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PREFACE

Linda K. Lemasters
Virginia Roach

This is the first issue since we returned from Istanbul, Turkey. What a cordial welcome we experienced from Selahattin Turan and his colleagues! Scholarly discussion, lodging, food, camaraderie, and sight seeing was phenomenal! The ISEP Board approved some changes in our Board of Editors. You will note that Virginia Roach, Karen Crum, and Ori Eyal are now participating in the publishing of *Educational Planning*. Welcome!

We believe that you will enjoy Issue 18:1, as we continue to put more emphasis on the planning and change processes. Camille Rutherford has authored the first article and spoke of the change process in relation to implementing comprehensive school reform models. One finding of particular note and one that we should share with our colleagues who are practitioners is that "this study suggests that the use of strategic planning models that emphasize initial planning activities can make the change process for schools less daunting."

The second article by Karen Crum and Victor Hellman moves from the schoolhouse to the school board. The findings of their study "revealed that the board does not initially recognize the majority of policy making decisions on its own, relying rather on school district staff." This certainly reinforces the roles of our practitioners and staff. Their work also has a message for all of us in leading boards in the planning and change processes.

Kürsad Yilmaz and Ali Balci conducted a very worthwhile study on individual and organizational values in primary schools in Turkey. Their findings were interesting, and may surprise the reader. There were similarities between school administrators and teachers that should be very useful for school leaders during the planning process.

The final article in this issue is by Shannon Chance and Brenda Williams. It "explores the use of rubrics as tools for assessing the quality of university-developed strategic plans." Embedded in the article is an excellent critical review of planning literature, a "must read" for students of planning. We have progressed through the articles in this issue from the school, to the school board, to higher education. This should provide a pertinent read for all.

We would like to thank the editorial board and Glen Earthman. It is good to have assistant editors working with us as well. Publishing a journal takes the collaboration and contributions of the editorial board, but also the contributors of articles emphasizing the latest research in the field. Thank you!

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Linda Lemasters is an Associate Professor and Program Coordinator for Educational Administration and Policy Studies, Department of Educational Leadership, Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University. She has collaborated with Glen Earthman on a textbook and numerous articles and is on the boards of the International Society of Educational Planners, as well as the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration.

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PLANNING TO CHANGE: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM

CAMILLE RUTHERFORD

ABSTRACT

While organizational change theory has been available to school leaders for the past forty years, few have attempted to consciously transform this theory into practice to overcome the plethora of problems that exist in many schools (Joyner, 1998). This paper examines the change process at two schools implementing comprehensive school reform models. The findings of this study suggest that the use of strategic planning models that emphasize initial planning activities can make the change process for schools less daunting. In our perpetually changing world, educational organizations will continue to be bombarded with the pressure to transform. For these changes to take place smoothly and efficiently, educators need to develop a greater understanding of strategic planning and the change process. They must embrace the adage that "those who plan to learn, must learn to plan."

PLANNING TO CHANGE

Those who plan to learn must learn to plan

Public outcry about the continued poor performance of the public education system has led to repeated calls for changes to improve student success (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). For years, interested stakeholders have waited for change, often pleading for improvement (Cuban, 2003). Despite these frequent calls for change, the public education system has remained virtually unchanged and unable to generate comprehensive improvements. Repeated tinkering, an outcome of a haphazard change process, has not been sufficient to overcome the significant shortcomings that exists in many schools. For significant change to occur there must be a plan.

Decades of ongoing mediocrity highlights the need for strategic guidance in approaching educational change (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). While organizational change theory has been available to school leaders for the past forty years, few have attempted to consciously transform this theory to practice (Joyner, 1998). This paper examines the change process at two schools attempting significant transformation through the implementation of comprehensive school reform models. Of primary concern were the initiating activities that were guided by the strategic planning literature. The goal of this research was to examine how these initiating activities affected the level of implementation of the proposed changes.

This exploration was guided by the assumption that planned change is superior to un-planned change or changes implemented in a haphazard manner. For planned change to be successful it must be built on a foundation of sound strategic planning theory that emphasizes initiating planning activities. The initiation phase is key to the institutionalization of the desired change (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976) as it provides a means to explore the context of the change, the organization's capacity to change, and the level of commitment toward the proposed change.

The educational sector has frequently relied on changes in policy to transform the way schools operate. While changes in policy are typically quite easy to enact, changes in practice do not always follow. While desirable, policy makers cannot simply mandate what matters (McLaughlin, 1987), as mandates alone are not sufficient to create the conditions that enable individuals and groups to develop the skills and deep understandings that foster the necessary cultural changes that support a change in practice (Fullan, 1997).

The current No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation is a prime example of the difficulty of using policy to evoke changes in teaching and learning. While the goal of the NCLB policy is to improve student achievement, the policy's emphasis on standardized testing has resulted in a regime of high-stakes accountability measures that reward superficial change that may temporarily appease policy makers but do little to foster the comprehensive changes necessary to truly improve teaching and learning (Cuban, 2003).

The strategic planning literature details steps required to foster profound change (Bryson, 1995). It is by providing guidance as to how best to engage in a process of large-scale change that the area of

strategic planning can be of assistance to educators.

While there is a plethora of different definitions of strategic planning, one that is readily applicable to educational organizations and served as the foundation for this study is from the work of Peter O'Brien (1991). From O'Brien's perspective, strategic planning involves defining the organization's mission and developing strategies and plans to align resources with environmental opportunities and threats in such a way as to achieve its mission in the most effective way (OBrien, 1991). Educational organizations that follow a strategic planning formula, instead of relying on haphazard change, benefit from several of the advantages of engaging in planned change. The promotion of strategic thought and action; improved decision making; enhanced organizational responsiveness and improved performance are just a few of the positive outcome of a strategic planning process (Bryson, 1995). Despite these benefits one must remain cognizant that participation in a strategic planning process in itself is not enough to guarantee a successful change. It is paramount that the individuals directing the planning process follow a planning model that meshes with the culture and environment in which the change is proposed. Criticism of past planning efforts in education can be considered a direct result of an over-reliance on hyper-rational models that emphasized plan development and strategy implementation (OBrien, 1991), while failing to acknowledge the context in which the change was to occur. The positivistic orientation of these overly rational models failed to work in the often non-rational environment of the schoolhouse (Rieger, 1993).

Unlike planning models espoused by the corporate sector, planning for educational institutions must be more dynamic and constructivist in its orientation. D'Amico (1989) suggested that strategic planning used in educational settings must be different from that used in corporate contexts because the organizational structures of schools and corporations are vastly different. One difference is that political factors have greater influence in educational settings than in the corporate environment. Corporate planning is primarily profit driven. Many early planners failed to account for this fact when trying to implement business planning models in educational environments (D'Amico, 1989). Strategic planning in educational settings also requires a greater degree of participation from the organization's stakeholders, as only the stakeholders can accurately determine if the changes being proposed are technically workable, politically acceptable, and fit the organization's core values and philosophy (Bryson, 1995).

A review of change models for educational organizations reveals a number of commonalties. The work of Berman & McLaughlin (1976), Bryson (1995), Conley (1993), Ferrara (2000), Fullan (1997), Joyner (1998), and OBrien (1991) all suggest that the strategic planning process can be divided into three distinct phases: initiation, implementation and institutionalization. While the various authors may have different names for the phases, the processes that occur highlight a consensus about the change process continuum. The initiation phase includes all activities that lead up to and include a decision to adopt or proceed with a change (Fullan, 1997). The implementation phase is marked by the transition from planning to the execution of the strategies that were conceived in the initial stage (Bryson, 1995). Consequently, the final phase of institutionalization occurs when the innovation or change implemented in the previous stage loses it "special project" status and becomes part of the routinized behavior of the organization (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976).

It is because the initiation phase directly impacts the success of later phases (Berman & McLaughlin; Ferrara, 2000; Fullan, 1997) that the activities that take place during this initial phase serve as the primary focus of this study. In Berman and McLaughlin' s (1976) landmark study of the implementation of educational innovations it was determined that the nature of what took place during the initiation phase was a major influence on the prospect of successful implementation.

Despite this guidance, provided decades ago, contemporary research indicates that most attempts at educational change still largely ignore the importance of initiating activities in determining effective implementation resulting in successful institutionalized (Ferrara, 2000; Fullan, 1997). Initiating activities must address the questions of whether and how to begin implementation, and what readiness conditions might be essential prior to commencing the implementation process (Fullan & Stieglebauer, 1997). To answer these questions, issues relating to context, capacity, and commitment need to be explored thoroughly.

Context

Traditional and contemporary planning models are consistent in that the context of the change must be investigated prior to initiating the change process. This includes an assessment of the external political, economic, and social forces and trends that influence the manner in which the organization operates as well as the internal resources and limitations that are present (Bryson, 1995). Traditionally this assessment was completed by performing a SWOT analysis that examined the internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as the external opportunities and threats (Bryson, 1995; OBrien, 1991; Taylor, 1987). Just as important as the results of the SWOT analysis is who is involved in the analysis process. A failure to involve all stakeholders can drastically skew the results. A successful analysis begins with a shared assessment by power groups and stakeholders, as both power brokers and stakeholders need to assume collective responsibility for identifying and defining the issues related to the change effort. The sharing of responsibility for a problem is imperative if all parties are to share the responsibility for its resolution (Joyner, 1998).

If a SWOT analysis is to be an illuminating instrument in the exploration of the context of change, its focus must penetrate past the surface of simple demographics and into the inner-workings of the organization. Along with a review of the demographic issues affecting changes in educational organizations, Hopkins (1998) asserted that relational and leadership factors must also be thoroughly examined. Relational factors include the extent to which cliques and specific interests groups exist within a school and often serve as the "gas" or "break pedal" of an organization. If stakeholder groups have significantly different ideologies, the organization's response to change can be greatly fragmented (Hopkins, 1998).

When assessing available resources, leadership must be counted as an essential element. This includes the extent to which the administration has historically employed a leadership style that is collegial and distributes ownership and leadership throughout the school (Hopkins, 1998). This notion is supported by the work of Berman & McLaughlin (1976) and Smith, Maxwell, Lowther, Hacker, Bol & Nunnery (1997) that observed that the implementation of a reform was greatly enhanced by strong administrative leadership within the school. The findings of these studies noted that in schools where there appeared to be strong commitment and support by the principal, general support from district officials, high faculty morale, and the presence of a faculty-elected leadership council, there was a greater perception of implementation success (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976; Smith et al., 1997). Thus, one could conclude that if these elements are not present, change efforts are likely to break down or be implemented symbolically without significant change occurring (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976)

Capacity

In addition to an exploration of the context of change, the initiation phase of strategic planning should include activities that examine an organization's capacity to change. Most school innovations over the last decade have been entered into as a "knee jerk" reaction to calls to reform. As a result, planners charge full speed ahead when confronted with the pressure or mandate for change without pausing to assess the system's capacity for change (Ferrara, 2000). An examination of organizational capacity should include a comprehensive understanding of the change being proposed and the change process itself. Just as important as the acquisition of information, the organization's readiness to accept change must also be examined. For the change process to be successful there must be sufficient understanding about the requirements of change. Smith et al. (1997) found that schools that struggled with implementing a significant change were generally those in which teachers lacked a sufficient understanding of the change process.

In an attempt to ensure schools understand the requirements of the change process, the creators of a number of school reform models suggest that as part of the initiation phase, school staffs must be provided with enough time and information to thoroughly learn about the change model. This includes an opportunity to discuss the model among themselves and an opportunity to observe the model in action. When these capacity building activities have not taken place, staff members often have little confidence in the ultimate success of the change effort, and thus the likelihood that the reform will be institutionalized is greatly reduced (Nunnery, Bol, Dietrich, Rich, Kelly, Hacker, et al., 1997).

A key component in examining organizational capacity is an assessment of the organization's readiness to engage in the change process. The work of Slavin (1998) noted three different categories of readiness based on capabilities, relationships, and immediate past history of a school that is contemplating a significant change. Slavin uses the terms "seed" schools, "brick" schools and "sand" schools to differentiate the level of readiness to successfully engage in change (Slavin, 1998). The seed analogy refers to the notion that the soil is fertile and the seed has within it the capacity to grow. "Seed" schools have an extraordinary capacity to translate a vision into reality. The staff are cohesive, excited about teaching, are lead by a visionary leader willing to involve the entire staff in decisions, and there is a broad awareness of research trends and ideas being implemented elsewhere. In contract, school staff in "brick" schools, would like to do a better job and are willing and able to engage in a reform process if they are convinced that it would work, but they are unlikely to create their own path to reform. There is a good relationship among staff and leadership in brick schools, as well as a positive orientation towards change and some degree of stability in the school and its district. Although the foundation of brick schools is not as fertile as seed schools, there is a sufficient base on which to build on if the bricks are brought in from outside designers. These bricks can then be used in conjunction with detailed blueprints to construct the desired change (Slavin, 1998).

