and importance of the teaching profession. Teaching is a profession that requires raising up a qualified workforce, providing peace and welfare in society and becoming a role model to society (Çelikten, Şanal & Yeni, 2005).

In Turkey, out of field teaching practice has grown due to system centralization. The implementation of 12-year compulsory education in 2012 did not provide a strategic and scientific planning of the number of teachers to be hired in primary, secondary and high school levels. Serious problems appeared because of these changes and primary school teachers could easily change their fields of teaching by attending a certificate program recognized by MEB. According to data from MEB (2012), out of the 42,000 primary school teachers, 4700 became physical education teachers; 4037 became Turkish teachers; 4219 became math teachers and 5120 became school counselors. As a result, in Turkey, any teacher can teach any subject, which is a sign of phase and role displacement according to Sharplin 's (2014) out-f-field teaching categories.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This is the first study that investigates the out-of-field teaching phenomenon by analyzing the views of teachers and principals. This study could contribute to the debates about the importance of teachers on students' achievement, national teacher training and employment policy, and especially the reality of out of field teaching in Turkey and other countries. Moreover, this study can help educational planners and policy makers to think about the reasons for the instability between teacher demand and supply. Out of field teaching is not a current subject. Its permanent negative effects on education should be questioned in order to minimize its negative effects.

RESEARCH PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to identify the problems of out-of-field teachers and to make recommendations for overcoming these problems. In accordance with this purpose, the following questions were raised:

1. What are the views of principals and teachers about out-of-field teacher employment?

2. What are the problems principals and teachers confront with out-of-field teachers?

3. How do principals and teachers perceive the advantages of out-of-field teacher employment for the teaching profession?

4. What are the principals' and teachers' suggestions to address the out-of-field teaching issue?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, a qualitative phenomenological research design was used. In this design, phenomenologies are emphasized in terms of awareness but not in great detail (Ersoy, 2013). Phenomena can be in the form of incidents, experience, perceptions, concepts, situation, and tendency. It is possible to encounter these phenomena in a daily life, but it does not mean that they are well known or comprehended. For this reason, phenomenological research design is used to search these phenomena, which are not well understood (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006, p. 72). In this study, the phenomenon was out-of-field teacher employment in Turkey.

Study Group

The study group was determined by criterion sampling, in which people meeting pre-determined criteria were interviewed. The criteria in this study were in-field and out-of-field principals and teachers. The study group consisted of 20 participants (8 principals and 12 teachers of in-field/out-of-field) teaching at Ankara public schools (primary, secondary, and high school levels). Participant's background information about field of study, graduate school attended and type of employment is shown in Table 1.

According to Table 1, 8 out of 20 participants are performing their duties as out-of-field assignments and 12 participants are considered performing with in-field qualifications. Many of the out-of-field teachers were graduated from the Faculty of Science and Economics. For the confidentiality of participants in the study, the principals are referred to as P1, P2, etc., and the teachers as T1, T2, etc.

Table 1

Distribution of Participants According to Field of Study, Graduate School, and Type Of Employment

Participants	Field of Study	Graduate School	Type of Employment
1 (T1)	PST	Faculty of Economics	Out of Field
2 (T2)	PST	Faculty of Science	Out of Field
3 (T3)	PST	Faculty of Economics	Out of Field
4 (P1)	PST (P)	Faculty of Science	Out of Field
5 (T4)	PST	Faculty of Communication	Out of Field
6 (P2)	Special Ed Teacher (P)	Faculty of Education	In Field
7 (P3)	PST (P)	Faculty of Education	In Field
8 (T5)	English Teacher	Faculty of Education /Physics	Out of Field
9 (P4)	Turkish Teacher(P)	Faculty of Education	In Field
10 (P5)	PST(P)	Faculty of Science	Out of Field
11 (T6)	PST	Faculty of Education	In Field
12 (T7)	School Counselor	Faculty of Education	In Field
13 (P6)	Electricity Teacher(P)	Faculty of Education	In Field
14 (T8)	PST	Faculty of Education	In Field
15 (T9)	Science Teacher	Faculty of Education	In Field
16 (T10)	PST	Faculty of Education	In Field
17 (P7)	PST (P)	Faculty of Education	In Field
18 (P8)	PST (P)	Faculty of Education	In Field
19 (T11)	PST	Faculty of Education	In Field
20 (T12)	English Teacher	Faculty of Languages, History and Geography	Out of Field

Note: PST = Primary School Teacher; P = Principal

Data Collection

The data of the study were collected from principals and teachers at Ankara public schools (Primary and secondary) in the 2013-2014 school year by means of structured interviews. Participants were interviewed between March 24, 2014 and April 7, 2014. The interviews were transcribed from a voice recorder. The entire transcription consisted of 45 pages.

Reliability-Validity of the Study

The data collection tool was submitted to expert opinion in terms of content validity and clarity. With feedback from 7 experts, the final version of the interview forms were prepared and used with participants. According to Creswell (1998; cited by Glesne, 2012), colleague assessment is one of the methods used to increase a study's credibility. To ensure reliability in the study, the responses to interview questions were categorized, after which themes were created independently by two researchers. To test the reliability of the study, the percentage of intercoders' agreement was computed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula.

Using Miles and Huberman's formula, the intercoder reliability was about 88.37%. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), an intercoder reliability of .70 and above is considered adequate for internal reliability. For descriptive validity, the study group and research process were reported in detail. In order to increase external validity, raw data were stored in case they were requested or intended to be used in future studies. Furthermore, according to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2006, p.270), to provide reliability and validity, giving direct quotations is necessary. Therefore, the findings of the study are supported by direct quotations.

Data Analysis

Content analysis technique was used to analyze the data. First, the data from interviews were transcribed and the raw data were organized. Then themes based on the data were created and annotated with descriptive narration in tables. Direct quotations from participants were given in quotation marks and the codes of the participants were presented in parentheses.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Participants were asked whether they approved of out-of-field teacher employment or not. While 17 participants disapproved of it, 3 of them approved of it,, and they were out-of-field teachers and principals. Participants explained their reasons for approving or disapproving of out-of-field teacher employment. These reasons, themes and frequency of views are shown in Table 2. Participants who approved of out-of-field teacher employment gave two reasons: the teacher shortages and their mastery of subject knowledge. While one teacher who approved of it noted that "if there were teacher shortages, teachers from minor subjects could be employed" (T12*)*, a principal expressed that "after 3-4 years of experience, there would be no difference between in-field and out-of-field teachers" (P1). These results indicate that teaching can be perceived as a profession that is typified by experience and the possession of a teaching certificate.

Table 2

Participants' Reasons for Approval or Disapproval of Out-of-Field Teacher Employment

Area of Questioning	Core Relevant Narrative Formed From Quotation (Key content summarized through relevant *quotations* and linked by formulated meaning statements)	Emergent Themes	Frequency of views
Perceived approval of out-of-field teacher employment?	*-If there are teacher shortages, it can be applied (P1) .* *-If there are teacher shortages, out-of-field teachers can be employed (T12)*	Teacher Shortage	3
	-Their subject knowledge is better (P5) *-With teaching certificate, they get qualified in teaching (P5)* *-High school teachers graduated from a faculty of science and arts and they are better (P5)* *-Subject knowledge isn't well taught at a faculty of education (P5)*	Subject Knowledge	4
Perceived disapproval of out-of-field teacher employment?	*-Out-of-field teachers don't have subject knowledge (T1,T2,T3,T4,P2,P3,P4)* *-Out-of-field teachers don't have teaching experience (T1,T2)* *-Teaching can be done with professional knowledge (P2, T5)* *-Out-of-field teachers learn teaching in a trial and error way (T6)* *-They lack a teaching certificate (P2,P3,T7)* *-They lack teaching and practice (T6,T7,T8,T9,T10,P6,P8)* *-They can't teach according to the level of the students (T7,T8,T10,P18)*	Lack of Subject Knowledge and Teaching Experience	36
	-Everyone must be employed in his or her field of study (T1,T2,T3,T4) *-Teaching is a professional job (T5,T8,P4)* *-Quality of education may decrease (P3,T5)* *-The status of teachers can decrease (T6,P6)* *-Having teaching certificate can't make people teacher (T6)* *-Out-of-field teachers fail in teaching (P6)*	Professional Specialization	13

Meanwhile, participants who disapproved of out-of-field teaching provided two reasons: a lack of subject knowledge and teaching experience, and professional specialization. To exemplify these reasons, one teacher pointed out, "In the past, sentences on the cards were cut into syllables to teach reading. An out-of-field teacher cut sentences into letters at the beginning of the semester. For instance "Ali runs." He cut it into A-L-İ. Then he tried to teach reading from letters" (T6). One principal stated, "As it was known that teaching profession, including education activities and related administrative affairs, was a professional job*"* (P3). In accordance with these views, it is possible to say that teaching profession can be regarded as a professional job.

Participants were also asked whether they had worked with out-of-field teachers or not. While 2 of them had not, 18 participants had. This large percentage of teachers who have worked alongside with out-of-field teachers is further evidence that out-of-field teacher employment has become a common practice in Turkey. Those working with out-of-field teachers expressed that they confront problems with out-of-field teachers. These problems, themes and frequency of views are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Participants' Views Regarding Problems Confronted with Out-of-Field Teachers

Area of Questioning	Core Relevant Narrative Formed From Quotation (Key content summarized through relevant *quotations* and linked by formulated meaning statements)	Emergent Themes	Frequency of views
Perceived problems with out-of-field teachers?	*-For them, teaching can be a compulsory job (T2,T3,T7)* *-They can't feel that they belong to teaching (T2,T3)* *-They can't internalize teaching (T1,T8)* *-Teaching can't be their first priority (T9)* *-They can't have responsibility for teaching (T9)*	Commitment	11
	-Their motivation can be low (T6,T8, P6) *-They have occupational burnout (P1,P3)* *-Their performance can be unproductive (P7)* *-They can't be dedicated to teaching (T6)* *-Their job satisfaction can be low (T1)*	Job Satisfaction and Motivation	8
	-They have trouble with the principal and the methods of teaching (T2,T4,T5,T6,T7,T8,T9, P4,P6,P8) *-They can be unqualified academically (T2,T3,T4,T10, P5,P7,P8)* *-They can have trouble with giving a lesson (T1,T2,P4,P8)* *-They can be unqualified in educational psychology (P1,P2,T8,T12)* *-They can have problems with classroom management (T3,T8,P7)* *-Parents can't trust out-of-field teachers because of their lack of teaching (P5,P7)*	Subject Knowledge and Teaching	50
	-They can break the peace of work (T6,T9,P7) *-They have trouble communicating with parents, colleagues and students (P1,P4,T3,T5,T6,T7,P7,T11,T12)* *-It can take a long time for them to learn how to teach (P2)*	Adaptation to Profession	13

As can be seen in Table 3, participants working with out-of-field teachers noted that out-of-field teachers had trouble with commitment, job satisfaction and motivation, knowledge of teaching and profession and adaptation. Many of the participants' views were grouped under the theme of "Subject Knowledge and Teaching" (f =50). Under this theme, one out-of-field teacher expressed that "I graduated from a chemistry program and was assigned as a primary school teacher. I was responsible for the first grade students. But I didn't know anything about first grade teaching, so I had lots of trouble teaching in that year " (T2). Another out-of-field teacher stated, "Teaching according to the level of

students was one of the biggest problems I had ever had, because there was a big difference between my field of study and primary school teaching" (T3). Under this same theme, a principal pointed out, "There was an English teacher, graduated from a physics education program. He had trouble with teaching language according to the level of students and assessment. Both parents and students complained about him" (P6).