"Sand" schools are the least ready for change. Sand schools are complacent institutions where the faculty feel they are doing a good job, or where they feel there is no way to improve on current performance levels. These are schools in which even the most heroic attempts at reform are doomed to failure. Trying to implement change is like trying to build a structure out of sand. Even if something can be built, the slightest breeze or wave will cause it to collapse. Sand schools require fundamental changes before they can support any type of comprehensive reform (Slavin, 1998).

Commitment

Before planners proceed to the implementation phase of the strategic planning process there must be a clear understanding about the organization's level of commitment toward the change process. This includes the allocation of resources as well as the emotional desire to support the necessary changes for successful implementation and institutionalization to take place. The level of commitment to a change process is greatly influenced by the reasoning as to why a change is being proposed. Berman and McLaughlin (1976) noted that the reasoning behind why a change process was initiated greatly affected the success of the implementation and in turn the final outcome of the innovation. In their study of the implementation of federal educational programs, Berman and McLaughlin found that the motivation supporting the initiation processes could be separated into two types: opportunism or problem solving. Programs that were motivated by opportunism grew out of a response to available federal funds. Despite having adequate resources, these programs were characterized by a lack of interest and commitment on the part of local participants. As a result, participants were often indifferent to project activities and outcomes, and little in the way of serious change was ever attempted or occurred (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976). Programs that grew out of a problem-solving motive emerged primarily in response to locally identified needs and were associated with a strong commitment to address these needs. Consequently, Berman and McLaughlin concluded that a problem solving condition might be a necessary condition for institutionalization to take place (1976).

Before an organization begins a change effort there must be consensus among the stakeholders about whether the change is desirable in relation to the desired goals and whether it is implementable (Fullan & Stieglebauer, 1997). If the values and goals implicit in a project's design are not congruent with those of the project participants, the innovation is likely to be either symbolically implemented or not implemented at all (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976). Change efforts that have developed a critical mass of support and commitment are more likely to result in successful implementation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976).

Full commitment grows out of an informed choice to participate in the change process. This is greaty influenced by the opportunity to explore diverse options and choose a change strategy that is believed to be well matched to the needs of a particular school (Stringfield & Ross, 1977). Stringfield & Ross (1977) found that one of the precursors to successful implementations was the opportunity to

choose. When teachers are not fully informed about the change process, or they are not provided with enough time to review the information about the change process or reform model, they will typically express little enthusiasm for the change being implemented (Stringfield & Ross, 1977).

METHODS

This article examines the change process that took place at two schools that implemented two different comprehensive school reform models. The models implemented are the Coalition of Essential Schools and ATLAS Communities. Sunshine High was a member of the ATLAS Communities, while Lone Star Middle School was part of the Coalition of Essential Schools. Both reform models are similar in that they are built on guiding beliefs rather than a prescriptive implementation plan.

ATLAS is an acronym for Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment for All Students. The ATLAS Communities approach is based on the belief that all students can and must reach their full potential. To facilitate the ability of students to reach their potential, schools follow pathways that focus efforts to improve learning for all students by focusing on teaching for understanding; evaluating student work through standards and authentic assessments; engaging teachers in serious, sustained professional development through whole-faculty study groups; involving families and other community members in the education of their children; and reorganizing the internal structures and decision-making processes of schools and districts to support the above goals (AASA, 2002).

Schools that become members of the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) follow a set of "Common Principles" that guide school reform. These principles suggest that the school should focus on helping children learn to use their minds well. The school's goals should be simple; each student master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge and the school's goals should apply to all students. When possible, teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent. CES recommends that graduation diplomas be awarded upon demonstration of mastery of the central skills and knowledge of the school's program. They also suggest that the tone of the school should stress unanxious expectation, trust and decency, and that the principal and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first and specialists second. To that end, teacher loads should be 80 or fewer pupils, and per-pupil cost should not exceed traditional school costs by more than 10%. Finally, the model designers, require that their schools demonstrate non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogies (AASA, 2002).

Both Sunshine High and Lone Star Middle School were part of a longitudinal study that investiated the questions of why and how some external reform designs succeed at school improvement and others do not. Data was collected over a four-year period where researchers made annual visits to the schools to conduct interviews with school staff as well as district administrators. Interviews were based on a semi-structured protocol that queried participants about the initiation and implementation process, as well as the impact the reform models had on student achievement, school culture, and teachers' lives.

The data from 33 interviews at Sunshine High, and 26 interviews at Lone Star Middle School were analyzed and coded using HyperResearch, a qualitative research software program. HyperResearch enables the user to code, retrieve, and analyze large amounts of data. The interview data from Sunshine High included interviews with the school district superintendent, the current and former school principals, two assistant principals, and twenty teachers. The interview participants at Lone Star included the current and former principals, two assistant principals, a para-professional, two teacher focus groups, as well as 15 teachers. Numerous participants were interviewed on more than one occasion.

FINDINGS

Both ATLAS and CES require significant changes in policy, practices, and perceptions. For these changes to occur, the operational context at the school must be one that is conducive to change. The school must have the capacity to change, and all stakeholders must be committed to the change process. The pre-implementation activities that took place at these schools were examined to determine the impact the initiation phase had on the change process. Initiation activities that are associated with context, capacity, and commitment of the change process were examined.

Context

The context of change at Sunshine High was rather dire. Before beginning the change process, state education officials considered Sunshine High to be a failing school and gave the school a grade of "D" on its accountability report. The community that surrounds Sunshine High was also operating under dire circumstances. Sunshine High was part of a small rural community that was in a steep economic decline with no prospects of improvement. The majority of the students in the school district were from low socioeconomic households, with more than 60% of the students qualifying for free or reduced-priced meals at school. Parent involvement at the school was severely lacking. School officials considered this to be a result of the low level of educational attainment of most parents in the area. Community support was further hampered by a lack of financial resources and racial divisions that have persisted for decades. The economic decline and low tax base of the community resulted in a lack of sufficient educational funding to support the upkeep of the educational facilities. Consequently, the school was in poor shape with older buildings in disrepair. In addition, teacher salaries were the lowest in the county. In an attempt to become more fiscally efficient, the newly-elected superintendent decided that Sunshine High would be amalgamated with the local middle school to become a comprehensive 7-12 school. The superintendent claimed that this amalgamation would result in the high school being filled to capacity and would force the state to provide the funding for new facilities to be built.

There was no evidence in the interview transcripts to suggest that a needs assessment or SWOT analysis was performed by school or district officials prior to initiating the change process. If a SWOT analysis had been performed during the initiation phase, it would have revealed a school with few strengths or positive opportunities and an overwhelming number of weaknesses and threats. One of the only pre-existing strengths was the school and district veteran administrators. The district superintendent had been in office for eight years, while the school principal had been in charge for the past seven years. Unfortunately, this apparent strength of leadership also highlighted some troubling weaknesses. The long-time superintendent chose to retire from the position midway through the change process due to ongoing conflicts with the school board that she described as two years of "hell." In addition to this weakness, the surrounding community and the school itself, was described by interview participants as being insular, rampant with nepotism, wary of outsiders and resistant to change. At the school level, the lack of parental and community support was exasperated by low teacher morale which was evidenced by high teacher turnover. The greatest concern to Sunshine High was the ongoing threat of state takeover if student performance on state achievement tests failed to improve.

Just as with Sunshine High, the data from the Lone Star Middle School revealed that a formal SWOT analysis was not performed there either. Had the analysis been performed the results would have indicated a healthy balance of positive and negative attributes. When the school was first opened, it was a predominantly White, middle- to upper-middle class school. Over the previous decade the school became increasingly diverse, to the point that the school had become predominantly Hispanic with large numbers of African-American and Asian students and only a few remaining White children. The diversity of the school was more than racial, as the students that attended Lone Star were from varied ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Although the presence of children from middle class households contributed to the diversity of the school, the majority of the students qualified for free or reduced-priced meals at school. Along with the school's slide down the socioeconomic scale, the reputation of Lone Star also experienced a decline. This negative reputation was bolstered by repeated poor performance on state standardized achievement tests. As is typical in many poor areas (Kerbow, 1996) there was a high level of student mobility at Lone Star. The transitory nature of the student population greatly affected the level of performance on state accountability tests. Continued low performance on these mandated tests was an area of great concern for district and school officials alike.

Fortunately, the weaknesses of low academic achievement and student mobility were tempered by high levels of teacher support and a relatively stable teaching staff. The presence of an onsite parent center and a community outreach program created positive opportunities to turn the already high percentage of parents that attended school functions into engaged stakeholders that could help turn the school around.

Capacity

Slavin's readiness scale would indicate that Sunshine High was a "sand" school. Their lack of readiness was highlighted by a high degree of complacency, as few in the school or community truly felt that the school could improve. In addition to complacency, the low morale and high staff turnover rate created a toxic combination that retarded any chance of growth instead of nourishing a capacity to change.

Despite a lack of readiness, there is evidence that school officials did try to develop their capacity to change, by increasing their knowledge of change models. The interview data indicated the leadership team at the school was charged with searching out information about various comprehensive school reform models. The team, comprised of the principal, the chairman of the school improvement committee, and a few teachers looked at several reform models. They reviewed information that noted the ATLAS model was successful in raising achievement levels and thus contacted the ATLAS design team to garner more information. Although the leadership team received a great deal of information from ATLAS, and even visited a number of ATLAS schools, the principal reported that they were not given enough information on which to make an informed decision. This sentiment is echoed by a number of teachers interviewed whose lack of understanding was exposed by their inability to articulate what it was that made Sunshine High an ATLAS school.

Lone Star could be considered a "seed" school as the staff were cohesive, excited about teaching, and were led by a principal that was willing to involve the entire staff in the decision-making process. A district curriculum director described the staff at Lone Star as being "sponges that are willing to try new things." This willingness to try new things highlights the school's capacity to change. With a common understanding that the school needed to change, a committee was created that invited all interested teachers to research the available reform models. The teachers noted that during their search they repeatedly found references of the positive impact of the Coalition of Essential School on school reform, leading them to request more information about the model. After contacting the CES creators, and beginning a dialogue with them, the CES design team came to the school and held a one-day retreat with the staff to explain the model in greater detail. While the interview data indicated the staff at Lone Star were actively engaged in the change process, many teachers still found it difficult to accurately recite the key CES principles that drove the change process.

Commitment

The work of Berman and McLaughlin (1976) highlighted the importance of stakeholder commitment towards the change process. A greater level of commitment is achieved when the decision to engage in change grows out of a desire to solve local problems, rather than opportunism. It was evident that the change process at Sunshine began out of opportunism. It was the opportunity to receive federal funding that moved district officials, not the school staff, to being the change process in the school. Numerous sources at Sunshine High revealed it was the district's Title I coordinator that first initiated the change process when she became aware of the available federal funds. Without the "carrot" of federal funding, it is unlikely that Sunshine High would have contemplated attempting any significant changes.

The lack of commitment to the change process at Sunshine High was further exaggerated by a lack of choice in the matter. The principal claimed the school was not given the opportunity to decide if they wanted to initiate a change process, rather district officials mandated the school undergo reform. A large number of the staff interviewed was not clear as to how or why the ATLAS reform was adopted, although they acknowledged that they signed an agreement to adopt the reform. Although the ATLAS design team required the majority of the school staff vote in support of change, there is little sense that teachers at Sunshine High were ever committed to the change process. Numerous teachers commented that they had received little or no training related to the change process and that they knew very little about the ATLAS model. Interestingly, none of these teachers indicated that they had any desire to learn more about the reform model that was guiding the change process at their school.

In contrast to the initiation process at Sunshine High, a number of Lone Star teachers indicated the change process at their school grew out of a problem-solving framework. The Lone Star principal at the time stated that prior to initiating the change process, the school experienced large turnovers of staff each

year due to the negative reputation of the school and the challenging nature of the students. The principal felt the only way to "change that turnover was to change the nature of the school, change the reputation of the school, and change the mindset of the community." This sentiment was echoed by a veteran teacher that stated, "we knew we needed to change as teachers to meet the needs of our students." The interview data did not indicate the staff at Lone Star formally voted on the decision to join the Coalition of Essential Schools, but despite the lack of formal consensus, several teachers commented that the reform initiation process was teacher-led rather than mandated by the administration.

CONCLUSION

There was little evidence to suggest that following four years of implementation, the ATLAS model had any impact on the school. A statement made by a teacher at the school substantiates this claim.

After three years of ATLAS, this is the third year working on it, you would think we would see something and say, 'Oh this has happened because of ATLAS.' No. There's nothing. I mean there's been no improvement because of ATLAS. None. In fact, there's been more negative than positive.

When asked if the students knew what ATLAS is, another teacher replied, "No. ATLAS is doing nothing for the students. ATLAS for the school is just trying to get us to work together but every time they do it they come up with a different plan." The only facet of the ATLAS program that was evident at the school was the study groups. Unfortunately, these study groups never operated as prescribed by the design team. Several teachers described the study group meetings as "gripe sessions," with little being accomplished at the end of the meetings. It should now be apparent that the change process at Sunshine High was not successful, as no positive changes took place and the ATLAS reform model was not institutionalized.

In contrast to Sunshine High, Lone Star Middle School successfully completed the change process. There was enough evidence to suggest that the necessary changes in practice and policy occurred to support the institutionalization of the CES reform model. More important than the successful implementation of the model are the numerous improvements that have taken place at the school. One teacher stated that, "ever since we started our reform, I haven't seen anything but improvement in our school." There was also evidence of increased cooperation and cohesiveness among the staff in addition to a greater sense of professionalism and teacher empowerment. These improvements were noted by the former principal, who commented that Lone Star had become a school where "people understand their clientele, people are willing to reach out to the community, and people are interested in improving, continually improving the academics here in the school." These changes in staff attitudes and actions had significant impact on student attitudes. One teacher noted "you see a lot more of the respect shown to the students, and therefore the students show it to the adults." The end result of these changes has been an increase in student achievement. After four years of implementing the CES model, Lone Star middle school was named a Texas Monthly Five Star School. The Five Star rating is based on the schools' performance on state accountability tests in relation to the demographics of the school. A five star ranking is given to schools that rank in the top 20% of their respective demographic grouping.

It is now evident that the initial planning activities or lack thereof had a significant impact on the implementation of change at these two schools. If district officials and school administrators at Sunshine High had reviewed the strategic planning literature they would have surmised that Sunshine High was not the least bit ready to engage in a change process. Participation in a few of the recommended initiation activities would have quickly revealed that the context in which Sunshine High operated was not conducive to change, the school did not possess the capacity to change, and there was a lack of commitment towards the change process. A significant amount of time, money, and energy would have been saved if district and school officials had used planning theory to determine that Sunshine High was not ready to engage in change.

Despite not participating in a formal planning process, the success of the change process at Lone Star Middle School highlight the benefits of using strategic planning theory to guide the change process. Initiating activities would have noted that the environmental context at Lone Star was one that had enough positive attributes to limit the impact of negative factors. In addition to a supportive context, the staff at Lone Star possessed a great capacity to change and was fully committed to the change

process. Consequently, a SWOT analysis would have foreshadowed a successful change process.

Regardless of the context, organization change is always an arduous task. The finding of this study suggests that the use of strategic planning models that emphasize initial planning activities can provide the necessary assistance to make the change process less challenging. In our perpetually changing world, educational organizations will continue to be bombarded with pressure to change. For these changes to take place smoothly, educators need to develop a greater understanding of the change process and strategic planning. They must embrace the adage that "those that plan to learn, must learn to plan." To support change, district officials must play a greater role in the change process, by providing schools with the necessary resources to support the change process. This includes moral was well as financial support. School district officials should acknowledge that they cannot mandate real change, but they can create an environment that will foster change. To ensure that all schools have the capacity to change, district administrators must be cognizant of the context in which their schools operate and closely monitor the balance between strengths and weaknesses. While reform designers can do little to influence the context of change, they need to be more particular in deciding which schools will implement their design. Greater attention to an assessment of school readiness and stakeholder commitment may reduce the number of schools engaging in comprehensive reform, but it should also increase the likelihood of success.

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SCHOOL BOARD DECISION MAKING IN THE ERA OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

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ABSTRACT

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) has been described by some as "the most sweeping intrusions into state and local control of education in the history of the United States" (Cook, 2004, p. 8) and the most significant change in the federal regulation of public schools in 30 years (Hardy, 2002). School boards are responsible for enacting policies that adhere to the spirit and letter of federal, state, and local laws and codes to help the school system ensure students are being provided an education that meets the needs of all students being served. This study explored how a school board functions in the Commonwealth of Virginia within the parameters set by contemporary reform efforts as well as the board's decision making processes compared with another board within the state. The findings revealed that the board does not initially recognize the majority of policymaking decisions on its own, relying rather on school district staff. Additionally the findings indicate that many of the policy decisions are most likely made outside the formal board venue. This reinforces the importance of staff members working with the board outside the arena of formal meetings while developing and revising school district policies. The chi-square analysis also revealed significant differences between decision-making processes between the two boards. These results are highly significant because, while it may seem intuitive that boards operate in different manners because of the unique make-up and background of each board and each board member, studies verifying this are lacking. A perennial and ever increasing argument revolving around the nature of schools is the lack of an empirical research base. This study provides a solid foundation to further explore the unique characteristics and decision-making patterns of boards in order to better inform educational planners and change agents as they work with the boards to meet varying student needs.

INTRODUCTION

The current manifestation of attempts to reform public schools in the United States was signed into law on January 8, 2002 by President George W. Bush. Commonly referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has been described by some as "the most sweeping intrusions into state and local control of education in the history of the United States" (Cook, 2004, p. 8) and the most significant change in the federal regulation of public schools in 30 years (Hardy, 2002). While the basic concepts of the legislation have garnered wide support - as few can debate the merits of accountability, research-based education programs, increased parental opportunities, and expanded local control and flexibility (McColl, 2005) - school officials across the nation say they are frustrated and perplexed by the mandates of NCLB (Hardy, 2002). Many educators have asserted federal legislators were quick to demand reform and changes, yet funds for the mandates are not being provided (Mathis, 2003; Sanders, 2003).

Public education has often been described as being a national interest, a state responsibility, and a local operation. While wide-spread attention has been proffered to schools and school districts due to heightened accountability efforts, undoubtedly, the weight of accountability also falls heavily, too, on the shoulders of the local school boards. School boards are designed to act as the policy making body for the districts they serve (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006). They are responsible for enacting policies that adhere to the spirit and letter of federal, state, and local laws and codes to help school systems ensure students are being provided an education that meets their needs.

It is imperative to study school boards and identify how they function within the parameters set by contemporary reform efforts. Educational leaders who are planning a change effort within a school and/or school system must be keenly aware of how boards operate and whether there is a discernable pattern to their actions. In this manuscript we present an overview of a study conducted on one school board located in the Commonwealth of Virginia (Hellman, 2008). We begin with a review of pertinent literature that grounds the study and provides the methodological framework. We then present salient findings of the study and discuss the implications of these findings.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AND THE CONTEXT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

While the generalities of NCLB are familiar within the educational community, it is prudent to review certain conditions of the law to frame the study. Additionally, this information will be presented within the context of the Commonwealth of Virginia, which was the setting for the research.The role of the federal government in public education has been hotly debated and the guidelines implemented under the act "amount to a sweeping effort by the federal government to change what Americans mean when they think of education" (Wermers, 2002, p. A1). Four areas identified within NCLB as cornerstones to education reform are (a) increasing accountability for student performance, (b) focusing on what works, (c) reducing bureaucracy and increasing flexibility, and (d) empowering parents (NCLB, 2002). Specific strategies contained within the act are designed to ensure that each of these four areas is addressed.

Rewarding divisions and states that improve performance represents a strategy to increase accountability. States that fail to meet adequate yearly progress goals either face sanctions or are allowed opportunities for improvement. Schools and divisions are also accountable to the public for their test results. Assessment is mandatory for reading and math in Grades 3-8. With the goal of focusing on what works, NCLB places emphasis on research-based programs and specifically targets funds to assist in school improvement and enhance teacher quality. Combining similar federal programs reduces bureaucracy, and allowing funds to be spent within broader categories increases flexibility. Parents are empowered with more knowledge about their schools, and school choice is allowed for parents whose children are in consistently low-performing schools (NCLB, 2002.). One means of empowering parents with knowledge is to increase communication between the school and parents. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, all division superintendents are reminded annually of the parental notification requirements required under NCLB (Wright, 2006).

In 2002, Susan Noble, Virginia Board of Education member, believed that Virginia was ahead of most other states regarding the implementation of the new law. In an editorial published in *The Richmond Times Dispatch* she stated, "Fortunately, Virginia, because of the strong foundation put in place by the SOL program is in a far better position than almost all other states to implement the law" (Noble, 2002). In fact, at the start of the NCLB act, Virginia had been considered to be at "the forefront of the accountability movement" (Duke, Grogan, Tucker, and Heinecke, 2003, p. 8). The Standards of Learning (SOL) are the achievement assessments used to measure student progress and these assessments had already been developed during the 1990s as a response to a lengthy reform process in Virginia aimed at improving student achievement and adding more rigor and consistency to instruction (Duke at al.).

High-stakes testing may have been in place for nearly a decade in the Commonwealth of Virginia, but sadly, many schools and divisions were not meeting federal Adequate Yearly Progress. In fact, during the 2007-2008 school year 26% of all schools did not meet AYP (Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). "Interestingly enough, while Virginia was miles ahead of many other states in terms of educational accountability prior to NCLB, no policy measures had previously been in place requiring attention to achievement gaps between groups of students . . . which may have acted as one factor contributing to such a large number of schools failing to meet AYP" (Crum & Sherman, 2008). At the division level, over half (59%) of the school divisions did not meet AYP in 2007-2008 (Virginia Department of Education). The American educational system at large has been highly criticized for large gaps between student groups and the alarmingly high number of divisions failing to meet AYP is indicative of this criticism (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Easley, 2005; Fusarelli, 2004; Gatto, 1991; Kozol, 2005; Sizer, 2004; Wood, 2004).

The implications for school boards are overwhelming. It is imperative that actions be taken by the boards that set clear policy to enable divisions to meet the diverse needs of their students. While it is easy to make sweeping statements that decry the need for change, no change should be enacted without adequately planning. And planning requires a study into the various components of the system. We therefore further examine the role of boards and their decision making processes in light of the need to make changes based upon the evolving complexities of NCLB.

Decision Making

Public administrative decisions have three unique qualities: They affect people's lives, are made in the name of the public, and use public resources (Harmon & Mayer, 1986). In order to effectively serve as good stewards of the community, school boards must make sound administrative decisions. We are not presenting this statement as fodder for a debate on the effectiveness of public boards. Rather, it serves as a springboard to address the question of what is decision making.

At its root, decision making means making choices (Harmon & Mayer, 1986). It involves choosing one alternative over another; in a general context, decision making implies action (Griffiths, 1959). Griffiths referred to decision making as "essentially a judicial proceeding" (p. 75), a judgment that will ultimately influence some course of action. He believed all judgments that affect actions are ultimately decisions; the researcher also considered decision making to be a process, a process composed of not only the decision itself but also the acts necessary to put the decision into operation (Griffiths). It is clear that decision making is not a single action performed in isolation; to the contrary, decision making is a process that is influenced by many factors.

Decision making can be viewed as an incremental process when all the factors that enter into the process are considered. Decision making involves the choice to execute, or not to execute, a particular action. One can assume that decisions are made in the best interest of the individual or organization making the decision; however, it is not difficult to imagine tensions within the process when the desires of the individual conflict with the values of the organization. Observations of this process can be of great value to researchers. Studying the decision-making process reveals much about the organization making the decision and allows those in an organization to plan in a sound and rational manner.