Meanwhile, a teacher who had trouble with commitment noted, "we as out-of-field teachers believed to have done our best. We got teaching certificates. But it was upsetting to become a primary school teacher after taking 4 years of education in econometrics. We couldn't work in our own field of study" (T3). Apart from commitment and knowledge of teaching and profession, out-of-field teachers reported feeling unsatisfied with teaching. Several participants reported that out-of-field teachers' job satisfaction (T1,P1,P2,P7) and motivation (T5,T8,P6) were low. Furthermore, under the theme of adaptation, they noted that it took a long time for out-of-field teachers to learn teaching (T1,T3,T6,T9,P2,P5,P7), and out-of-field teachers had trouble with communicating with other educational stakeholders (T3,T5,T6,T11,P1,P4,P7).

Although out-of-field teacher employment is not approved, it is inevitable that this practice has some advantages. One of them is that graduates from different programs have become teachers. The advantages of out-of-field teaching practice according to participants are shown in Table 4.

Table 4.

Participants' Views Regarding the Advantages of Out-of-Field Teacher Employment

Area of Questioning	Core Relevant Narrative Formed From Quotation (Key content summarized through relevant quotations and linked by formulated meaning statements)	Emergent Themes	Frequency of views
Perceived advantages of out-of-field teacher employment?	*-Classes without teachers decrease (P4,P5P6)* *-The teacher shortages is met (T1,T4,T5,P4,P5P6)* *-Students meet teachers and education process can continue (P6)*	Teacher Employment	10
	-They combine their filed of study with teaching (T3,T6,P5) *-They have different perspectives on teaching (T3,T4,P2)* *-They change the classical perspectives on teaching (T3)*	Different Perspectives on Teaching	9
	-It provides employment for people from faculty of science or letters (T1,T5,T10,P1,P3,P4) *-The number of unemployed graduates decreases (T9)* *-Unemployed candidate teachers can be employed (T12)*	Unemployment	8

As Table 4 shows, participants stated that the advantages of out-of-field teacher employment included meeting the teacher shortages, bringing different percpectives to teaching and decreasing unemployment. As far as meeting the teacher shortages is concerned, a teacher expressed that "in my first school there were a few teachers. Anyone from the street could have been taken to a classroom as a teacher" (T4). Similarly, a principal pointed out that "with out-of-field teacher employment, classes without teachers could be prevented*"* (P2). As for the different perspectives on teaching, a principal believed that

"out-of-field teachers could have extraordinary perspectives on teaching. They could make use of their filed of study for teaching*"* (P5). In the same vein, a teacher noted, "Out-of-field teachers could break the teacher stereotypes. Their brains could work differently and teach students in that way" (T3). Additionally, many of the participants commented on decreasing unemployment, noting that out-of-field teacher employment could help solve unemployment (T1,T5,T9,T10,T12,P1,P3,P4).

Participants were also asked how to address the out-of-field teacher employment issue. Their suggestions to address the out-of-field teaching issue are shown in Table 5. Participants' suggestions vary under such themes as MEB-YÖK collaboration, regulations, educational administration and planning and quality of faculty of education. Participants generally expressed that out-of-field teacher employment could be prevented by means of necessary regulations. In support of this theme, one teacher responded, "absolutely, MEB policy must be changed and new regulations should be created to prevent out-of-field teacher employment. In-field teachers should be employed" (T3). Similarly, a principal pointed out that "out-of-field teacher employment must be put to an end" (P4). This out-of-field practice can be addressed through education planning. A teacher noted, "education planning should be done before and the teacher shortages in the required subjects should be computed" (T9). Another teacher, thinking of creating regulations in accordance with education planning, expressed that "scientific studies should be conducted. Effects and negative results of out-of-field teacher employment should be discussed and policies to this problem should be created" (T20). On the theme of the quality of faculty of education, a principal thought that "qualified faculty of education should be employed" (P2). Similarly a teacher stated that "prospective teachers should get more experience at schools with students, principals and teachers. Teachers should be well prepared in better education conditions" (T9). According to participants' suggestions, MEB-YÖK should collaborate with academicians and planners from the faculty of education to plan for sufficient well qualified teachers.

Table 5.

Participants' Suggestions for Addressing Out-of-Field Teacher Employment

Area of Questioning	Core Relevant Narrative Formed From Quotation (Key content summarized through relevant quotations and linked by formulated meaning statements)	Emergent Themes	Frequency of views
Perceived suggestions to address out-of-field teacher employment	*-Consistent education policy should be pursued (T1T,2,T3,P2)* *-Education should be planned (P1,P5,T4,T9,T11)* *-The teacher shortages should be computed (P1,T6,T9)* *-Scientific studies should be done and projections for education components should be prepared in scientific way (T12)* *-Strategic plans should be prepared and research/development studies should be done (T1)* *-Education policy should be arranged according to regional differences, and national policy should be developed (P2,P3)*	Educational Administration and Policy	23
	-Out-of-field teacher employment should be prohibited (T1,T3,T5,T12,P4) *-There should be criteria like experience, interview and skills for teaching to be employed as a teacher (T4,T6,T7,P4)* *-An association for the teaching profession should be founded (T1)* *-Education policies shouldn't be changed inconsistently by politicians (T12)* *-Job selection should start from secondary school (P5,P6)* *-Changes to be done in education system should be run by teachers and local authorities (T1,T2)*	Regulations	25
	-The quotas of universities should be checked (T8) *-The number of faculties of education should decrease (P5,T6,T11)* *-Graduates from faculty of science and arts shouldn't be allowed to become teachers (T12)* *-It should be collaborated with universities (T 19)*	MEB-YÖK Collaboration	8
	-Qualified faculty of education should be developed (P2) *-Teachers should take better and more detailed education (T9)* *-The teaching profession should be more qualified (P2)* *-Teachers should be taught using more active methods (P4)*	Quality of Faculty of Education	5

Discussion and Conclusion

Increase of student admission to the faculty of education and establishment of policies to overcome the instability of teacher supply and demand are certainly issues to be discussed to address out-of-field teacher employment issues. While the percentage of out-of-field teachers in the USA was 13.7% in the 2011-2012 school year (Ramsay, 2013), it was over 50% of the total number of teachers in Turkey (Çınkır, 2013). This rate indicates that there is a serious problem with teacher training, employment and the education system in general.

The findings of this study indicates that most principals and teachers disapproved out-of-field teacher employment mainly because participants noted that out-of-field teachers lacked subject knowledge, teaching experience and professional specialization. In a similar study, Hobbs (2013) asked teachers why they felt that they were out-of-field teachers. Teachers' responses were grouped into such categories as issues relating to qualifications, issues relating to teaching and pedagogy, student-related issues and teachers' personal responses, attitudes and motivations. Sharplin (2014) also stated that out-of-field teachers felt alienated because of the inconsistency between their field of study and their field of assignment, thus preventing any chance to use their professional skills. According to Umoinyang, Akpan and Ekpo (2011), the employment of out-of-field teachers is one of the reasons for students' failure in basic subjects such as math and science.

According to the participants, out-of-field teachers have problems with such issues as commitment, job satisfaction and motivation, knowledge of teaching and the profession and adaptation to the job. However, participants stated that the most serious problem for out-of-field teachers was lack of subject knowledge and teaching. They do not have the requisite training and skills to fulfill the professional job of teaching. Du Plessis (2013) conducted a study about out-of-field teachers' feelings and attitudes towards teaching. In her findings, educational administrators, principals, in-field teachers, out-of-field teachers and parents were asked what the out-of-field teachers' feelings and attitudes towards teaching were. Participants believed that out-of-field teachers were stressful, anxious, hopeless and disappointed and suffered from burnout, and out-of-field teachers themselves stated that they were unhappy to do a job apart from their own field of study, and they felt guilty for being unqualified in their assigned area. In their study about history teachers, Salleh and Darmawan (2013) pointed out that in-field teachers were better role models for students and taught more effectively. Taken together, these results suggest that out-of-field teachers have psychological and professional problems, even if they are trying to do their best to teach effectively.

While out-of-field teacher employment may not have the approval of educational stakeholders, it does have some advantages. Participants pointed out that out-of-field teacher employment was advantageous in terms of increasing teacher employment, introducing different perspectives on teaching and decreasing unemployment. The most important advantage can be regarded as providing different perspectives on teaching, since out-of-field teachers can combine their field of study with teaching. Du Plesis, Carroll and Gillies (2014) similarly reported that out-of-field teachers made use of their specialization to teach effectively. Out-of-field teacher employment becomes an important source of employment. YÖK (2014) enabled about fifty thousand candidates to earn teaching certificates in the 2013-2014 Spring Term, and with these certificates, candidates could be employed as teachers at public or private schools.

Out-of-field emloyment is not seen in any other sector like health or law, and it must be put to an end if the education system is to bring up well-qualified generations of students and thinkers. Participants' suggestions for addressing out-of-field teacher employment were grouped into four themes: consistent educational planning and policies, regulations, MEB-YÖK collaboration and quality of faculty of education. Participants also added that MEB and YÖK played key roles in this process, as YÖK provides candidates with teaching certificates and MEB policy is responsible for employing out-of-field teachers. For this reason, MEB and YÖK could collaborate with educational administrators and planners to project the teacher shortages in the various subjects. Ingersoll and Curran (2004) have also made some suggestions for preventing out-of-field teacher employment. They suggested that standards of teacher training should be raised, that teachers should be more qualified in both subject knowledge and teaching, that out-of-field teacher employment should be prohibited and that authorities from MEB and educational administrators from schools should collaborate with institutions of higher education.

To conclude, it is fair to say that out-of-field teacher employment is not approved by most educational stakeholders, from principals to teachers. Studies abroad and in Turkey have pointed out that out-of-field teacher employment is a source of multiple problems in the education system. Such a practice, while intended to meet the teacher shortages, should not continue. Quality generations of Turkish citizens must be taught by professionally qualified teachers. Education is an open system whose output is human beings. All educational stakeholders have responsibilities to provide good quality education. It is vital to take the precautions necessary to ensure a successful education for the coming generations. One way to accomplish this is to assign well-qualified teachers for the task of teaching. Otherwise, as one of the participants said, borrowing from the Turkish saying, "*When grandfather ate a plum, his grandchild's teeth were gnashed* [*Dede erik yese torunun dişi kamaşır*]*."* In other words, the negative results of out-of-field teacher employment will most impact the next generations.