According to Griffiths (1959), "An understanding of the decision-making process in a particular enterprise is the key to its organizational structure" (p. 80). Griffiths purported that a flat, decentralized organizational structure is best if an organization desires the decision-making process to be carried out by those close to the problem. Conversely, a tall, hierarchical structure is desired if the goal of the organization is to have centralized decision making. The structure of the organization has an impact on where the decision-making process occurs; likewise, where the decision-making process occurs has an impact on the structure of the organization.

Griffith's (1959) administrative decision making model provides the framework for our decision making analysis. "Because of his belief that the decision-making process is an integral part of administration, Griffiths (1959) specifically studied educational administration and the decision-making process of administrators" (Crum, 2006, p. 39). According to Griffiths, "The administrative decisions are those which establish criteria by which others in the organization make their decisions" (p. 93). Griffiths' decision-making process consisted of six steps:

1. Recognize, define, and limit the problem.
2. Analyze and evaluate the problem.
3. Establish criteria and standards by which the solution will be evaluated or judged as acceptable and adequate to the need.
4. Collect data.
5. Formulate and select the preferred solution or solutions. Test them in advance.
6. Put into effect the preferred solution.
    a. Program the solution.
    b. Control the activities in the program.
    c. Evaluate the results and the process.

Role of the School Board and Decision Making

School boards are the policy making body for the division they serve. Their role, essentially, is to effectively govern the education of the community (Gemberling, Smith, & Villani, 2000; Hess, 2002; The Twentieth Century Fund, 1992). School boards have historically "perceived their role to be supportive in nature, approving the budget and legal documents, dealing with constituents, receiving reports, campaigning for bond issues and providing 'cover' on politically sensitive issue" (Resnick,

1999, p. 7). Yet, boards have been called upon to take on greater leadership roles within the divisions because of the heightened calls for accountability and high student achievement (Resnick).

Within the context of NCLB, school boards are "responsible for (a) ensuring that all schools within the division meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) related to NCLB and (b) putting plans in place to assist schools that have not yet reached AYP" (Crum, 2007). While bound by state law, school board members "have enormous discretion as to how active its members wish to be on which issues . . . the board also has the formal authority to bring about changes in division policy in virtually any area of the educational program" (Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs, & Thurston, 1999, p. 253) and their roles are extensive, combining "the legislative, executive, and judicial functions of government" (Kirst, 1994, ¶ 6). Board members are considered public school "trustees" (Rosenberer, 1997) and are responsible for meeting the needs of the community, as well as implementing the policies of the system (Crum).

The root of success for school boards lies in effective decision making (Smoley, 1999). And the authority of the local school board for its decision making power is derived from state legislatures and state constitutions (Reeves, 1954). In 1964 Goldhammer identified five sources of authority for local school boards, which are still applicable today: (a) the state constitution, (b) legislative enactments (statutory law), (c) rules and regulations of the state board of education, (d) decisions of the courts, and (e) societal demands. Goldhammer listed the board's responsibilities as "the making of decisions, the formulation of policies, the development of programs, the employment of personnel, the levying of taxes, the provision of educationally related service, and the management of the use of the physical facilities of the school division" (p. 4).

Legislation by the federal government is cited as having a profound effect on the source of authority of local boards. As asserted earlier, it is imperative to study the decision making process of the school board, as it is still generally described as being the entity that converts federal and state legislation into local action (McAdams, 2002). The thoughts of Etzioni (1964) regarding school boards are as relevant today as they were 40 years ago when he suggested that a better understanding of the decision-making process and how it impacts organizations was needed. But, the political landscape is much different for school boards today compared to school boards 40 years ago as local school boards are facing increasing demands for accountability resulting from both state and federal legislation. It is critical to add to the body of research on school boards and explore the impact of the NCLB legislation on the decision-making process of school boards is not found in the literature.

METHODOLOGY

The selected school board was located in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The school board consisted of seven members, elected by the residents of the jurisdiction; all seven members of the school board were included in this study. Regular school board meetings were held once a month, in the evening, and were broadcast live and recorded by the local cable company. Approximately 36,000 residents lived in the jurisdiction served by the school board being examined. There were nine schools within the division. The division enrollment as of December 2005 was approximately 6,040 students in grades kindergarten through twelve. Demographics for the student population revealed that approximately 85.5% of the students were Caucasian, 10.7% African American, 1.8% Hispanic, and 2.0% other.

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach to answer the research questions. Although the study employed the case-study approach of qualitative research, chi-square testing, as used in quantitative studies, was also used to test for significance. The data for review consisted of recorded video tapes, as well as recorded minutes, of the meetings. Only regular meetings for the period of January 2005 through December 2005 were examined. There were no video records of special meetings or closed (executive) sessions (Hellman, 2008).

DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

The decision-making framework utilized for this study was developed by Griffiths (1959), further refined by Howerton (1971), and also used in Crum's (2006) study. Howerton's expanded framework included operational criteria for classifying specific comments or actions within the working definitions.

1. Recognize and define the problem.

a. Problem was recognized, defined, or limited.
b. Problem was redefined.

2. Analyze and evaluate the problem.
    a. Problem was linked with the organization.
    b. Problem was clarified.
    c. Data previously presented were clarified.
    d. Specific elements of the problem were identified.
    e. Direction was given to the problem.
    f. The question of when to decide was considered.
    g. The question of whether or not a decision should be made was considered.
    h. The question of who was best qualified to decide was considered.
3. Establish criteria for evaluating solutions.
    a. The conditions of a satisfactory solution were considered.
    b. Objectives which the solution should meet were established.
    c. Specific requirements or needs were considered.
    d. Existing policies, standards, goals, or governmental provisions were considered.
4. Collect data relevant to the problem.
    a. Data were requested.
    b. Data were offered.
    c. A procedure for collecting data was recommended.
    d. Opinion or advice in data form was offered.
5. Select alternatives and weigh consequences.
    a. The use of previously formulated solution to a similar problem was suggested.
    b. Ways of combining elements of data into a solution were suggested.
    c. Additional alternatives were requested.
    d. The outcome of an alternative solution was considered.

Research Questions

This study was designed to ascertain whether or not the characteristics surrounding school board decision making today were influenced by NCLB and whether or not they were similar to those characteristics found in previous research. The study conducted by Crum (2006) was used as a model for analysis. This study sought to answer seven research questions:

1. What are the characteristics surrounding the initial awareness by a school board of a need to make a decision?
2. What characteristics of decision making can be identified from an analysis of the actions that occur in public school board meetings?
3. What are the characteristics surrounding the termination of action by a school board on a decision-needing situation?
4. What influence, if any, has the NCLB legislation had on the decision-making process of the school board being studied?
5. Are the current characteristics surrounding the initial awareness by a school board of a need to make a decision similar to the characteristics found in past studies?
6. Are the current characteristics of decision making identified through an analysis of the actions that occur in public school board meeting similar to the characteristics found in past studies?
7. Are the current characteristics surrounding the termination of action by a school board on a decision-needing situation similar to the characteristics found in past studies?

Research Question 1

The first research question required determination of the characteristics surrounding the initial awareness by a school board of a need to make a decision. To answer this question, the study used the same procedure that was followed by Howerton (1971) and Crum (2006).

Step 1. Through a content analysis of recorded video tapes and minutes of meetings, data were

collected to determine who first identified the decision-needing situation, when and how it was identified, and what problem area was involved. The protocol instrument is shown in Table 1. This instrument, developed by Crum (2006), was adapted for this study. Crum expanded upon Howerton's (1971) three classifications, using four classifications, with the addition of the category of superintendent. The four classifications for this study were as follows: (a) board member, an individual serving in the capacity of school board member for the locality being investigated; (b) superintendent, a person serving in the capacity of superintendent of schools for the locality being investigated; (c) staff member, any salaried, full-time employee of the school system being investigated; or (d) other, any individual addressing the school board who does not fit into one of the other three categories.

Step 2. Three classifications were utilized to record when the decision-making situation was identified: during the meeting, in the agenda letter, or prior to the agenda letter.

Step 3. The means for communicating the initial awareness of the decision-making situation was recorded into one of two categories: written or spoken.

Step 4. Problem areas were identified through a content analysis of the recorded video tapes and minutes. Problem areas were the same as those used by Howerton (1971) and Crum (2006). The additional area of Policy was added to help further clarify the actions taken by the board in this study. The problem identified for the study were: (1) *Curriculum; (2) Facility;* (3) *Finance; (4)Miscellaneous; (5) Personnel*; (6) *Student Concerns*; and (7) *Policy.*

Research Question 2

The second research question asked what characteristics of decision making could be identified from an analysis of the actions that occurred in public school board meetings. To answer this question, the following steps were taken:

Step 1. Utilizing Table 1 as a protocol for recording data, a content analysis was conducted of the verbatim recording of each meeting. Review of written minutes was used as a cross reference to ensure recording accuracy. Utilizing the framework for analysis developed by Howerton (1971), the researcher categorized statements into one of the following decision-making process steps: (a) recognize and define problem, (b) analyze and evaluate problem, (c) establish criteria for evaluating solutions, (d) collect data relevant to problem, or (e) select alternatives and weigh consequences.

Step 2. The researcher recorded each statement onto the protocol in the appropriate category and recorded who made the statement. In recording each verbal utterance, the researcher categorized it as either a statement or a question.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 examined the characteristics surrounding the termination of each decision-making situation. The following procedure was utilized to answer this question:

Step 1. Utilizing the protocol found in Table 1, the researcher recorded data to identify how the decision-making situation was terminated. Situations were terminated in one of three ways: (a) formal procedure, that is, motion and vote; (b) informal procedure, that is, reaching consensus; or (c) no action, that is, no board action required.

Step 2. The information was sorted and categorized by problem area and source of identification. Data were then cross checked with recorded minutes.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question investigated the effect, if any, of NCLB legislation on the decision-making process of school boards. To answer this question, the recorded video tapes were scrutinized for direct or indirect references to NCLB. Meeting minutes were also reviewed. Any reference to NCLB was recorded on the Decision-Making Process Step Protocol Instrument in the designated location. In addition, the researcher reviewed each decision-needing situation and determined if there was any relationship to NCLB. These results were recorded on the Researcher-Identified Problem Area - NCLB Identification Protocol Instrument shown in Appendix 1. The table in Appendix 2 depicts the protocol form that was used for recording data; it is similar to the table used by Howerton (1971) and modified for

use by Crum (2006). Appendix 1 depicts the protocol form that was used by the researcher to determine whether or not there was any connection between the decision and NCLB.

Research Questions 5, 6, and 7

The fifth, sixth, and seventh questions were addressed through the utilization of chi-square testing. Chi-square testing was the appropriate measure for comparing observed frequencies of occurrence with expected frequencies (Hinkle, Wiersna, & Jurs, 1998). Hinkle et al. explained, "Observed frequencies are those that the researcher obtains empirically through direct observation; theoretical or expected frequencies are developed on the basis of some hypothesis" (p. 575).

Question 5 was addressed using the observed data collected for Question 1; Question 6 was addressed using the observed data collected for Question 2; and Question 7 was addressed using the observed data collected for Question 3. To answer Questions 5, 6, and 7 the following steps were followed:

Step 1. Observed frequencies used to answer Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 were recorded in total and by problem area.

Step 2. Total frequencies reported by Crum (2006) to answer Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 of her study were reviewed and used as the basis for expected frequencies.

Step 3. Chi-square testing was utilized to determine if the observed frequencies were significantly different ($p < .05$) from the expected frequencies found in Crum's study.

DATA ANALYSIS

The method of data analysis for this study was a content analysis of verbatim recordings of actions by the various participants during monthly school board meetings. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2005), content analysis is a reliable method of analysis provided the categories are clearly defined and worthwhile, the procedure for sampling is sound, and the categories can be utilized reliably by observers. Based upon the content analysis, descriptive statistics were generated. Hinkle et al. (1998) wrote, "Descriptive statistics are used to classify and summarize numerical data; i.e., to describe data" (p. 17). Data were presented in both tables and charts for each of the first three research questions (Hellman, 2008).

Chi-square analysis was also utilized in this study. Because it is appropriate when comparing observed data to expected data (Hinkle et al., 1998), chi-square is a popular nonparametric test requiring few assumptions, which are easily met (Abrami, Cholmsky, & Gordon, 2001). Abrami et al. listed the three assumptions for use of the chi-square statistic:

1. The samples have been randomly selected.
2. The observations are independent.
3. Group sample sizes are sufficiently large.

Reliability and Validity

The techniques utilized in this study have been proven to be reliable and valid based upon the results of previous studies. Howerton (1971), Rock (1981), and Crum (2006) all employed techniques similar to those used in this study. Crum stated, "As previous studies have shown, the use of a steady school board, one whose composition does not change within the study cycle, as well as one whose categories are similar throughout meetings, is a dependable source to study" (p. 68). Howerton stated, "Reliable information can be gained so long as relatively stable attributes are described in the means of the investigation" (p. 66).

Reliability and validity were also enhanced for this case study through the use of both recorded video data and typed minutes. Using more than one source of information for data is referred to as triangulation of information (Creswell, 1998).

All data were collected via two protocol instruments. Creswell (1998) defined a protocol as "a predetermined sheet on which one logs information learned during the observation or interview" (p. 126). Creswell contended that protocols enable a researcher to organize thoughts regarding the development of items such as headings and categories. The protocol instrument utilized for Research Questions 1 – 3 of this study was similar to the protocol used by Crum (2006). In her study, Crum established an interrater reliability coefficient of .875 for the Decision-Making Process Step protocol instrument.

The second protocol instrument was used to answer Question 4 of this study. An interrater reliability coefficient of .927 was established by the researcher for the Researcher-Identified Problem Area - NCLB Identification Protocol Instrument. To establish the interrater reliability, the researcher, along with another doctoral student, reviewed excerpts from video tapes and recorded the data on the protocol instrument. The coefficient was established by dividing the number of agreements by the number of opportunities for agreement.

FINDINGS

Question 1

School board members, the superintendent, staff members, and others identified the problems for the decision-making situations. The number and percentage of problems by source of origin are shown in Table 1. As indicated in Table 1, for the 164 decision-making situations that were observed in this study, 99 or well over half (60.4%) of the problems were identified by staff. The board identified close to one fourth (23.2%) of the problems. The superintendent and others identified fewer problems--9.7 % and 6.7% respectively--than did the board. In fact, those two groups collectively identified fewer problems than did the board. Furthermore, the board, the superintendent, and others combined identified fewer problems than did the staff alone. This pattern is similar to the pattern found by Crum (2006).

Table 1:

Source of Problem Identification

Source	Number	Percent
Board	38	23.2
Superintendent	16	9.7
Staff	99	60.4
Other	11	6.7
Total	164	100.0

Question 2

Review of the data indicated that 3,692 actions were recorded as the board acted on the 164 decision-needing situations. More than one third (35.8%) of the actions occurred in the data collection category. The next highest frequency of actions was noted in the analysis and evaluation category; that category contained over one fourth (27.0%) of all actions taken by the subject board. The two categories combined accounted for almost two thirds (62.8%) of all actions observed during the study. This fact suggests that data made up an integral component of the decision-making process. Conversely, the problem recognition area contained only 373 actions (10.1%). The areas involving the selection of alternatives and weighing of consequences and the establishment of criteria generated 478 (12.9%) and 522 (14.2%) actions, respectively. Each of these three categories involved less than 15% of the total actions; combined, they generated slightly over one third (37.2%) of the actions (Hellman, 2008). These data are delineated for the reader in Table 2.

Table 2:

Distributions of Actions by Categories

	Recognize Problem	Analyze & Evaluate	Establish Criteria	Collect Data	Select Alternatives & Weigh Consequences	Total
Number	373	998	522	1,321	478	3,692
Percent	10.1	27.0	14.2	35.8	12.9	100.0

Question 3

Table 3 depicts the distribution of problems by method of termination and source of problem identification. Slightly less than three fourths (73.2%) of all problems were terminated formally. The data also indicated that almost one fourth (24.4%) of all problems were terminated with no action taken by the school board to resolve them. A very small percentage (2.4%) of the problems were terminated by informal methods. This finding suggests that for those problems requiring resolution, the school board tended to terminate them in a formal manner. The problems that did not require action were often informational items brought to the attention of the board. It is significant to note that all but two (94.8%) of the problems identified by the board were terminated formally. A lower percentage (81.3%) of the problems identified by the superintendent were terminated formally, and even fewer (67.7%) of the problems identified by staff were terminated in a formal manner. Problems identified by others generated the lowest percentage (36.4%) of formal termination procedures.

Table 3:

Distribution of Problems by Method of Termination and Source of Identification

Termination Method	Source									
	Board		Superintendent		Staff		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Formal	36	94.8	13	81.3	67	67.7	4	36.4	120	73.2
Informal	1	2.6	0	0.0	3	3.0	0	0.0	4	2.4
No Action	1	2.6	3	18.7	29	29.3	7	63.6	40	24.4
Total	38	100.0	16	100.0	99	100.0	11	100.0	164	100.0

Question 4

Question 4 addressed how NCLB was identified both by method and by area (researcher identified, through discussion, through minutes or agenda, or through both discussion and minutes or agenda). The data indicated that the researcher identified the relevance of NCLB in 62 (37.8%) of the 164 decision-needing problems. The data further reveal that there were only three (1.8%) incidents of NCLB's being mentioned in discussion, minutes or agenda, or both. This is a significant finding in that it suggests that although NCLB played a major role in the decision-making process of the subject school board, the board proceeded with the decision-making process with little or no mention of NCLB. One plausible explanation for this phenomenon suggests that the legal framework had been previously assimilated into the decision-making process of the subject board (Hellman, 2008). In fact, almost three fourths (72.7%) of all problems within the curriculum area were identified by the researcher as being impacted by NCLB. Conversely, none of the problems in the facilities area were identified as being impacted by NCLB.

Questions 5, 6, & 7

Data presented in this section detail the chi-square analysis of characteristics associated with problem identification, analysis, and termination by the subject school board for this study as well as the school board studied by Crum (2006). To determine if the characteristics surrounding problem identification were similar, a chi-square analysis was performed on the data found in Table 1 of this study as well as similar data from Crum's study. To determine if the characteristics associated with the actual decision making were similar between the two boards, a chi-square analysis was performed on the data found in Table 2 of this study and similar data from Crum's study. The final chi-square analysis was performed on data found in Table 3 of this study and similar data from Crum's study. The purpose of this analysis was to determine if there were any similarities between the findings of this study and Crum's study regarding problem termination.

With regard to similarities related to problem identification, the results shown in Table 1 were compared to the results found in Crum's (2006) study. H_0 for this analysis was stated as follows: There is no difference in the parties responsible for problem identification between the two studies. The resulting $\chi^2 = 431.9$, with 3 degrees of freedom and a confidence level of $p < .05$, caused H_0 to be rejected. In rejecting the null hypothesis, it was concluded that the differences between the two studies regarding problem identification were not due to chance; there was a statistically significant difference between the two boards regarding problem identification.

Chi-square testing was performed on the data found in Table 2 of this study and similar data found in Crum's (2006) study. H_0 for this analysis was stated as follows: There is no difference in the activities within the action categories between the two studies. The resulting $\chi^2 = 2{,}100.8$, with 4 degrees of freedom and a confidence level of $p < .05$, caused H_0 to be rejected. In rejecting the null hypothesis, it was concluded that the differences between the findings of the two studies regarding characteristics of problem analysis were not due to chance; there was a statistically significant difference in how the problems were recognized, analyzed, evaluated, and solved by the two boards.

The final chi-square testing was performed on the data found in Table 4 of this study and similar data found in Crum's (2006) study. H_0 for this analysis was stated as follows: There is no difference in the methods of problem termination between the two studies. The resulting $\chi^2 = 166.4$, with 2 degrees of freedom and a confidence level of $p < .05$, caused H_0 to be rejected. In rejecting the null hypothesis, it was concluded that the differences between the two studies regarding method of problem termination were not due to chance; there was a statistically significant difference in how the problems were terminated by the two boards (Hellman, 2008).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Undoubtedly, educational planners and change agents must understand how school boards make decisions in order to effectively enact policy changes within school systems. With the overwhelming number of demands placed upon educational agencies by NCLB, it is further vital to determine if the

policies boards are acting upon are related to the mandates set forth by the federal legislation. While some of the findings in this study may at first appear to be intuitive, it is important to note that the literature has not revealed any tangible studies that have explored contemporary boards and compared their decision making patterns, as well as exploring the NCLB actions of boards.

Results from this study demonstrated that the majority of the problems (decision-needing situations) were presented to the school board by staff and the highest percentages of problems occurred in the area of finance. Results also indicate that all groups were responsible for introducing problems. Data were conclusive in indicating that the staff presented the majority of the problems in the areas of finance, facility, curriculum, miscellaneous, and policy, whereas the board presented the majority of the problems in the personnel and student concerns areas. The overwhelming majority of the problems were introduced to the board in writing, thereby indicating the board was aware of most of the decision-needing situations prior to the meetings. This conclusion supports the findings from Crum's (2006) study. It appears, therefore, that boards rely heavily on their designated staff within the school system to identify action needing situations, rather than seeking out issues on their own. It is incumbent upon the division staff to identify the salient issues that are germane to the needs of the school system and present them in an effective manner to the board in order to help enact and promote positive change.

Supporting our assertion that board members are aware of issues prior to the start of the board meeting, and taking this theory one step further, are the findings revolving around the actual statements and questions made throughout the course of the board meetings. More than three-fourths of all the verbal statements were made by a combination of staff and school board members. NOTE: This sentence does not tell us who made the statements, board or staff, yet the following sentences focus on board statements, please clarify. Further, a high percentage of the actions were in the form of declarative statements compared to a relatively small percentage of questions. This finding may be surprising to some, but may also reaffirm the beliefs of others. While boards may appear to be in the process of deliberating issues within the context of the actual board meetings, these findings reveal, due to the lack of probing questions and more declarative statements (which at time proved to be verbose and lengthy!), that many of the decisions are most likely made outside the formal board venue. This reinforces the importance of staff members working with the board outside the arena of formal meetings while developing and revising division policies.

Interestingly, while data revealed that actions were distributed across all five categories of the decision-making framework, two categories—analysis and evaluation, and data collection—accounted for over half of all the actions. Over one-third of the problems examined in this study generated actions involving all five categories of the framework and over half involved actions in at least four of the categories. This finding supports the conclusion that this board took a very pragmatic, methodical approach to decision making. Data revealed that the researcher identified 62 of the 164 decision-needing situations as being related to NCLB. Examination of the minutes, agendas, and tapes, however, indicated that NCLB was mentioned during only three of the decision-needing situations. From a phenomenological perspective, this represents a significant finding. During a period when accountability and mandates were paramount in education, the board under study proceeded to make decisions that were influenced by NCLB, with little or no mention of the law. Again, this finding supports the conclusion that although faced with numerous constraints and mandates, the board completed its tasks with little mention for the legal framework for its decisions. One plausible explanation for this phenomenon suggests that the legal framework had been previously assimilated into the decision-making process of the subject board (Hellman, 2008). This again supports the need for division staff to diligently identify the integral components related to the NCLB legislation to bring them to the awareness of the board.

Finally, the statistical analysis between the current study conducted by Hellman (2008) and the previous study by Crum (2006) provide an important and necessary look into the overall workings of boards. A chi-square analysis was performed on selected data, utilizing the findings of Crum's study for the expected outcomes. Problem identification, characteristics of analysis, and problem termination were all analyzed. Statistical analysis revealed a significant difference between the two boards in each of the three areas. These results are highly significant because, while it may seem intuitive that boards operate in different manners because of the unique make-up and background of each board and each board

member, studies verifying this are lacking.

A perennial and ever increasing argument revolving around the nature of schools is the lack of an empirical research base. This study provides a solid foundation to further explore the unique characteristics and decision-making patterns of boards in order to better inform educational planners and change agents as they work with the boards to meet the varying needs of students.