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GREEN SCHOOLS – THE IMPLEMENTATION AND PRACTICES OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN LEED AND USED GREEN RIBBON PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA

Steven A. Marable
Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Virginia

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the environmental education curriculum which has been utilized within Green Schools. The study defined Green Schools as educational facilities with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification or United States Education Department (USED) Green Ribbon recognition. Currently, there is no set standard for the implementation of environmental education in Green Schools or for schools that utilize the building as a teaching tool for students. The researcher surveyed Green Schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia in order to better understand what common programs and curricula were being utilized. The findings will assist in establishing pedagogical best practices for environmental education while describing how LEED certified buildings are currently being used by educators as a teaching tool to support sustainable practices. Overall, 14 Green Schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia agreed to participate in the study. Once principals and staff gave consent to participate in the study, they were asked to respond to an eSurvey, which consisted of 14 multiple choice and open response survey items. Overall, 98 principals and staff participated in the survey. Quantitative data were collected through multiple choice survey questions analyzed to report descriptive statistics about the sample population. Qualitative data were examined by emerging themes according to pedagogical strategies and programs. The findings from the study indicated that teachers are employing practices that are consistent with current emphases on environmental education. Data also supported that educators take pride in their buildings and incorporate the facility as a teaching tool in a variety of instructional practices throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

INTRODUCTION

Gordon (2010) defines Green Schools as the results of the planning, designing, and construction process that, "takes into account a building's performance over its entire 50-60 year live cycle" (p. 1) with a focus on creating an environment that is optimal for learning. Green Schools create this optimal environment by providing fresh air, a comfortable temperature range, with plenty of natural lighting, and minimizes distractions from nearby noises "while also maximizing resource efficiency, minimizing pollution, and teaching students the importance of innovation in the built environment" (p. 1).

While there has been a growing trend in Green School research, much of the research has emphasized the building components and energy conservation, rather than how the building features are utilized to teach students about sustainability. In order to be called a Green School, the building must teach about sustainability. Green Schools have two components that are tied directly to educating students about sustainability. The first component is that the building is utilized as a teaching tool for students to learn about sustainability. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) 2009 for Schools New Construction defines the school as a teaching tool when it has a curriculum based on

the green performance features of the building that is implemented within 10 months of the LEED Certification. The curriculum must meet state requirements and go beyond a mere description of the features. Instead, the building should "explore the relationship between human ecology, natural ecology and the building" (USGBC, 2012, np).

The second component a school must incorporate to maintain its Green School status is that the building must utilize a curriculum for teaching environmental (or sustainable) education. This component does not directly tie sustainability to the features of the building; rather, it infuses sustainable practices and education throughout the curricula taught in the building. However, there is no set standard with regard to environmental education curriculum.

The United States Department of Education (USED) recently launched its Green Ribbon Schools, the first comprehensive federal policy for schools that relates environment, health, and education. This award recognizes the work and programs in place at schools reaching high levels of achievement in environmental impact, healthy environment, and environmental literacy. This seemed to be one of the closest efforts in creating a standard for a curriculum that supports environmental education in Green Schools. At the same time teachers and administrators in LEED Schools were implementing the educational components of that certification requirement. To date the degree that this implementation adheres to the intent of the educational LEED requirement is more of an individual matter than a specified effort.

Higher accountability, higher energy cost, and shrinking school budgets are some of major issues many school systems currently face. In addition, school divisions and administrators are carrying the heavy burden and increased pressure to improve student's achievement levels with less money and resources (Kats, 2006; Okcu, 2011). One subject that has recently grown in interest over the past decade is the development of sustainable or Green Schools. Another recent trend in research related to Green Schools was the use of the building as a teaching tool for sustainability. However, this was not emphasized in research and there are no set of standards or consistency with regard to school implementation and little research has been conducted on the subject (Chan, 2013; Cole, 2013).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study sought to answer the following research questions:
The major research question is:
How do USED Green Ribbon and LEED schools in Virginia implement environmental education into the curriculum?

The sub-questions are:

a. In what way is environmental education included in the curriculum of the school division?

b. To what extent is the implementation of environmental education directed by individual classroom teachers?

c. What common practices and strategies are used to implement environmental education?

d. What level are the practices used to implement environmental education formally evaluated?

e. How do LEED schools in Virginia utilize the building components as teaching tool?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

While considerable research has been conducted linking building conditions to student achievement and staff performance, there has been little research linking any added benefits of newly designed sustainable school buildings, and even less on the topic of Green Schools as a teaching tool (Barr, 2013; Chan, 2013; Cole, 2013; Edwards, 2006; Issa, 2011; Kats, 2006; Okcu, Ryherd, & Bayer, 2011; Olson & Kellum, 2003). Green buildings have criteria of an educational program to help students become aware of their environment (Barr, 2011; Chan, 2013; Cole, 2013). While Green Schools are designed to utilize a curriculum for environmental education which uses the building as a teaching tool, there is no set standard or criteria of implementation (Barr, 2012). LEED and USED Green Ribbon schools provide a framework for the implementation of environmental education which can be further examined to assist in establishing what common themes are currently found in environmental education curricula.

As an educational leader, it is important for principals to consider the economic impact the school program has on the school division and the community as tax payers. It is equally important to understand how environmental education can positively influence staff, and students, and how the surrounding community can assist in the promotion of civic and environmental responsibility. Each of these components is important to consider as a responsibility of the school system.

This study will add to the current, but limited, body of research involving Green Schools with regard to usage of the building as a teaching tool and implementation of environmental education. The findings from this study will help educators and planners see current trends of sustainability curricula in Green Schools and how Green Schools are used as a teaching tool for sustainability.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research has shown that the quality of school facilities is associated with student and staff health, attendance, and performance. LEED design aims to improve elements such as lighting, acoustics, and indoor air quality, while utilizing design features to support environmental education practices. Further research is needed to investigate the impact of LEED building design on outcomes such as environmental education/sustainability, student achievement, student and staff attendance rates, and occupant satisfaction. The studies examined in this review all attempt to build a foundation of empirical evidence that supports the idea that green schools improve student achievement and decrease absences for students and staff (Bruick, 2009, Edwards, 2005; Issa, 2011; LaBuhn, 2010; Oetinger, 2010). Currently, there is no formal educational research that examines the implementation

of environmental education and sustainability program in Green Schools. Three of the studies reviewed utilized a collection of regional data from smaller samples sizes to compare student achievement and attendance in green schools with non-green schools (Bruick, 2010; Edwards, 2005; Issa, 2011). The other two studies utilized a sample population from across the United States (LaBuhn, 2010; Oetinger, 2010). While many of the studies did not find a positive relationship between green schools and student achievement and attendance that was statistically significant, the studies did show improvement in both dependent variables (Bruick, 2010; Edwards, 2005; Issa, 2011; Oetinger, 2010). LaBuhn's study (2010) was the only study where green schools were significantly outperformed by non-green schools across many populations throughout the United States. However, it should be noted that the design did not utilize matched pairs when setting up the samples as part of the design methodology. Instead, the study compared green schools to non-green schools in the same district or geographic location and analyzed data using a simple linear regression (LaBuhn, 2010).

More research on LEED and Green Schools is needed to add to the foundation of knowledge regarding the impact of Green Schools on occupants and implementation of environmental education linked to these schools.

Outside of the referenced research, there is still little empirical research related to Green Schools. Presently, there is no educational research that examines Green Schools as a teaching tool for environmental education or how this might affect student performance. As popularity of Green Schools continues to grow, it is important that the educational components of these facilities also grow in order to increase student, staff, and community understanding of the energy performance features and learning outcomes that are offered within these buildings. Students spend many years inside school facilities, as school divisions move forward with new construction, it is important that these facilities also serve to supplement the curricula and engage students, staff, and the community with regard to environmental education and sustainable practices.

The United States Department of Education (USED) developed a program in 2011, USED Green Ribbon Schools, that recognizes and honors "schools and districts that are exemplary in reducing environmental impact and costs; improving the health and wellness of students and staff; and providing effective environmental and sustainability education, which incorporates STEM, civic skills and green career pathways" (USED Green Ribbon Schools, 2013, np). According to the USED Green Ribbon, the recognition award is part of an effort to identify and inform the public about "practices that are proven to result in improved student engagement, higher academic achievement and graduation rates, and workforce preparedness, as well as a government wide goal of increasing energy independence and economic security" (USED Green Ribbon Schools, 2013, np).
USED Green Ribbon criteria seems to further explain the criteria of LEED. USED Green Ribbon's aim is not only to construct buildings that are energy efficient and healthier for occupants, but also to educate students about sustainability and the responsibility that individuals have with respect to their impact on the environment. In the future, these programs may lead the way in developing standardized criteria for implementation of environmental education within schools, both new and old.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the educational practices implemented in Green School to meet the educational requirements for LEED and USED Green School certification. Therefore, the building population of the study were the school buildings that were certified as either LEED or USED Green Schools. At the time of the study, there were 17 public schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia that were LEED or USED Green Ribbon certified. Of those schools, 14 agreed to participate in the study. An eSurvey with both multiple choice and open-ended questions was utilized to for data collection. The population of the study included all principals and faculty from the schools, and communication to invite participates was filtered through the principals of each school. The study included all schools that were currently certified as LEED; schools that have completed construction, have been utilized for a minimum of one year, and were pending or completed certification from USGBC; and USED Green Ribbon Schools for the population. A complete listing of the LEED and USED Green Ribbon schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia is contained in Appendix A. This mixed methods study analyzed quantitative data through descriptive statistics. The qualitative data were coded and examined for common themes that existed in implementation practices between schools and divisions.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Research Question a.

In what way is environmental education included in the curriculum of the school division?

Almost half of the participants (49%) responded that environmental education was included in the curriculum of the school division. Nearly one-third (32%) of the participants responded that environmental education was not included in the curriculum, or they were unsure if it was included in the curriculum of the school division. Nearly one-fifth (19%) of the participants did not respond to this particular survey item. Since a non-response does not necessarily negate the inclusion of environmental education, it was coded separately. (See Table 1.)

Table 1 – Integration of Environmental Education in the Curriculum

Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	49
No or Unsure	32
No Response	19

Positive responses from participants varied and were coded according to common themes that developed: Building, Community, Curricula, Learning Garden, and School Programs. The two themes mentioned the most were curricula and school programs and many responses incorporated more than one theme. It was evident that there are many ways to incorporate environmental education into the formal and informal curricula that exists in Green Schools.

Several examples include incorporating sustainability concepts into the formal curriculum through STEM, cross-curricular assignments, research assignments, using informational and fictional text, class debate/discussion on current events, field trips, outdoor classroom, learning garden, and class projects. There are also ways to include environmental education and sustainable practices informally into the curriculum. Some examples from the survey instrument include recycling programs, environmental clubs, civic and community service projects, fieldtrips, and by reducing energy usage. There are many ways to create school-wide opportunities for students to learn about sustainability and the added benefit of school-wide programs is that it works to establish a culture of sustainable practices throughout the school.