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Researcher-Identified Problem Area - NCLB Identification Protocol Instrument

Problem # _____ Date Originated _____

Problem Area: Curriculum_____ Facility _____ Finance _____ Personnel _____

Policy _____ Miscellaneous _____ Student Concerns _____

Researcher-Identified Problem Related to NCLB:

- ☐ Title I - Improving The Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged
  - o Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs
  - o Reading First
- ☐ Title II - Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals
  - o Teacher and Principal Training And Recruiting
  - o Enhancing Education Through Technology
- ☐ Title III - Language Instruction for LEP and Immigrant Students
- ☐ Title IV – 21st Century Schools
  - o Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities
  - o 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- ☐ Title V - Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs
  - o Innovative Programs
- ☐ Title VI – Flexibility and Accountability
- ☐ Title VII – Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education
- ☐ Title VIII – Impact Aid Program
- ☐ Title IX – Unsafe School Choice
- ☐ Title X – Repeals, Redesignations, and Amendments to Other Statutes
  - o McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements

APPENDIX 2

Decision-Making Process Step Protocol Instrument

Problem # _____ Date Originated _____

Problem Area: Curriculum_____ Facility _____ Finance _____ Personnel _____

Policy _____ Miscellaneous _____ Student Concerns _____

Problem Outcome _____

Decision-making process steps	Participants				
	Superintendent	Staff	Board	Others	Total
A. Recognize and define problem					
B. Analyze and evaluate problem					
C. Establish criteria for evaluating solutions					
D. Collect data relevant to problem					
E. Select alternatives and weigh consequences					
Problem Identified by:	_____ Superintendent	_____ Staff	_____ Board	_____ Others	
Time of Origin:	_____ During Meeting	In Agenda Letter		Prior to Letter	
Method of Original Identification:	_____ Spoken			_____ Written	
NCLB Noted:	_____ Minutes/Agenda			_____ Discussion	
Procedure Used in Termination:	_____ Formal	_____ Informal		_____ No Action	

ADMINISTRATORS' AND TEACHERS' VIEWS OF INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES IN TURKISH PRIMARY SCHOOLS

KÜRŞAD YILMAZ
ALI BALCI

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the views of primary school administrators and teachers on individual and organizational values in primary schools in Turkey. Survey data were gathered using the "Value Scale" wherein primary school administrators and teachers were asked to rank order individual and organizational values. Findings suggested similarities between the views of primary school administrators and teachers both on individual and organizational values. Both the primary school administrators and teachers ranked highest "fairness" as an individual value and "respect for people" as an organizational value. For administrators, money was the lowest ranked individual item and "religious devotion" was the lowest organizational value, whereas "religious devotion" both as an individual and organizational value was ranked the lowest in the list by teachers.

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1960s, Greenfield (1961) noted concern with the status of values in educational administration. Yet, the majority of theories in educational administration and leadership have ignored the importance of values in schools. More recently, studies have increasingly pointed out the importance of values in school administration (Bates, 2001) and the particularly crucial role values play in educational organizations (Strike, 1993).

Although previous studies emphasized administrators' instrumental activity and technical satisfaction with activities, researchers have suggested that values motivate school administrators and such cultural foundations were vital (Bates, 2001). These critiques question the basic assumptions of a positivist paradigm in the social sciences and educational administration (English, 1992, 1997, 2003; Foster, 1986). A common concern of critics is that studies in educational administration increasingly emphasize that organizations are inseparable from social culture. Such emphasis is prevalent in the studies on organizational culture (Bates, 1992; Chikudate, 1991; Hofstede, 1991, 1993, 1998; Schein, 1991, 1993, 1996) and such studies argue that organizations are not independent of values.

Values are perceived as instrumental in creating humane workplaces. There is a relationship between effective management, culture, and values (Bryying & Trollestad, 2000). As Hofstede (1980) stated, without understanding the culture of followers, communicating leadership and administrative skills would not be effective.

VALUES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

Several studies have developed a greater understanding of values and their role in social dynamics. Sharp (1928) conducted one of the earliest recorded studies on values (Aydın, 2003). Sharp (1928, as cited in Aydin, 2003) considered values artifacts of emotion and attitudes that might socially be observed everywhere. Rokeach (1968, 1973, 1979), an American social psychologist, was the first author to consider values in a social dimension and relate them to attitudes and behavior in that framework. Rokeach (1968, 1973, 1979) illustrated that every value was based on a single belief and every attitude on a group of beliefs. Allport also conducted research on values (Allport 1968; Allport & Vernon, 1931; Allport, Vernon, & Lindzey, 1960). According to Allport (1968), values are the meanings perceived in relation to ego. Schwartz (1994) conducted studies to determine the content of values and suggested value categories (internal and external values) that since have been used in experimental studies.

In this sense, values constitute an indispensable part of human life as social preferences of individuals relate to value systems that are acquired over time (Goodman, 1967). Values influence attitudes, principles and the value of things grown out of personality. People integrate their values with individual points of view to determine their priorities (Hostetter, 2003). Values help individuals in creating thoughts, professional opinions, and support for their attitudes and dispositions (Everard, 1995).

Thus, being aware of people's value systems not only gives information about them, but also provides some information on their social culture (national culture) and cultural differences.

Values exist not only at an individual level but also at an organizational level, and they are a crucial part of organizational existence. Individual values influence individual and organizational behavior. Several researchers have pointed out to this causal relationship (Kotey & Meredith, 1997; Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Posner & Munson, 1979; Sikula, 1971). In these studies, individual values as an independent variable influenced individual and organizational behavior.

Values are crucial in understanding individual and organizational behavior. Value differences are largely the cause of many conflicts (Lamberton & Minor, 1995). They are also functional in that they bind components of social systems (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

VALUES IN SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Values, as an element of culture, are at the core of situations concerning people at an individual level or in social and organizational life. Values are like motors that orient the lives of individuals. Values are at the core of the education as well (Everard, 1995). Values have prominence in school life, as in other organizational lives. At the same time, values have an important place in the educational process (Şişman & Turan, 2004). In this sense, educational institutions have been seen as the most effective tools to maintain or change the values system of individuals or the society. The values in a school are closely relevant to many subjects like decision-making, recruitment, reward and punishment, performance evaluation, personal relations, communication, cooperation, leadership, conflict etc. (Şişman & Turan, 2004). According to Sergiovanni (1992), schools are value-laden communities and moral leadership should perform the management of these communities.

Given the role schools play in shaping and translating the values of a given society, school managers must be good values managers as well (Çelik, 2004). As Evans (2000) stated, the leaders or managers who do not have strong values and motivation to inspire the school community engage in passive leadership. Yet, even in this context, cultural values undoubtedly are considered, due to their existence in all elements of school. Thus, educational administration is closely related to values. Values influence administrators' decisions and behaviors inside or outside of the organization (Çelik, 1999; Dawis, 1991). According to Begley (1996; 1999) and others (Akbaba-Altun, 2003; Çelik, 1999; Dawis, 1991; Frankel, Schechtman, & Koenigs, 2006; Richmon, 2004), research is needed on the nature and the function of values in education administration.

Although there is robust support in the literature on the primacy of values in social and organizational life, there has been little or no attempt to determine what those values are. Although the scope and content of studies on values in Turkey (Akbaba-Altun, 2004; Erçetin, 2000; Güngör, 1998; Karaman-Kepenekci, 2004; Kıncal & Işık, 2005; Kuçuradi, 1998) and in the world (Allport, 1968; Allport & Vernon, 1931; Allport et al., 1960; Rokeach, 1968, 1973; Trusted 1998) differ, there has been little research to determine views school administrators and teachers hold on individual and organizational values.

This study focused on views school administrators and teachers in Turkish primary schools hold on individual and organizational values. Measuring organizational values in schools and individual values of teachers are essential to understand daily managerial functioning. Whether there is a congruence or divergence on values between administrators and teachers will indicate the extent of common values as well as the strength of school culture (Pang, 1998).

THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this study is to determine views of administrators and teachers on individual values and organizational values in primary schools in Turkey. The following questions guided this study.

1. What are the school administrators' and teachers' views on individual values?
2. What are the school administrators' and teachers' views on organizational values in school?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Turkish Education System provides education to approximately 19.4 million students in over 56, 000 schools with 680,000 teachers and administrators. Of these, approximately 11 million students,

35, 000 schools and school administrators and 403, 000 teachers comprise the state primary school system (Ministry of National Education, [MoNE] 2007).

The study population includes public primary school administrators and teachers in city centers throughout Turkey. A "multi-stage sampling method" was used to create the study sample. Two main criteria were used to select the sample of the study. First, the geographical regions and provinces of schools were determined. There are seven geographical regions in Turkey. The provinces in those regions were categorized by level of development using Socio Economic Status (SES) data by the Turkish State Planning Organization (2004), as "underdeveloped", "developing" and "developed" provinces. The study provinces in each region and were then selected through random sampling to reflect a range of development across the country. The resultant sample included 712 teachers and 407 school administrators from 21 different provinces.

The researcher developed a "Value Scale". Values were defined in words or phrases. The instrument was first pilot tested in a group of 150 teachers. An exploratory factor analysis (principal components) was carried out in order to establish the construct validity of the instrument. Cronbach Alphas were calculated to test the reliability of the instrument. Based on the factor analyses, the scale had two dimensions. The first scale was on individual values and the second was on organizational values. Twenty-nine values for each dimension were tested. The results indicated that the 29 items loaded high on one factor and the factor loadings ranged from .30 to .71. Thirty four percent of the variance was explained by only one factor, the dimension of individual value. The Cronbach Alpha value for the 29 items comprising this dimension was .89.

The results of the second factor indicated that 29 items load high on one factor and the factor loadings ranges from .30 to .82. Forty eight percent of the variance was explained by only one factor, the dimension of organizational value. The Cronbach Alpha value for the 29 items comprising this dimension was .94.

The participants were asked to rank the values in the instrument from "1 to 5" based on the priority they assign to that value. They were invited to consider the importance of those values in terms of their principles and how important the value is in shaping their own lives and life in schools. Respondents were asked to mark "1" for the values they thought were "contrary to my principles" and "5" for the value statements that were "very important for me." Finally, they were expected to rank order all values in a given dimension.

Educational Studies Support Program of the Research and Development Office of the Ministry of National Education (EARGED) assisted with the data collection. EARGED provided services like copying the instrument, forwarding the instruments to schools and collecting the completed instruments from schools nationwide. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and standard deviations were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS

The views of school administrators and teachers presented in the study on individual values are listed in table 1.

Table 1.

School Administrator and Teacher Views on Individual Values

Individual Values	Administrators				Teachers			
	n	$\bar{X}$	ss	Rank order	n	$\bar{X}$	ss	Rank order
1. Openness	405	4.79	.53	7	710	4.78	.50	10
2. Fairness	406	4.91	.36	***1***	712	4.94	.31	***1***
3. Independency	405	4.72	.60	13	710	4.71	.59	13
4. Commitment	402	3.88	1.29	*27*	700	3.99	1.25	*26*
5. Achievement	402	4.75	.52	10	710	4.75	.51	11
6. Rationality	407	4.77	.51	9	708	4.74	.54	12
7. Diligence	407	4.86	.40	***4***	711	4.82	.44	7
8. Democracy	405	4.73	.71	11	708	4.83	.49	6
9. Religious Devotion	401	3.39	1.41	*28*	705	3.34	1.40	*29*
10. Honesty	406	4.90	.40	***2***	711	4.93	.32	***2***
11. Equality	407	4.85	.42	6	708	4.86	.45	***4***
12. Self-sacrifice	407	4.66	.62	17	705	4.61	.64	22
13. Respect for people	407	4.89	.38	***3***	712	4.91	.33	***3***
14. Cooperation	406	4.72	.56	12	711	4.68	.56	17
15. Benevolence	407	4.70	.60	15	709	4.71	.57	15
16. Secularism	405	4.61	.86	19	707	4.69	.75	16
17. Having authority	405	4.06	1.02	*26*	708	3.98	1.08	*27*
18. Self-control	406	4.57	.68	23	707	4.64	.67	19
19. Self-respect	407	4.70	.62	16	708	4.79	.53	8
20. Money	407	3.29	1.16	*29*	709	3.49	1.10	*28*
21. Loyalty	402	4.58	.77	22	708	4.66	.70	18
22. Responsibility	406	4.85	.46	***5***	708	4.85	.40	***5***
23. Objectiveness	407	4.77	.49	8	708	4.78	.52	9
24. Frugality	401	4.31	.88	*25*	710	4.23	.88	*25*
25. Harmony	407	4.62	.63	18	708	4.63	.62	21
26. Creativity	406	4.60	.62	20	707	4.56	.67	24
27. Solidarity	406	4.71	.55	14	708	4.71	.55	14
28. Competence	405	4.59	.62	21	706	4.63	.60	20
29. Satisfaction	405	4.57	.69	24	703	4.58	.70	23

NOTE: Values listed in the first five rank orders by the participants are ***bold*** and ***in italics,*** whereas those in the last five rank order are presented *in italics*.

The highest five rankings of individual values given by the primary school administrators were respectively "fairness" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.91), "honesty" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.90), "respect for people" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.89), "diligence" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.86) and "responsibility" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.85). The lowest five rankings of individual values given by the

school administrators were "money" ($\overline{X}$ = 3.29), "religious devotion" ($\overline{X}$ = 3.39), "commitment" ($\overline{X}$ = 3.88), "having authority" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.06) and "frugality" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.31).

As table 1 indicates, the highest five individual values the primary school teachers rank ordered were respectively "fairness" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.94), "honesty" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.93), "respect for people" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.91), "equality" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.86) and "responsibility" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.85), whereas those ranked last were "religious devotion" ($\overline{X}$ = 3.34), "money" ($\overline{X}$ = 3.49), "having authority" ($\overline{X}$ = 3.98), "commitment" ($\overline{X}$ = 3.99) and "frugality" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.23).

Table 2 presents the views of the school administrators and the teachers on organizational values in primary schools.

Table 2.

School Administrator and Teacher Views on Organizational Values

Organizational Values	Administrators				Teachers			
	n	$\bar{X}$	ss	Rank order	n	$\bar{X}$	ss	Rank order
1. Openness	407	4.73	.57	12	709	4.67	.66	12
2. Fairness	406	4.82	.57	***3***	711	4.75	.61	***4***
3. Independency	403	4.47	.84	24	707	4.52	.79	22
4. Commitment	400	4.28	.96	*26*	698	4.15	1.11	*27*
5. Achievement	405	4.80	.49	8	706	4.73	.53	8
6. Rationality	406	4.78	.59	9	706	4.72	.62	9
7. Diligence	404	4.80	.48	7	707	4.75	.57	***5***
8. Democracy	406	4.73	.68	11	708	4.78	.57	***2***
9. Religious Devotion	398	3.06	1.42	*29*	699	2.98	1.41	*29*
10. Honesty	404	4.82	.49	***2***	706	4.77	.60	***3***
11. Equality	406	4.81	.49	***4***	709	4.73	.65	7
12. Self-sacrifice	406	4.63	.73	19	706	4.55	.76	19
13. Respect for people	406	4.88	.41	***1***	711	4.78	.56	***1***
14. Cooperation	405	4.76	.57	10	709	4.69	.64	10
15. Benevolence	406	4.60	.73	21	703	4.55	.74	20
16. Secularism	406	4.67	.74	17	707	4.67	.73	14
17. Having authority	405	4.25	.93	*27*	708	4.18	1.05	*26*
18. Self-control	406	4.61	.65	20	705	4.57	.75	18
19. Self-respect	403	4.68	.65	15	701	4.67	.63	13
20. Money	405	3.55	1.23	*28*	701	3.62	1.20	*28*
21. Loyalty	402	4.51	.82	23	701	4.50	.80	24
22. Responsibility	406	4.81	.52	6	705	4.74	.60	6
23. Objectiveness	406	4.81	.52	***5***	707	4.68	.72	11
24. Frugality	404	4.44	.90	*25*	704	4.32	.91	*25*
25. Harmony	406	4.73	.56	13	705	4.60	.74	17
26. Creativity	405	4.65	.62	18	707	4.54	.77	21
27. Solidarity	405	4.73	.56	14	704	4.65	.65	15
28. Competence	406	4.67	.60	16	704	4.62	.68	16
29. Satisfaction	405	4.59	.73	22	701	4.50	.80	23

NOTE: Values listed in the first five rank orders by the participants are presented in ***bold*** and ***in italics,*** whereas those in the last five rank order are presented *in italics*.

As shown in the table 2, the top five organizational values as ranked by the primary school administrators were "respect for people" ($\bar{X}$ = 4,88), "honesty" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.81), "fairness" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.82), "equality" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.81) and "objectiveness" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.81), respectively. As shown in table 2, the five organizational values the school administrators listed last were "religious devotion" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.06), "money"

($\overline{X}$ = 3.55), "having authority" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.25), "commitment" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.28) and "frugality" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.44).

As shown in table 2, the highest ranked organizational values as ranked by the primary school teachers were "respect for people" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.78), "democracy" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.78), "honesty" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.77), "fairness" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.81) and "diligence" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.75), respectively. As reported in table 2, organizational values the teachers ranked lowest were; "religious devotion" ($\overline{X}$ = 2.98), "money" ($\overline{X}$ = 3.62), "commitment" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.15), "authority" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.18) and "frugality" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.68).

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicated that individual values of primary school administrators and teachers were similar. They mostly focused on fairness, honesty, and respect for people, equality, and responsibility. The only difference between the two groups of respondents was that the primary school administrators put "diligence" in the 4th rank order, whereas teachers ranked "equality" 4th. The rank order of the other values did not differ for administrators and teachers. This order might indicate that school administrators and teachers attribute more importance to relation-oriented values (fairness, honesty, respect for people, equality, responsibility etc.).

Güngör (1998) claims that the highest ranking or the top value of a person in a value list may be considered as his/her *basic value*. Theoretically, if one is asked to rank order a list of values, the top ranking value is the most influential one in his or her life. Other values are a means of individual psychological and social happiness and peace. Therefore, the basic individual value for school administrators and the teachers was "fairness". This may suggest that such an attitude indicates that fairness and equality were dominant in their own lives. One may also suggest that both administrators and teachers attach much more importance to relation-oriented values.

Individual values of the teachers and the school administrators in the last rank of their value ranking are the same. These values were money, religious devotion, commitment, having authority and frugality. However, money was the lowest-ranking item for school administrators, whereas religious devotion was the lowest-ranking value for teachers. These findings support the findings of other studies that had similar results (Aydın, 2003; Bacanlı, 1999; Erçetin, 2000; Kuşdil & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2000). Finding religious devotion as the lowest-ranking item might be a result of training and the professional socialization process in a secular educational system.

Although dedication is one of the most distinctive cultural features of the Turkish society (Özen, 1996), it was the final item on the individual value lists both for school administrators and teachers. Researchers have found that Turkish culture emphasizes *commitment to internal the group.* Turkish culture ensures social order mostly through hierarchical roles (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994; Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1996). The reason for the differences in findings regarding these values between previous studies and the current study might be social changes that have occurred in the past decade. Because of social changes and the influence of globalization and liberal economic policies, values like commitment, trust, and dedication might have given way to other individualistic values. The values like commitment to internal group and family, two of the most distinctive features of the Turkish society, might have been less emphasized. In societies where values such as commitment and family have been worn out, people often face problems like violence in family and schools, individuals might resort to violence and use of drugs.

Turkish society has traditionally been characterized by density, lack of competition, and lack of entrepreneurship, many Turks perceive work as an obligation and may lower work performance as a result (Tezcan, 1995). Diligence and responsibility were two of the values emphasized by both the school administrators and the teachers. As a result, one might surmise there have been recent changes in Turkish society and culture. The findings are not as surprising when one considers that individuals have to take responsibility and work harder than before in a society that is constantly changing. Values such as diligence and responsibility are desirable values for societies and organizations.

The basic organizational value in primary schools for the administrators and teachers was respect for

people, whereas religious devotion was the lowest ranking among the values. Thus, one may conclude that the school administrators and the teachers attribute the utmost importance to respect for individuals in organizations.

School administrators and teachers perceive respect for others as the basic value for school organizations and religious devotion as the lowest ranking. The results might suggest that individuals whose basic individual values were fairness might also perceive it as the basic organizational value. These individuals attribute more importance to relation-oriented values at both individual and organizational levels. Finding religious devotion as the lowest-ranking item is expected, given a secular educational system attaches little or no importance to religious values. While the finding concerning the religious devotion was expected, secularism was expected to be one of the top ranking values in the list; however, administrators ranked secularism as the 17th item and teachers ranked it as the 14th. The findings indicated that the views of participants on religious devotion and secularism have not changed much over time. In addition, teachers attributed relatively more importance to secularism in organizations than the administrators.

It is surprising to find commitment as one of the lowest-ranking values both by the administrators and by teachers, given organizations expect commitment from employees to the organization. While, again, changes might have taken place in society, previous studies found the Turkish culture among the cultures that emphasized *commitment to internal group* (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994; Smith et al., 1996).

One may also argue that school administrator and teacher commitment to schools has weakened. Recently, an increase in violence in primary schools, insufficient salaries and other workplace-related issues might have caused weaken feelings of commitment. Teachers with lower levels of commitment are less likely to be able to focus on students and their work, which might lower their performance, increase absenteeism, and increase teacher and administrator turnover. Teachers and administrators may quit the profession; high staff turnover might cause stress (İnce & Gül, 2005). Low commitment by teachers also leads to low academic achievement for students, teachers become less tolerant to students, they become intolerant in classrooms, and they may become more worried and burnout (Balay, 2000). This is also crucial for the future of the education system, because studies have consistently pointed out that those individuals with higher organizational commitment spend greater efforts to realize organizational goals and carry out tasks assigned. More importantly, employees who have a feeling of commitment to their organizations identify themselves with the organization and increase their performance. Alternatively, individuals with lower levels of commitment are less likely to concentrate on their work and devote themselves to the mission of organization (İnce & Gül, 2005).

When we evaluate the views of the school administrators and the teachers on individual and organizational values together, there are some similarities and differences between the views of the two groups. They both ranked fairness as the highest individual value and respect for people as the highest organizational value. These two values are relation-oriented. Furthermore, they emphasized diligence and responsibility among individual values, equality and objectiveness among organizational values.

There were some similarities as well as differences between individual and organizational values ranked the lowest in the list by the school administrators. They ranked money lowest as an individual value and religious devotion as an organizational value. The values provided in the lowest ranking order by the administrators were the same (money, religious devotion, commitment, having authority, frugality) although the order was different. Hence, the school administrators ranked the same values lowest as individual and organizational values. School administrators ranked individual and organizational values either as more important or less important similarly. Therefore, it may be safe to assume that organizations influence and are influenced by social culture and individual values.

There were some similarities as well as differences between the views of teachers on individual and organizational values. Teachers ranked fairness top in the list as an individual value and respect for people as an organizational value. Moreover, they emphasized equality and responsibility among individual values and democracy and diligence among organizational values, so one may conclude teachers attach more importance to democracy and diligence in organizations when compared to other values. This response may have been due to deficiencies their schools in terms of democracy and diligence.

Individual and organizational values ranked lowest by the teachers were the same as those ranked lowest by administrators, although there were differences in the order. They ranked religious devotion the lowest both as an individual and organizational value, followed by money, having authority, commitment, and frugality.

There were also similarities and differences between the rankings of organizational values in primary schools for school administrators and teachers. The organizational values shared by the administrators and teachers were respect for people, fairness and honesty. The values that differed were equality and objectiveness for administrators, democracy and diligence for the teachers.

Similar views of school administrators and teachers on organizational values are important. If leaders support their followers' values, supporters may become much more motivated and devoted to follow their leaders (Meng, Ashkanasy, & Hartel, 2003). In addition, value agreements may lead to a more meaningful organizational existence and increased job satisfaction of employees.

The lowest-ranked values for both school administrators and teachers in terms of organizational values of schools were also similar. The school administrators and the teachers ranked religious devotion, money, commitment, having authority, and frugality lowest among organizational values in primary schools.

CONCLUSION

The primary school administrators' and teachers' views about individual and organizational values were found to be similar in Turkey. Therefore, it can be said that there is a congruity between the values of primary school administrators and teachers. Individuals who share similar value systems suggest they perceive outside stimuli similarly and respond similarly. That enables them to anticipate the others' behaviors better and coordinate the actions more effectively. Moreover, individuals with similar value systems act the same for common aims. Similarities in the values of the members of an organization lead to friendship, cooperation, mutual support, help, and motivation in the group.

There were similarities between the administrators and teachers' views regarding individual and organizational values. Thus, both principals and teachers regard the values that are important for them in their daily lives as similarly important for their organizational lives, too. The consistency between the individual and organizational values increases the staff's devotion, work satisfaction, happiness, and long-term work in the organization. It can be interpreted from the results that the primary school staffs in Turkey work in harmony.

It is essential to determine the value profiles of the staff to ensure appropriate approaches to administration in schools. Such processes as group behavior, communication style, leadership and leadership behavior, and decision-making are all influenced by values as the organizational value system affects the organizational aims, policies and strategies. When there is a parallel between organizational values and organizational policies it is easier to reach the objectives. Thus, educational planners should take the values of the staff into account in the plans and programs they develop as these educational policies and plans influence individual and social life directly.