Research Question b.

To what extent is the implementation of environmental education directed by individual classroom teachers?

Almost half of the participants (48%) responded that implementation of environmental education occurs by individual classroom teachers initiative. Many participants (30%) responded that implementation was a school-wide process. While only 8% responded that implementation took place by grade level or department level.

When implementation takes place as a school-wide process, it also supports a culture of sustainability within the Green School. One participant stated, "I think the most unique practice I've seen at this school is how most of the kids and staff (most of them) will automatically pick up a bug and take it outside, rather than squish it." (R30). However, at the individual level, it may be difficult to establish and maintain a whole-school program over time. One participant stated, "…in past years we monitored the weight of paper collected from each source within the school and created displays of the data using Excel spread sheets, formulas and graphics. This monitoring encouraged participation by teachers." (R66).

As an instructional leader, it is important to consider how implementation should occur within the school. When implementation takes place as a school-wide process, it also supports a culture of sustainability within the Green School. However, at the individual level, it may be difficult to establish and maintain a whole-school program.

Research Question c.

What common practices and strategies are used to implement environmental education?

There were several resources, practices, and programs used to implement environmental education. The internet (21%) and project based learning (20%) were the most common resources provided in responses among participants. Other themes that developed from responses included multimedia, learning garden, community partnerships/field trips, and none. The most common programs utilized in Green Schools included recycling programs (26%) and community outreach/partnerships (22%).

Throughout the study, it was evident that teachers are employing practices that are consistent with current emphases on environmental education. This was evident by the response from (R59); "We gathered school heating and cooling data from the county's environmental compliance manager to study the current efficiency of managing the school's temperature using Newton's Law of cooling." Furthermore, participants seemed

to show a sense of pride for the school and the sustainable programs that are implemented. One participant (R42) stated; "We have a wonderful horticulture program that teaches sustainable farming." Another stated; "In my opinion, we are the most unique school in the state. Our ability to have an on campus laboratory specifically built and designed for environmental studies puts The Gereau Center/CEED on the cutting edge of environmental education." (R31). However, overtime, if environmental education and sustainability were not part of a whole-school culture then practices and awareness were utilized less by teachers. This is evident from the response of participant (R68); "There are plaques on the walls, but I bet it's been a long time since anyone read them." Also, (R63) stated; "It is my understanding that with LEED certification our school is to be recycling paper, aluminium and plastics, as well as composting leaves and grass clippings. The only program we actually implemented is paper recycling. I find this discouraging."

Implementation of environmental education does not occur overnight; instead it is a process that should be planned out with annual goals or benchmarks. For example, many of the Green Schools in Virginia incorporated a recycling program and/or community partnership/ outreach as part of the environmental educational practices. A recycling program is relatively simple to start up and can include a variety of items (paper, aluminium, plastic, cell phones, batteries, etc.) while including all staff and students. Community outreach/ partnerships vary according to the location and geography of the school division. Some of the common activities included field trips and sponsorships through local environmental agencies such as, Save the Bay Foundation, James River Association, Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District, and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

Building a learning garden on the school grounds was another common qualitative response from the participants. This strategy can be utilized in a variety of ways while offering students hand-on learning experiences. Project-based learning activities were a common quantitative response and participants provided a variety of qualitative examples. These examples included: STEM projects; field trips to examine stream health; collecting and monitoring data on recycling, energy usage, and water usage in the building; and creating videos to advertise sustainable aspects of the building and programs.

The practices and strategies mentioned are valuable additions to the formal and informal curricula of the school. They incorporate real-world concepts and high engagement hands-on activities which assist in creating 21st century learning opportunities and authentic experiences for students. These are educational aspects that all instructional leaders can find value. However, in LEED schools where the building is used as a teaching tool, it is important for educational leaders to consider on-going staff development, so they are aware of the sustainable features and learning opportunities that exist within the building. Refer to table 1 for specific examples environmental education practices by school level.

Research Question d.

What level are the practices used to implement environmental education formally evaluated?

Almost half the participants (40%) responded that environmental education was evaluated at the school level. Evaluation at school division level (4%) and evaluation by an outside agency (2%) were much lower, however, and 8% percent of the teachers responded that there were two or more agencies that evaluated the program. Participants that selected two or more items included the following: two participants selected evaluation at the district

level and by an outside agency; two participants selected evaluation at the school level and district level; three participants selected evaluation at the school level, district level, and by an outside agency; and one participant selected evaluation by an outside agency and other: Lynnhaven River Now for Pearl School recognition. No response to the survey item consisted of 25% of the participants. Lastly, 21% of the participants responded with 'other.' Those participants provided the following types of answers; "part of PLTW exam" (R67), "No," "No evaluation," "Not sure," "I don't know," and "None of the above."

As instructional leaders in the building, it is important for teachers to understand that they are the person responsible for the successes within the school. This should be a primary emphasis when it comes to establishing a Green School with a culture that supports sustainable practices.

Research Question e.

How do LEED schools in Virginia utilize the building components as teaching tool?

There were seven themes that developed from the analysis of data. These themes include: lighting, water reduction, learning garden, signage, building monitoring system, building design and energy savings, and community involvement. While, many responses included various features of the LEED buildings, many did not provide specific details regarding how teachers used the building as a teaching tool. Refer to Table 3 for specific examples regarding how teachers utilized the building as a teaching tool.

It was evident that many participants utilize features of the building and share information about the sustainable features with students in their classes. This took place in both the formal and informal curricula of the schools. It was also evident that school staff took pride in teaching in a Green School. One participant stated; "We have the coolest school ever!" (R28). Another stated; "This is a fabulous beautiful school. There are signs all about put in by the contractor denoting all the green aspects of the building." (R58).

While all the responses of participants varied in detail, the data collected did provide useful information regarding the implementation of environmental education in Green Schools. According to the responses of participants, knowledge of environmental education and Green Schools varies from school to school and person to person. This was evident with the number of responses that included detailed information about the sustainable aspects of the school, environmental programs, and staff knowledge about curricula used to teach about environmental education and the building as a teaching tool. This was also evident with regard to the number of responses that included answers such as 'I don't know,' 'Unsure,' and no response at all for particular survey items.

There is a large variety of activities in LEED schools that utilize the building components as a teaching tool. Many of the activities that incorporated the building components within the learning process were developed around conversations related to community service/clubs, conservation, recycling, natural resources, pollution, engineering, and alternative sources of energy. These topics were related to many different aspects of the building also. Many of the topics utilize the building signage are part of the lesson. Lessons related to conservation, recycling, reduction of energy often utilized aspects of the building such as various lighting features that save energy or support an increase of natural light within the building. Teachers also discussed components that reduced water and energy usage. Many of the community service projects and clubs took advantage of various types recycling and outdoor learning spaces such as courtyards, learning gardens,

compost bins, and retention ponds. While specific lessons were not provided within the data collected by the survey instrument, it was evident that many the participants actively utilized components of the buildings and/or discussed specific building features with students.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Future studies may also consider modifying the survey instrument to include only those Green Schools that utilize the building as a teaching tool for those specific survey items. While there were only three schools that were not LEED certified it was evident that not all participants were knowledgeable with regard to the identification of LEED versus USED Green Ribbon. For example, participant (R63) stated; "I don't know what the LEED building design is. We know we are a green school and how to work to obtain and keep that classification but what is LEED? If you don't define it don't use the term." Lastly, future studies may also consider incorporating focus groups and/or phone interviews as part of the data collection. This addition to the methodology would allow the researcher to ask follow up questions and expand on responses to help ensure clarity and data saturation for future studies.

REFLECTIONS

Overall, this was a successful study with regard to working with several school divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia and several principals from all school levels. Many of the school divisions were supportive and interested in the study. However, because of the timing for the survey, there were some environmental factors that may have affected the number of participants that responded to the survey instrument. Many schools across the state of Virginia were closed for several days due to inclement weather on the first day that surveys were to be sent to teachers by the school principals. As a result, this required much more follow up on the researchers part to ensure that surveys were sent out in a timely manner and that all participants had an equal time to complete the survey.

Overall, the research study was a positive experience and it was interesting to see how schools from a diverse population implemented environmental education and sustainability. However, responses did differ with respect to in-depth details. Some of the responses were quite detailed and utilized several aspects of the building as a teaching tool, for example, the building monitoring system was used by many to track and monitor energy usage. The researcher's assumption was that many participants would respond with familiar aspects of the LEED building such as informational signage and increased natural lighting.

Educational leaders should understand that the implementation of a Green School does not occur overnight; instead it is a process that should be planned out with annual goals or benchmarks. For example, many of the Green Schools in Virginia incorporated a recycling program and/or community partnership/outreach as part of environmental educational practices. A recycling program is relatively simple to start up and can include a variety of items (paper, aluminium, plastic, cell phones, batteries, etc.). This can also be a school-wide program, which will support buy-in from all staff and students. Community outreach/partnerships vary according to the location and geography of the school division. Some of the common activities included field trips and clean up around the school grounds or nearby parks. Throughout the study, it was evident that teachers are employing practices that are consistent with current emphases on environmental education.

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Appendix A: List of Green Schools in Virginia

School	Division	Type of Green School
Albemarle High School	Albemarle County	LEED - Silver
Brownsville Elementary	Albemarle County	LEED - Gold*
Stony Point Elementary	Albemarle County	USED Green Ribbon
Fluvanna High School	Fluvanna County	LEED - Silver
Gereau Center/CEED	Franklin County	USED Green Ribbon
Glen Allen High School	Henrico	LEED - Gold*
Holman Middle School	Henrico	LEED - Silver*
Magna Vista High	Henry County	USED Green Ribbon
Sandusky Middle School	Lynchburg City	LEED - Certified
Locust Grove Middle School	Orange County	LEED - Gold*
Kettle Run Elementary	Prince William County	LEED - Silver
Piney Branch Elementary	Prince William County	LEED - Silver*
Fishburn Park Elementary	Roanoke City	USED Green Ribbon
College Park Elementary	Virginia Beach	LEED - Platinum
Hermitage Elementary	Virginia Beach	LEED - Certified
Virginia Beach Middle	Virginia Beach	LEED - Silver
Windsor Oaks Elementary	Virginia Beach	LEED - Silver*

Note. * indicates that the school earned a point on the LEED application for utilizing the building as a teaching tool.

Table 2 - Environmental Education Practices by School Level

School Level	Environmental Education Practices
Elementary	• Have discussions about natural resources/conservation and use examples of ways the school helps to use fewer resources. Further, discuss alternative energy and power sources such as wind and solar power.
	• Use an outdoor garden space at the school for each grade level. Students use the outdoor space to grow a choice salad food, to harvest and eat together as a class later in the spring or to grow indigenous plants.
	• Create Recycling Programs, Environmental Clubs, and community service projects
	• Create an overarching theme for grade levels to teach how systems work.
	• Utilize science units on the water cycle to discus and teach about conservation.
Middle	• Integrate concepts such as zero net carbon and energy building that actually produces its own energy through solar arrays and wind turbines. Students are involved in an energy engineering class which uses this building as a laboratory for sustainable energy.
	• Use the science curriculum where several standards relate to the environment and sustainability. Have students cover alternative energy sources, point source and non-point source pollution, and renewable vs. nonrenewable resources.
	• Create Recycling Programs, Environmental Clubs, and community service projects
	• Utilize School Announcements.
	• Use the English research unit to focus on students selecting an environmental issue, researching it, and presenting pros and cons.
	• In Language Arts, use informational texts and fictional texts about the environment, pollution, and its effects.
	• Discuss renewable and nonrenewable energy resources and complete an in-class project about energy conservation.
	• Allow student to enter a poster in the James River Association's poster contest titled 'What a Healthy River Means to Me.'
	• Educate students about the cost of building and operating solid-waste facilities and the value of recycling different products.
High	• Utilize the science curriculum concepts that discuss reduction of materials, reuse of materials, and recycling.
	• Utilize units that include learning about renewable energy options and analyzing the viability for renewable energy in VA.
	• Use data contacts and operators for the air quality monitoring station and information available for teachers. Use curriculum links for

	NEED.org that is available to teachers.
	• Use science courses to teach sustainability, model it, and survey students and teach about our footprint. Incorporate stream study into the curriculum and create a 'pond in the classroom to teach concepts about ecology.
	• Use the engineering class to introduce concepts from the curriculum, especially those concerning energy and clean water.
	• Discuss current topics in other countries, which often deal with pollution and other environmental concerns (i.e., clean water).
	• Utilize the course on environmental science.
	• Use the STEM curriculum.

Note. STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Table 3 - Environmental Education Practices that use the Building by School Level

School Level	Environmental Education Practices	Building as a Teaching Tool
Elementary	• Have discussions about natural resources/conservation and use examples of ways the school helps to use fewer resources. Further, discuss alternative energy and power sources such as wind and solar power.	• Use open spaces for class discussions to show how light harvesting tiles, special lights, use of windows for optimal light, and plumbing - toilets that use less water, waterless urinals, motion sensor facets, rain collection, and retention ponds conserve energy and utilize natural resources.
	• Use an outdoor garden space at the school for each grade level. Students use the outdoor space to grow a choice salad food, to harvest and eat together as a class later in the spring or to grow indigenous plants.	• Use interior and exterior gardens for hands-on learning and explain how natural materials are used for building.
	• Create Recycling Programs, Environmental Clubs, and community service projects	• Use recycling cans throughout the building, create various recycling programs, compost bins, learning gardens, and utilize informational signage throughout the building to teach about sustainability.
	• Create an overarching theme for grade levels to teach how systems work.	• Study and research how various systems in the building work - Wind Turbines, Solar power, rain collection, green roof, etc.

	• Utilize science units on the water cycle to discus and teach about conservation.	• Discuss how solar panels and rainwater collectors help conserve resources. Also, use plaques throughout the building that tell students about the sustainable features of the building, and small plaques at every classroom door with names and pictures of flora and fauna indigenous to the region, with QR codes that link to websites about them.
M i d d l e	• Integrate concepts such as zero net carbon and energy building that actually produces its own energy through solar arrays and wind turbines. Students are involved in an energy engineering class which uses this building as a laboratory for sustainable energy.	• Use the design, solar orientation, daylighting, solar hot water and different types of solar panels to demonstrate how things change. Discuss how low e glass, insulation principles, CO2 monitoring, use of local and recycled materials, water harvesting, green roof and surrounding gardens, and wind generators and weather monitoring, information kiosk dashboard help monitor our energy usage.
	• Use the science curriculum where several standards relate to the environment and sustainability. Have students cover alternative energy sources, point source and non-point source pollution, and renewable vs. nonrenewable resources.	• Have students tour the school and discuss the green features. They then tour the grounds to evaluate the school on weathering and pollution found. The school uses sustainable supplies, showing students that large buildings don't need to devastate the land to complete construction. The school also uses less water and electricity, but is still able to perform as a normal school.
	• Create Recycling Programs, Environmental Clubs, and community service projects	• Use recycling cans throughout the building, various recycling programs, compost bins, learning gardens, and informational signage throughout the building.

	• Utilize School Announcements.	• Provide information about the building and sustainable features and concepts.
	• Use the English research unit to focus on students selecting an environmental issue, researching it, and presenting pros and cons.	• No specific response included.
	• In Language Arts, use informational texts and fictional texts about the environment, pollution, and its effects.	• Use building signage that explains the types of recycling waste.
	• Discuss renewable and nonrenewable energy resources and complete an in-class project about energy conservation.	• Monitor the recycling program and discuss the use of natural light throughout classrooms.
	• Allow student to enter a poster in the James River Association's poster contest titled 'What a Healthy River Means to Me.'	• No specific response included related to the building.
	• Educate students about the cost of building and operating solid-waste facilities and the value of recycling different products.	• Monitor the weight of paper collected from each source within the school and created displays of the data using Excel spreadsheets, formulas, and graphics.
H i g h	• Utilize the science curriculum concepts that discuss reduction of materials, reuse of materials, and recycling.	• Discuss signage that describes the environmental educational concepts of the building. For example, the green roof. Use the outdoor garden and compost bins. Discuss how the building is designed to save energy. That is a powerful teaching concept in itself.
	• Utilize units that include learning about renewable energy options and analyzing the	• Discuss the green roof and design plans for energy and water conservation.

	viability for renewable energy in VA.	
	• Use data contacts and operators for the air quality monitoring station and information available for teachers. Use curriculum links for NEED.org that is available to teachers.	• Discuss how the green roof system is monitored by a Hobo meter for soil moisture, air and substrate temperature, and relative humidity. Discuss how the school website hosts an ambient air quality monitoring station operated by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.
	• Use science courses to teach sustainability, model it, and survey students and teach about our footprint. Incorporate stream study into the curriculum and create a 'pond in the classroom to teach concepts about ecology.	• Discuss various building materials throughout school and use signage to clarify.
	• Use the engineering class to introduce concepts from the curriculum, especially those concerning energy and clean water.	• Discuss the energy efficient building (new high school). Discuss various features such as films on windows, the white roof, thermal glass, automatic lights, and types of lighting.
	• Discuss current topics in other countries, which often deal with pollution and other environmental concerns (i.e., clean water).	• Discuss the water reduction features of the building - such as automatic faucets, and low flush toilets, and adjustable lighting.
	• Utilize the course on environmental science.	• Discuss and utilize the learning garden for hands-on activities.

Note. Many common responses were combined and some responses were edited for readability. As a result, specific participants are not noted in the responses.

IMPROVING INSTITUTIONAL CREDIBILITY: COMMUNICATION AS THE CENTERPIECE OF PLANNING IN THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Cathy A. Fleuriet
M. Lee Williams
Texas State University – San Marcos

ABSTRACT

Each year institutions of higher education receive greater pressure from the federal level, regional accreditation agencies, and state legislatures, to become more transparent and accountable for their actions. It is more important than ever, then, for colleges and universities to engage in authentic strategic planning that may be embraced by both internal and external constituents. Unfortunately, strategic plans often do not work to move an institution forward. Using organizational principles and theory, this essay reframes the university strategic planning process with communication as its centerpiece. A case study is presented that illustrates how communication centered strategic planning can lead to the most meaningful and successful plan, thus improving the internal and external credibility of the institution.

> *"In the absence of communication from leaders, the organization will seek information from other sources, whether those sources know what they're talking about or not. Your silence doesn't stop the conversation; it means you're not participating in it."*
>
> Jeanie Daniel Duck
> *The Change Monster (2001)*

INTRODUCTION

Whether an institution engages in strategic planning due to governing board or administrative mandates, accreditation criteria, or because "everybody else is doing it," strategic plans have historically been part of organizational life that will not go away. It is something we do. But far too often, once it is completed, we rarely look at the plans again. Even worse, when our institution happens to have successes in areas not in our plans, we add them in after the fact as sort of a "plan addendum".

Many institutions have not taken planning seriously because the perception is that strategic plans have rarely worked to move them forward. Why is this true? The organizational structure and culture of higher education institutions make strategic planning particularly problematic. Whereas many private sector organizations may reflect a more collective society, colleges and universities mirror the individualistic nature of our society. Academic departments, for example, exist due to their expertise in a particular discipline. Faculty members work as independent agents who carry out their teaching and research duties relatively untouched by larger organizational issues (Willson, 2010). It is no wonder that they cringe at the very thought, much less the creation and implementation, of a strategic plan. In colleges and universities around the country, even administrators often breathe a sigh of relief when the plan is completed and placed as a link on the homepage.

Rowley and Sherman (2001) note that, "In the postmortems [of strategic planning],

faculty, administrators, staff, and members of the governing board all blame the general [strategic planning] process" (p. 5). On many campuses, academic departments quietly go their own way, disregarding a plan for which they know they will not be held accountable.

CHANGING TIMES

In education circles, the infamous 2006 Spellings Report was a major wake up call. It chastised postsecondary education by stating that "the quality of student learning at U.S. colleges and universities is inadequate and, in some cases, declining" (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, p. 3). It initiated a new era for strategic planning and assessment. With pressure from the federal level, regional accreditation agencies, and state legislatures, we have entered an age of "accountability," and now it is even more important for institutions of higher education to take strategic planning more seriously. In short, it is time to shake the dust off the plan and begin an authentic process for engaging in planning and assessment.

Noting changes in regional accreditation expectations, Bardo (2009) states that "the number of reports, the expected details of outcomes measures, and the level of ongoing interaction between the institution and the regional association will continue to increase" (p. 29). He goes on to say that, due to increased accreditation requirements, authentic strategic planning will be a crucial factor in achieving successful reaffirmation. Public institutions have the added complexity of more stringent state regulations and federal requirements. The bottom line is that institutions of higher education can no longer avoid creating and maintaining a transparent planning and assessment process. Academic and administrative departments can no longer go their own way. There is too much at stake.

Added to the complexity of campus attitudes toward planning and assessment are the difficult economic times we are now facing. As institutions across our nation lose faculty, staff, and even entire academic departments, there are now cries of "Why plan? We have no money to address new initiatives anyway." However, scholars who study planning issues argue that strategic planning is indeed worth the effort if carried out appropriately. Rowley and Sherman (2001) observe what occurs when strategic planning is rejected. "Problems don't go away, they get worse. Life doesn't become less complicated, it becomes more so. And if campuses don't improve, they slide further and further into difficulty and thence oblivion" (p. 23).

Strategic planning is a crucial element in helping campuses to make a successful transition from who they are now to what they want to be in the future (Keller, 1983). Shirley (1988) highlights the importance of strategic planning in aligning campuses with increasing numbers and demands of vocal stakeholders. More recently, Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) state that strategic planning is crucial to an institution of higher education in creating a dynamic fit with its environment. The problem may be then, not the strategic plan concept, but the *process* used to create the plan.

TYPICAL PLANNING MODELS

Due to the loosely coupled and often decoupled organizational structure of higher education institutions (Weick, 1995), strategic planning is generally driven by the top of the organization. Often the process, and resulting strategic plan, resembles "internal" marketing where "tell and sell" is the dominant communication strategy (Clampitt, DeKoch, & Cashman, 2000). A typical model of the process may be described as follows.

As the five or ten year planning cycle comes to an end, institutional leaders, such as the president's leadership team, meet to decide new goals and direction for the university. They pay attention to legislatures, coordinating boards, boards of trustees, higher education trends, and yes, sometimes a few on-campus constituencies, to come to consensus on what goals the university strategic plan should encompass. These goals are typically shared with a slightly larger internal audience, along with instructions to "disseminate" goals to departments and see that they are implemented. This done, higher administration moves on with the confidence that they have created a plan that will address external pressures and serve university needs.

This kind of executive model for decision-making is not uncommon. Nutt (1999, 2002) tracked the success rate of decisions made by executives and managers at 356 different companies over the course of nineteen years. He found that nearly two thirds never explored alternatives once they made up their minds and that 76% used persuasion or edicts rather than discussion and participation to gain acceptance of ideas. With regard to implementation and success rate, persuasion failed 56% of the time, and edicts failed 56% of the time. This same research indicated that intervention (i.e., discussion of problems and performance gaps) was successful 96% of the time, and participation (i.e., announcing a broad, overarching objective and involving employees in decision-making) was successful 80% of the time. Clearly, the results of this research have implications for strategic planning process models in institutions of higher education.

ALTERNATIVE PLANNING MODELS

Recently, planning scholars have introduced planning models that address the complexity of the process and components needed to ensure success. To varying degrees they address communication as an important element in this process. For example, Cordeiro and Vaidya (2002) outline a variety of "lessons learned" from their work with strategic planning. They suggest the following: 1) identify, prioritize and allocate funds to key strategies, 2) use faculty members as consultants, 3) make the process clear, 4) effectively communicate the planning message, 5) have clear and measurable objectives, and 6) build flexibility to recognize and respond to internal and external environment changes. While the authors mention communication as one of the components of the process, they lean toward the "providing information" aspect of communication rather than an "engagement" perspective. They state, "What is necessary, however, is a methodology for ensuring that stakeholders understand the process, how issues are addressed, and what the plan is intended to accomplish" (p. 30). An actual communication process to facilitate the planning process is not outlined.

Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997), likewise, describe a ten step planning process that includes such things as performing an external and internal environmental assessment, conducting a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, and formulating strategies, mission, goals, and objectives. They suggest a participative rather than top-down planning process. Again, however, they do not describe a communication model that will accomplish this task. Although references to the importance of communication and participation in the strategic planning process are not absent from planning literature, a focus on communication as the *centerpiece* of successful strategic planning is missing.

Willson (2006) speaks to the notion of combining planning approaches to address higher education institutions. He notes four planning approaches (i.e., rational, incremental, strategic, and communicative) and suggests relating these approaches to the organizational culture of the institution (Willson, 2003). In addition, he explores how Habermas' communicative action theory applies to planning through the use of a case study.

Planning research is also beginning to discuss the notion of change as an issue important to address in the planning process. Lick and Kaufman (2000/2001) outline four roles of change—change sponsorship, change agent, change target, and change advocate—that aid in understanding the dynamics of change and building the levels of commitment necessary to sustain change. However, they do not address how change can be communicated effectively, as has been addressed in much organizational communication literature (Clampitt & DeKoch, 2011). Polka (2007) notes that in order to facilitate change leaders need to address six employee professional "high touch" needs. The first need mentioned is communication.

Finally, in their article on educational planning foci from 1974 to present, Lindahl and Beach (2010) outline major themes that occurred in International Society for Educational Planning (ISEP) publications during these years. They note that, although feedback loops had some emphasis in the late seventies and eighties, "recent articles tend to mention these loops briefly as part of the overall planning process, rather than focusing on them specifically" (p. 3).

A CASE FOR COMMUNICATION AS THE CENTER OF PLANNING

At this point in the article, you may be thinking, "I communicate what needs to happen all the time—in memos, via the internet, and in hard copy. Still, faculty and staff show little understanding of the importance of planning and assessment." The issue is, what do we mean by "communication?" If you, as a leader, are sending messages via the modes described above, you are not necessarily "communicating" with stakeholders. An organization cannot be successful when leaders simply transmit messages, even if the quantity or quality of those messages is excellent. Communication is much more than just sending messages. It involves being audience centered, developing relationships, listening to the needs and perspectives of others, and adapting messages to the receivers' needs. A successful organization is one where stakeholders understand each other's point of view, develop some degree of agreement, and choose to act in a collective way to accomplish their mission. With ineffective communication, an "organization" at best is a collection of decoupled work units. At worst, it is a configuration of disjointed, isolated individuals. Given the decentralized nature of university culture, effective communication may be even harder to achieve within the organization.

Any discussion of leadership, then, must attend to the dynamics of the relationship between leaders and other members of the institution (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Because communication is the fundamental tenant of leader-employee relationships, effective downward, upward, and lateral communication among leaders and employees can facilitate an organizational climate where both routine business and major change initiatives can occur. This, in turn leads to greater success for the organization itself.

Most organizations, public or private, understand the importance of strategic

communication with external stakeholders and current or potential customers. Marketing plans are commonly used to outline strategic communication for these audiences. Yet institutions rarely approach internal communication in the same way. We know, however, that the most successful institutions create missions, goals, values, and procedures to facilitate a more common culture where employees identify with and are committed to the organization (Williams, 2008). A common culture brings coherence to the workplace and greater organizational identification for employees. But how do we achieve this kind of culture? Bacal (1998) notes the following:

> When we look at organizations that use their common culture as a strategic advantage, what we find is that they create that culture through the use of very strategic, coordinated communication strategies. They use multiple methods, consistently. Their training supports their cultural goals, as does their written communication (e.g. newsletters, billboard, slogans, etc.). Their management communicates consistently with common messages in a number of forms (e.g. performance management, department or sub-organization meetings, award and recognition programs, etc.). And perhaps most important, management behavior is consistent with the messages echoed via other communication methodologies. . . internal communication, in its broadest sense, is the key to bringing that [common culture] about. It won't happen unless we are proactive in our communication and coordinate our efforts so they convey consistent, compatible messages (p. 4).

Organizational research supports the notion of effective communication as crucial to moving an organization forward. Belasen (2008), in his discussion of stakeholder theory, outlines seven principles of stakeholder management (often referred to as Clarkson Principles). Principle 2 states that "Managers should listen to and openly communicate with stakeholders about their respective concerns and contributions. . . [Effective communication] involves discourse between managers and stakeholders. Managers should try to understand the multiple perspectives of the stakeholders" (p. 185-186).

Strategic, coordinated communication strategies, then, are at the heart of creating a common organizational culture. Some have even concluded that internal communication, where there is talk back and forth within the organization as well as up and down the hierarchy, may well be more important to a company's success than external communication (Young & Post, 1993).

Yet leaders have been slow to embrace the importance of communication to organizational success. Clampitt and Berk (1996) note three primary reasons. First, communication has been wrongly perceived as a cost that does not produce measurable return. This has occurred because researchers have had some difficulty in linking how an institution communicates with its success or profitability. Second, communication has long been perceived as a technical skill, not a strategic activity. Finally, senior managers have had a longstanding fear of a process they believe cannot be totally controlled.

However, shying away from engaging in strategic communication during times of significant change only serves to alienate employees who complain about lack of information in a decision making process affecting their lives. What leaders need to know is that, as "messy" as the process is, true buy-in to new ideas and new directions for an organization can only occur when those within the organization believe they are part of the decision making process. Salem (2008) notes that "Communication is a social process in which individuals can make sense together, and artifacts are only an opportunity for

making sense, an opportunity for conversation. Complaints about inadequate information are complaints about the lack of opportunities to make sense together" (p. 5).

HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION

A strategic communication model can actually allow planning to serve as an "artifact" that assists faculty, staff, and students to understand their institution, and, more importantly, feel a commitment to its goals. Farmer (1990) notes that effective planning can contribute to the kind of campus environment that supports change. Specifically, an open planning process can provide the dynamics through which the university's vision is translated into specific planning objectives and implementation strategies. Farmer (1990) emphasizes the prominent place of oral communication in the planning process at King's College.

> Extensive face-to-face deliberation provides opportunities for immediate feedback, both verbal and nonverbal, on proposed objectives and strategies . . . The ability to deal immediately with responses, acknowledging the ideas and the feelings of people involved in the planning process, helps to nourish a widened sense of ownership and also to transform discussion of planning objectives into productive talk about the implementation strategies (p. 12).

A strategic planning process that embraces a model of open, two-way communication has an additional advantage. It can become a heuristic devise for reconceiving the entire internal communication system. For example, with a new planning initiative, leaders may want to analyze the climate in which the planning will take place. They may ask such questions as "What are the key beliefs and values of stakeholders?" "What is their emotional state?" "What are they willing to do?" "How disposed are they toward change?" A communication strategy that builds an analysis of context into the system cannot only aid the planning but also facilitate successful institutional change.

Implementing the Communication Process

Initially, those in charge of planning for a university or college need to consider three key components of the strategic communication process:

- Who are the stakeholders in the planning process?
- What messages do you want to communicate to the various stakeholders?
- Who will be involved in communicating the chosen messages?

Who are the stakeholders? With regard to stakeholders, Belasen (2008) encourages leaders to include both internal and external groups and individuals. This would include anyone who values "the goals and interests of the organization, in managerial decision-making processes" (p. 179). Although there are differences among institutions due to size, private/public status, region, and state, the most salient stakeholders for most higher education institutions would typically include faculty, staff, administrators, students, parents, governing boards, legislators, and accreditation agencies. All these have some "stake" in the institution's goals. A strategic plan outlines those goals and includes steps to reach those goals. Therefore, it becomes an important artifact in the conversation among stakeholders about the goals of the institution. As you view this list, you can easily see that these groups do not all have the same vision about institutional priorities. Belasen (2008)

states that, because stakeholders often have competing values, leaders should take on the responsibility of finding out what stakeholders want. "Better communication also helps prevent conflict before it has a chance to percolate" (p. 180). This "conversation," although tedious during the initial stages of the planning process, does lead to greater ownership of the strategic plan.

In an effort to bring others into this conversation, the leadership of the institution could engage the campus community in a review of the current strategic planning process. Groups including deans, chairs, faculty, and staff could have input into the process and provide feedback. In this way the president makes it clear that stakeholder opinion matters, and the campus community believes it is part of the future of the university.

What messages do you want to communicate to stakeholders? At first blush, this may seem like an odd question. However, leaders must pay attention to the varied perspectives of stakeholders to understand what is most important to each of them. Although there may be some broad goals on which all stakeholders agree, different stakeholder groups often want to hear their specific interests reflected in the messages they receive about planning. For example, faculty may want leaders to talk about student learning or program development with regard to the plan. Staff may want to hear how important their role is in supporting the academic mission of the university. Governing boards may want to know more about how the strategic plan will lead to prestige. Therefore, leaders must be "audience centered" in their communication. This means that leaders need to take into consideration the knowledge, attitudes, and interests of their various audiences with regard to the institutional goals and direction in order to tailor messages accordingly. They must also allow feedback from the various audiences to refine, clarify, and provide authenticity to the planning process.

Who will be involved in communicating the chosen messages? Most institutions of higher education have an office that oversees planning and assessment. Sometimes the president or provost will lead the initiative. A strategically communicative planning process, however, requires more than the "official" leadership of the institution to lead if it is to be successful. Particularly in larger institutions, deans and department chairs must take an active role in discussion regarding the strategic planning process. Middle management, as well as directors at the first level of management, must be able to have conversations and actually consult with their faculty and staff on the plan's goals and outcomes. They can then serve as liaisons to the provost, president, and other officials in charge of planning in communicating feedback of faculty and staff within the smaller units of the institution. This way the voices of stakeholders across campus will be heard, leading to a more authentic plan with greater buy-in.

Another important avenue for engaging in strategic communication is through opinion leaders within academic and administrative departments (Rogers, 2003). An opinion leader is an individual whose ideas and behavior serve as a model to others. Opinion leaders communicate messages to a primary group, influencing the attitudes and behavior change of their followers. Often faculty and staff pay more attention to experienced, knowledgeable people in their own departments than to anyone who speaks for the "larger" institution. At an academic institution, it isn't very hard to learn who these people are. You have probably even relied on this type of person to chair committees and

serve as a liaison in other capacities for the institution. Opinion leaders provide yet another avenue to carry on the important conversations needed to result in a meaningful plan. It is important to remember that one-way communication is not true communication. True communication will result only if the feedback loops are in place and positive changes result from the conversations.

When selecting those members of the university or college community who should play a leadership role in the strategic planning process, it is crucial that they be perceived as credible. Kouzes and Posner (2003) spent over a decade of research addressing the characteristics of most admired leaders. Consistently, four characteristics emerged: honest, forward looking, inspiring, and competent. At all levels of leadership, whether they be formal or informal leaders, those chosen to engage in communicating with stakeholders should possess these qualities in order for communication to be successful in the planning process.

Addressing these three questions provides a strategic communication framework that serves as the foundation for the planning process. However, this framework, alone, does not ensure success. Communication throughout the planning process should be based on sound principles that have been shown to facilitate change initiatives. Below is a summary of communication guidelines to incorporate into the planning process.

COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES OFTEN OVERLOOKED IN PLANNING

As noted earlier, most planning models do not incorporate effective communication as a centerpiece of the planning process. Implementing the following communication principles provides a necessary ingredient for success:

- The first principle of effective communication is to "analyze the audience." The many sub-audiences and opinion leaders in the organization must be considered to determine their receptiveness to messages and strategies. When communicating change, such as will inevitably occur with the creation of a new strategic plan, leaders must realize that resistance is likely to be encountered at all levels of the organization. Understanding the reasons for resistance and having conversations about related issues will aid greatly in creating a smoother strategic planning process.

- Before the strategic planning process is launched, leaders at all institutional levels should be trained to implement the process as part of the regular business, be knowledgeable about successful communication processes, and be held accountable for providing information and feedback to their departments or divisions.

- Messages related to the strategic planning process should be linked to the institution's mission statement. The mission statement provides a collective identity for stakeholders. It is the "charter" and "constitution" on which the organization is grounded.

- Although more time consuming than regular planning models, a communication based strategic planning process depends upon interpersonal, face-to-face channels

that allow two-way exchange and feedback. This, in turn, will prevent selective perception on disliked topics, provide greater detail, and more effectively get receivers to change strongly held attitudes.

- Designated and clearly identifiable locations on the university website can be used to update the steps in the planning process, provide documents that are under review by various stakeholders, solicit feedback to documents, and allow those in the university community to record their questions.

- The more stakeholders at all levels of the institution are engaged in the "conversation" about planning, the more committed they will be to do their part in implementing the plan. Participation allows stakeholders to voice frustrations and offer suggestions that may be important to strategic plan implementation.

- Those leading the institution must claim ownership of messages. When leadership delegates ownership, it signals to those in the organization that the message is not important enough for leadership to devote time to it. In addition, insufficient communication from senior leaders will often result in middle management killing initiatives.

- Deans, directors, and department chairs are crucial to "translating" the university strategic plan for faculty and other employees as the process unfolds. This translation provides focus and meaningfulness at the operational level and helps stakeholders understand how the plan affects them. In addition "middle management" can serve as an upward communication liaison for suggestions and concerns expressed.

- Communication alone does not create buy-in. It creates expectations that there will be follow through and action taken on the initiatives. Therefore, communication should be considered an ongoing dialogue that supports progress on initiatives that are being implemented. Institutions with a "high say" "low do" organizational climate create the perception among stakeholders that communication is all talk and no action, thus creating distrust.

COMMUNICATION BASED STRATEGIC PLANNING: A CASE STUDY

The case study outlined here involved a large southwestern state university. This process was led by a new president whose tenure followed an administration that used a more traditional top-down methodology. It is an example of a "top down" "bottom up" approach that used communication as the centerpiece for strategic planning. It included the following nine steps.

Step 1: Review of Previous Planning Process

Trust is an essential prerequisite for communicating change and should be "a consciously pursued institutional goal" (Farmer, 1990, p. 10). At this university, dissatisfaction in the planning process, resulting from a long history of limited stakeholder involvement, was a critical issue that needed to be addressed.

In order to attend to this issue, the first step was to allow stakeholders to critique the previous planning process. To answer the question, "Who are the stakeholders?" the president's leadership team met with the associate vice president in charge of planning to come to consensus on this issue. They decided to solicit initial feedback from stakeholders, including deans, chairs, faculty and staff, about the old planning process. Four separate groups of stakeholders were charged with meeting for one semester to discuss, critique, and provide ideas to the associate vice president in charge of planning, as well as provide formal public reports that were shared with the leadership team. Ad hock groups included a presidential task force (consisting of key faculty and staff leaders throughout the university), the council of deans, and the council of chairs. In addition, the standing university committee on planning that was in place when the new president arrived also critiqued the previous planning process. Because the president ensured that academics would drive all university initiatives, an academic planning steering committee convened to review all reports and make formal recommendations for the new process to the president's leadership team. Note that these groups did not just include persons in designated leadership roles. The persons chosen to serve on the academic planning steering committee were true opinion leaders within their colleges and within the university. They embraced the characteristics perceived as important to good leadership. The associate vice president in charge of planning met regularly with the president and vice president for academic affairs to ensure that these recommendations would be included in the new planning process. The committee also developed a planning calendar that incorporated formal feedback loops at all planning junctures.

Step 2: Environmental Scan Process

Most universities go through some kind of environmental scan and evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (i.e., SWOT analysis) when a strategic planning process begins. However, rather than have one office gather and provide information on the environment, a process was developed to identify thoroughly all possible environmental impacts on planning, both internal and external, to all university levels. Academic departments created SWOT analyses and environmental scans that took an "inside out" approach to initiatives they were attempting. Reports included what departments needed for support to carry out initiatives they were discussing, including infrastructure. Departments also had the opportunity to produce an environmental scan that reflected unique environments. In addition, the office for institutional effectiveness provided input for a university scan, including possible local, regional, state, and national impacts. This was the first time that internal and external impacts on planning had been aggregated in a meaningful way to determine how colleges and the university would have to prioritize initiatives using limited resources. The information was gathered and shared with the academic planning steering committee for synthesis. In addition, the information was announced and placed on the planning web-site for review by the university community. This transparency helped engender trust in those who had previously been skeptical of the planning process.

Step 3: "Bottom up" Feedback Process

Often university goals are laid out by administration and "presented" to the university community without true input from those who will actually carry out the initiatives

to support those goals. Such was the case of the university studied in this analysis before the arrival of the new president. The new administration, however, wanted to send a clear message that the planning process would be transparent, and that stakeholders would be consulted about university goals and direction. This message was reiterated to stakeholder groups by the vice presidents, deans, chairs, and members of the academic planning steering committee. At this point in the process, the framework for strategic communication had been set. Stakeholders had been identified, and a clear, consistent message was delivered by appropriate opinion leaders. In addition, feedback loops were in place. This framework provided a more trusting atmosphere where stakeholders knew that they were participating in the planning conversation.

With environmental scan assessments and departmental internal evaluations in place, all academic units were equipped with the appropriate information to frame a realistic vision for their departments. Whereas university goals had previously been framed by administration, university goals actually grew out of the vision and direction of departments and colleges.

In order to capture the collective academic vision for the university, the newly formed academic planning steering committee framed questions that were distributed to all academic departments, seeking essential information to develop university goals. Answers to these questions served as both information for university planning and, more importantly, discussion at the department, college, and academic division levels. The discussions across organizational lines (i.e., department to department and college to college) led to a better understanding of diverse views and the need to engage in dialogue to create consensus about a collective vision among university community members. Instead of "persuasion from the top," the university was collectively contributing to the creation of those goals.

Step 4: Planning Categories

Based on college and department feedback on planning questions, the academic planning steering committee created planning categories that would provide the framework for university goals. Departments provided information about the plans they were creating with regard to academic programs, teaching excellence and student learning, scholarly and creative work, development, and diversity. These documents were made available to everyone on campus via the web. Not only did the resulting public documents collectively assist the framing of university goals, they also activated important conversations among departments and colleges that had never occurred before. This sharing of information allowed departments and colleges to see where collaborations could take place, where duplications of initiatives were occurring, and what opportunities there may be for future academic initiatives. In addition, academics could contribute information to goals they embraced because the goals were part of what academics "do for a living." These categories then became the basis for the creation of department, college, and, finally, university goals.

Within academic affairs, perhaps the greatest value of looking collectively at what individual departments wanted to accomplish was the realization that the university could not do it all. Thus, the new planning process called on departments, colleges and the division of academic affairs to prioritize maintenance needs and new initiatives within their plans. Maintenance priorities included such items as new faculty or operational budgets to maintain an existing program with growing numbers of students. Chairs met with faculty

to create department plan prioritization, deans met with chairs, and deans met with all faculties in their college to discuss the college plan and what it would prioritize. In these sessions faculty had the opportunity to discuss, provide feedback, and make suggestions for the college plan. This iterative process allowed departments to commit to the college plan because they were now part of the "conversation." Deans then presented final plans, including plan priorities, in open forums where everyone on campus was invited to attend. In addition, the forums were taped and placed on the web for those who were not able to attend.

Finally, each dean met with the vice president for academic affairs to make a case for the college's priorities. The vice president of academic affairs was charged by the president to make choices as to what programs and new initiatives would be lifted up to the division plan. This plan, along with academic affairs priorities, was also presented in an open forum and placed on the web for viewing and monitoring.

Because the new planning process continued to engage faculty and staff through communication, in the form of the public presentations and publicized written documents, the university community was able to follow the planning "track" and have a greater understanding of why certain priorities and decisions had been made. Thus, trust continued to build, and participation in the process grew.

Step 5: Mission Statement Review

A crucial part of the success of the strategic planning process was the decision to review the university mission statement to determine what changes, if any, needed to be made. The timing for conducting this review was intentional because the best time to reevaluate the university's mission was when all academic departments were already laying groundwork for their future that would lead to decisions for the university's direction. Rather than having an "imposed" mission statement, the campus community was provided the opportunity to create a mission statement that reflected the direction outlined in the newly created academic plan.

The president wanted a mission statement that would truly be a guide for university initiatives. Thus, the mission statement process reflected the new "open communication" perspective that was now beginning to be embraced by a campus that had a history of limited feedback systems. Academic departments, administrative units, and student body leaders (in groups) reviewed the "then" current mission, vision, and core values statements to 1) come to consensus on elements of these statements they considered fundamental to the mission and create a prioritized list, 2) answer the question "What should be included, but isn't," and 3) answer the question, "What is distinct about our university?" Units were asked to provide their title (e.g., Department of Psychology) along with the number of people who participated in the discussion. Participation was optional. Feedback was collected and publicly posted to the web. The president then appointed a mission statement review committee to synthesize themes, report data, and fashion a draft mission statement. The draft statement was placed on the web for review by all students, faculty members, and staff. After several iterations, the final statement was created and approved by the president's leadership team and later the board of regents.

Step 6: Administrative Division Planning

After the mission review process was completed and academic affairs stakeholders

completed strategic plans, the academic planning steering committee was expanded to included appropriate leaders from administrative divisions so that support divisions could begin their strategic support plans, based on information gleaned from academic plans. The expanded committee was charged to develop, evaluate, and modify planning and assessment processes in academic and administrative units. By providing a framework that addressed basic planning concerns (e.g., assessment and resource allocation), the committee considered the needs of the entire university, as well as external mandates.

With academics at the core of university processes, administrative divisions now had the opportunity to view all academic strategic plans to provide the support needed to achieve university goals. Whereas support divisions had previously created plans separate from the division of academic affairs, they now had the ability to determine academic needs, have conversations with departments, and provide feedback to the administration on the needed infrastructure and other support as they created plans that would support the academic endeavor. In keeping with the planning categories that had been created for academic affairs, administrative units used a collaborative process similar to the academic affairs process for creating their plans. All vice presidents presented their plans in open forums, and all on campus were invited to attend.

The presentations made by support division vice presidents provided an unexpected "plus" for the university collaboration that had not been anticipated. Generally, academic and administrative sides of the university remain in their own "corners," never completely understanding the importance of working together for student success. Public presentations by divisions such as student affairs provided a greater understanding of how academic affairs and student affairs could combine resources and ideas to create a better, broader learning environment for students. The student affairs division, for example, provided formal study sessions in freshman dorms to support similar strategies in academic plans. Again, the opportunity for conversation and feedback led to a better, more meaningful strategic plan.

Step 7: Creating a "Living" Plan

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the most problematic issues facing any strategic plan is whether or not it will actually be used to guide initiatives at all university levels. The new planning process addressed this issue. Committees were formed to "read across" all major planning categories in college plans in order to 1) identify opportunities where colleges could share ideas and build on initiatives, 2) aggregate resources requested by all colleges, 3) identify infrastructure needed to fulfill requests, and 4) report on types of support or guidance that could be provided for colleges about which they may not have information. Each committee prepared a report for the president's leadership team, and separate discussions between committee members (i.e., representative faculty, staff, and student stakeholders) and the deans, vice presidents and the president began. Reports were shared throughout campus, and decisions about prioritizing initiatives within plans were guided by discussions resulting from the reports. For the first time, faculty and staff could see that their plans were not only being read, but were being used to frame arguments and provide information for prioritizing university initiatives, infrastructure, and other forms of university support. In addition, because information was shared, various academic and support units had the opportunity to discuss needs and realistically look at what could be provided.

Step 8: Development of University Goals

Because the university used an open, collaborative, communicative process to determine direction, initiative priorities, and the university mission statement, university goals evolved naturally from previous planning process activities. Although formally reworded, the goals related directly to the planning categories that grew out of original planning questions to academic departments concerning academic programs, student learning and success, scholarly and creative activity, development, and diversity.

For each of these broad goals, "intended outcomes" to make progress toward the goal were created. These outcomes were derived from initiatives outlined in college and division plans, reports and recommendations from "read across" committees, presidential commitment to new initiatives already underway, and external state and accrediting agency expectations.

Step 9: Developing Final University Plan Draft

By the time the final draft of the university plan was completed, all stakeholders across campus had been given the opportunity to provide input on all aspects of the plan via departmental, college, and division discussions, as well as presentations, information, and feedback opportunities via the web. From the plan's initiatives and goals to the university mission statement, campus stakeholders had opportunities for ownership of the final university plan. The implementation of communication principles and strategies proved to be successful in moving the organization forward.

CHALLENGES IN USING A COMMUNICATION BASED PLANNING MODEL

Although the planning process and resulting plan proved to be a success, communicating the process and getting buy-in was sometimes problematic. The following are challenging issues inherent to using a communication based planning process for university planning.

1. *In institutions having a history of mistrust with administration, the introduction of a new planning process can easily be perceived as a "Here we go again" initiative forced on the campus community.*

The new leadership realized trust among some university employees may be a problem as the process began. Following the announcement of a new planning framework, the usual negative comments were made in some departmental hallways and meeting rooms. However, once the president announced that the planning process would be "open and collaborative," all levels of leadership had to consistently illustrate that in every portion of the process. Only when campus stakeholders began repeatedly to see their ideas being implemented in discussions about the plan did trust begin to build. Toward the end of creating the process, much more buy-in occurred.

2. *Implementing a communication based planning process is time consuming, especially within the context of a large university setting.*

From inception to completion, ending in the creation of department, college, division, and university plans, the new planning process took over two years to create.

During that time, the president put on hold the submission of proposals for new Ph.D. or other programs, as well as other proposed initiatives, until the new university plan was completed. Only programs and initiatives specifically given the "go ahead" by the previous administration were cleared to move forward. The president believed that all initiatives needed to reflect the new mission and university plan before they would be considered. Although some departments across campus grumbled, the message communicated clearly that the new plan was a true guide for the future of the university, thus reducing further skepticism on the part of the campus community.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to be both "efficient" and "effective" in a communication based process. However, the benefits of an engaged university community greatly outweigh the time and effort required.

3. Given the decoupled organizational structure of universities and colleges, and faculty allegiance to departmental goals rather than university goals, faculty participation is difficult to engender during a university strategic planning process.

Because faculties are crucial to ensuring that university initiatives are actually implemented successfully, their participation in any planning initiative is important. Morris (2000) noted, "We know decisions would not be accepted or implemented without participation [by faculty]—or at least consultation" (p. 55). In addition, organizational literature supports the notion that employee participation has positive effects on job satisfaction, commitment, performance, and acceptance and implementation of change (Miller & Monge, 1986; Seibold & Shea, 2001; Wagner, 1994). Morris (2000) summed up faculty attitudes toward strategic planning participation through the response of one faculty member participating in the study.

> In the eyes of most faculty members, committee work is time consuming and typically results in little more than a report that sits on some administrator's bookshelf. In addition to tangible rewards, there must be visible action and recognition on the part of the institution with regard to the work of the committee. Faculties have to see the effort as more than an "academic exercise" (p. 64).

The initial faculty attitude discussed in this case study differed little from the statement made above. However, over time most faculty became convinced that the planning process was more than an academic exercise. Committee membership included respected faculty opinion leaders appointed by the president. All recommendations made by various committees were taken to the president and implementation of recommendations began quickly. Committees were recognized in the university plan and on the web, as well as in speeches made by the president and other university top administrators. The experience represented a true "flattening" of the organizational structure.

4. Guiding any process from the top of the organization is always problematic, especially when messages are incorrectly translated.

Wood (1999) states that previous organizational research has found immediate supervisors to be the primary information sources for employees. Although all parts of the institution in this case study were included in the communication process, first level managers and opinion leaders often had more influence than those at the top of the organization. This pattern is common in organizations undergoing change (Larkin & Larkin, 1994; Quirke, 1996). In implementing the strategic planning process, the university

was dependent on the translation of many messages by department heads and other opinion leaders within the institution. Some department heads and opinion leaders did not believe in the process or had reasons for rejecting it for what they perceived to be advantageous to their individual department or personal agenda. In these cases, they "translated" the message negatively to those over whom they had influence, thus slowing down overall acceptance into the process.

In order to counteract this trend, most of the messages were sent to all university stakeholders to interpret so that they could come to their own conclusions. Although this did bother some middle managers, it did engender conversations that would never have occurred if a larger audience had not received the message.

5. *Because many managers are not knowledgeable about communication principles and effective group processes, this hinders the use of consensus building communication.*

Clampitt, DeKoch and Cashman (2000) note that, in continuously changing organizations, CEOs should engage employees at all organizational levels in communicating the core message. This is one area of the planning process that was problematic. In this case, it was not that managers were necessarily against a communication based planning process. Some simply did not know how to carry it out. Although most chairs and directors had gone through leadership training based on communication principles, there had not been enough training to allow people at all leadership levels to integrate communication principles into their leadership styles.

Argenti and Formen (2002) suggest that "making communication a core value and including it as an integral part of any performance review will guarantee that this value permeates all levels of you organization" (p. 144). Recognizing this, the university has implemented more communication based leadership training for all directors, chairs, and other middle management positions in hopes that training will lead to better leadership.

CONCLUSION

Because strategic planning at institutions of higher education, as well as other organizations throughout the country, will continue to exist as part of the organizational culture, it seems prudent that the most meaningful method of conducting strategic planning be investigated. Toward that end, the purpose of this article was to reframe the strategic planning process with strategic communication as its centerpiece. Although many conducting planning research incorporate communication elements within the process they propose, none focuses on communication as the core component.

To better clarify the communication centered approach to strategic planning, a case study was presented. The planning process employed at a large southwestern state university illustrates how well established communication principles and organizational communication theory can be integrated into a strategic planning process. The resulting plan served as an authentic guide to create and implement the university mission and goals. Furthermore, we conclude that institutions should consider how a communication centered strategic planning process can be used to address both routine and non-routine communication, and thus improve their credibility in the current age of accountability.

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