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ASSESSING UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLANS: A TOOL FOR CONSIDERATION

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the use of rubrics as tools for assessing the quality of university-developed strategic plans. While tools exist for assessing the quality of the planning process, such tools are not readily available for assessing the resulting product or the overall quality of the plan itself. Specifically, a rubric is described that has been designed and field-tested for the purpose of evaluating the strategic planning document produced at the university level. This approach builds upon outcome assessment methods developed in the business sector and proposes a tool tailored for use in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the use of rubrics as tools for assessing the quality of university-developed strategic plans. While tools exist for assessing the quality of the planning process, such tools are not readily available for assessing the product or the overall quality of the plan itself (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Kaufman & Grise, 1995). A number of tools do currently exist for evaluating business–related plans (University of Wisconsin, 2005). However, these tools are grounded in linear business models, which are not well suited to the variables found in higher education settings (Presley & Leslie, 1999; Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997; Shahjahan, 2005; Swenk, 2001). Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence identified and described a host of differences between business and education and they clearly articulated the need for planning approaches tailored to higher education.

The rubric described in this paper was designed by a team of doctoral students enrolled in an educational planning course at The College of William and Mary. The team's methods for developing and field-testing an assessment rubric are described. The objective is to share findings of the project with scholars interested in educational planning. This assignment represents an effort to address concerns raised by Adams (1991). Adams articulated three crisis areas in planning: (a) definition and identity, (b) intellectual or scientific foundation/theory, and (c) evidence of success and utility. This article seeks to address one of these areas – success and utility – which may in turn enhance an understanding of identity, purpose, and intentionality of strategic planning in higher education (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

The overarching framework used in this assessment rubric is built upon Holcomb's (2001) five critical questions for fostering change in schools and Allison and Kaye's (2005) recommendations regarding strategic planning for non-profit organizations. The call to conduct this type of assessment has come from both inside and outside of higher education. Such assessment helps address demands for increased accountability in higher education and across the non-profit sector.

DEFINITION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

There are many ways to define *strategy*. Pearson (1990) described the way strategy is used in higher education: to set direction, to focus effort, to guide "consistent concentration of effort through time," and to promote flexibility (as cited in Presley & Leslie, 1999, p. 202). Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) define *strategic planning* as "a formal process designed to help an organization identify and maintain optimal alignment with the most important elements of its environment" (p. 15).

Presley and Leslie (1999) remind us that the main goal of strategic planning in higher education is to enhance practice. They join Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) in noting the best result of planning is providing guidance to an organization. While traditional planning was operations-driven, today's strategic planning constitutes a process for seeking opportunity. Most contemporary organizations actually still use traditional (rather than genuinely strategic) planning methods, and thus miss opportunities for creative and proactive response. Many scholars in the field of planning agree that by defining a collective vision and charting a course aligned with this vision – through a truly strategic and ongoing planning process – an organization can effectively respond to unforeseen challenges in advantageous ways (Barnetson, 2001; Cutright, 2001; Gordon, 2002; Rowley, *et al*., 1997; Swenk, 2001).

STRATEGIC PLANNING: FROM BUSINESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Strategic planning was introduced in the private business sector during the 1960s and brought to the university and other parts of the public sector in the late 70s and early 80s, following its documented success and subsequent refinement (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997). Presley and Leslie (1999) note during this time, the planning process in higher education adopted an internally oriented and very linear form of planning, which was more appropriately termed "long-range planning." Long-range planning is generally more prescriptive than truly strategic planning, which allows flexibility to incorporate unforeseen changes and opportunities.

Presley and Leslie (1999) further note that the business world shed strategic planning as a central tenet in the late 1980s. Criticisms of corporate practice lead "strategic planning" to be eclipsed by concerns for "operational effectiveness" and "strategic management" (p. 209). Currently, higher education's strategic planning practices are being criticized in much the same way that the practices used by corporate America were attacked in the 1980s. While some scholars seek more complex ways to understand planning and its efficacy, others have called for more radical approaches, including development of entirely new methods of strategic planning (Kunstler, 2005; Presley & Leslie).

Conversely, Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) assert that in business, strategic planning "has held promise for well over thirty years" and note, "for today's colleges and universities, no longer immune from the world in which they live, strategic planning can be a logical and effective method of intervention, defining an appropriate direction toward a future in which they will flourish" (p. 320). Yet they ask: Are business strategies appropriately transferred to higher education?

These researchers are among the many insisting rationalist, linear, business-type models alone are too limiting. Corporate models lack the type of flexibility necessary to align institutions' aspirations with their quickly-changing opportunities and their fluid contexts. Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) suggest higher education needs special attention to address unique circumstances – circumstances that are quite different from the fast-paced business world which remains untethered by educational and service missions, public accountability, or the need for broad-based buy-in. Traditional business-oriented planning models inadequately reflect the complex inter-relationships inherent in higher education.

LEARNING FROM LINEAR MODELS: LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

Traditional business models reflect a belief in linear Newtonian-type cause and effect relationships that seldom describe the complex decision-making processes occurring in higher education (Cutright, 2001; Swenk, 2001). This tradition is steeped in orderly, goal-driven metaphors (often mechanical or political in nature), which "assume decision making is rational – decision makers act to achieve goals" (Barnetson, 2001, p. 147). These metaphors fit with commonly held assumptions and paradigms of the "nature of the world" and "human nature." Linear metaphors tend to assume tight control is required to avoid eventual break down; they fit with Western scientific, religious, and political views, which presume that people will act in their own self-interest if unregulated (Barnetson).

Some instruments were developed to assess outcomes in business despite the fact the machine/factory model, which emerged from the industrial revolution, generally emphasized process over outcomes (Dolence & Norris, 1995, cited in Cutright, 2001). Outcome assessment tools have recently been adapted for use in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of plans for various non-profit endeavors. For example, outcome-based approaches developed for business purposes are now heavily used by federal funding agencies to ensure productive use of public funds (Davis, 2007).

"Project monitoring" was first developed by the United Nations to monitor and evaluate the efficacy of aid programs (Wilson, 1997). The UN's Mission Plan identified three dimensions: (a) project inputs and tasks, (b) project outputs and level of accomplishment targeted, and (c) project outcomes including "the impacts and effects of project operations and performance on the beneficiaries" (Wilson, 1997, p. 33). Monitoring was conducted both internally (in the field) and externally (by experts). Such dimensions are used in many logic models today, both formatively; through "benchmarking" and collecting performance data alongside the activity, and summatively; in assessing accomplishment at the end of the project (Davis, 2007; Wilson, 1997).

The business model relies on high levels of predictability, and thus it is far too limiting for direct

application in higher education. Many tools developed using the business model do, however, contribute to the field of planning by providing graphic depictions of relationships between components. Many models also include evaluation of specific components that were traditionally overlooked in strategic planning. Graphic depictions are the crux of the critical-path model, the logic model, and the theory of change or "onion" model (Davis, 2007; University of Wisconsin, 2005).

The standard logic model graphically illustrates connections between inputs (including funding); outputs (e.g., programs, activities); and outcomes (e.g., changes in behavior of participants). The logic model used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development "supports the five fundamental components for managing a program: identification of need, activities/interventions, outputs, outcomes, measuring performance. The function of the logic model is to integrate program operations with program accountability. All five components must work together for a program to operate in an efficient and effective manner" (The Center for Applied Management Practice, n.d.). In 2001, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation identified four types of logic models in current use: (a) a theory approach, (b) an outcomes approach, (c) an activities approach, and (d) a research performance approach (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2007). These models are commonly used to assess viability of a proposed program to help ensure results, but all rely on high levels of predictability.

Graphic representation of linear models includes the critical path model described at NetMBA (2002-2007) that was first developed by DuPont in 1957 to graphically illustrate a sequence of actions required to implement a project, to predict the length of time required for the project, and to indicate "which activities are critical to maintaining the schedule and which are not." This model was developed for routine projects with low complexity and high predictability. A similar "network" model known as PERT (the Program Evaluation and Review Technique) was developed at around the same time for the United States Navy and this model allows for a higher degree of uncertainty because it accommodates ranges of time required to complete various activities. These models are highly deterministic. Both stress temporality, both are limited by their ability to accommodate unknowns, and both frequently yield overly optimistic time projections even in situations that are more predictable than those found in higher education.

Another graphic tool, known as the "onion model," delineates fundamental, core issues from peripheral issues that have less influence on a given situation, person, or organization (similar to the dimensions described by Rapoport, 1999). This model has been used successfully in both education and business, although it seems to deal with a very focused set of concerns within any given diagram. Curry (1983) used the onion model in the field of education as a "method for describing learner interaction with content," (as cited in Polhemus, Swan, Danchak, & Assis, 2005). Alexander and Robertson (n.d.) used the onion model to show relationships – such as those among stakeholders in a business venture – and to graphically illustrate pressures (as arrows) exerted by various groups on others to prompt change. Applications by Curry and Alexander and Robertson suggest the onion model may be useful for understanding various relationships found in higher education. The tool could also be used in assessing strategic plans to identify core versus peripheral issues and evaluate relationships among various issues.

With linear models, specific, measurable outputs, or "deliverables" must usually be predefined. In these cases, the plan locks the organization into a pre-determined path. This limits the possibilities for flexibility and innovation. The linear model requires a level of predictability which higher education does not enjoy, because the system requires input from multiple levels inside and outside the organization.

In related work, Shahjahan (2005) described the negative impact deterministic methods for obtaining research funding have on society's collective creativity. He stated that research and publishing mechanisms, including grant-funding processes, restrict possibilities for innovation; a researcher must essentially know what he or she is going to find in order to promise deliverables before initiating the research, and must be able to state these in quantifiable terms. In this same vein, Presley and Leslie (1999) noted that strategic plans in higher education are remarkably similar (rather than inventive or innovative). Why do institutions choose such similar strategies? Are these plans more focused on maintenance than change? Is the consistency a result of a limited model, or a desired outcome?

While Stone and Brush (1996) found formal planning was useful and necessary to the attainment of external validation and legitimacy – and essential to resource acquisition – they also found that

many stated purposes of formal planning are difficult to achieve under conditions of ambiguity and that adoption and consistent use of formal planning were not widespread.

Implementing change in universities has been exceedingly difficult due to high levels of unpredictability. Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1998) indicated inertia, psychological resistance to change, and the need for consensus all slow the change process at universities. They suggest the strongest resistance often occurs when the plan is complete and implementation begins.

Even in business there has been a shift away from such linearity. Presley and Leslie (1999) explained that in the early 1980s research on corporate planning shifted to studying relationships between outcomes and planning processes. Corporate planners moved away from being rigidly prescriptive and rationalist when they began incorporating institutional culture and complexity into strategy formation and implementation. Language used by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2004) is fairly consistent with these emerging, non-linear models:

> The process of developing [an organization's logic] model is an opportunity to chart the course. It is a conscious process that creates an explicit understanding of the challenges ahead, the resources available, and the timetable in which to hit the target. In addition, it helps keep a balanced focus on the big picture as well as the component parts. (p. 7)

Chaffee (1985) found that while strategy formation in business actually had three facets (linear, adaptive, and interpretive), higher education has stayed in the linear mode. This planning approach impaired higher education's effectiveness in planning by rendering it ill-prepared to interpret and adapt to changing contexts. Understanding non-linear models is crucial to improving strategic planning in higher education.

NON-LINEAR MODELS TAILORED TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) warned that when institutions of higher education try to adopt typical business strategies in strategic planning, most fail. These scholars assert "non-business institutions, particularly colleges and universities, have not had particularly positive results from their experimentation with strategic planning. In many instances, the process has not yielded the outcomes desired for institutions of higher education in ways comparable to business applications" (p. 40). This may be because institutions generally fail to recognize adaptive and interpretive strategies – replicating only the linear strategies. Even when higher education does widen its range of techniques to include adaptive and interpretive business strategies, it still needs to tailor these to its specific characteristics. The planning scheme it uses must reflect dual-governance, for instance, which is much different than the top-down approach businesses typically use.

Funding of higher education is very different from corporate funding. While product research and development in the business world is largely unrestricted, funding mechanisms limit or exclude the possibility for higher education to react in a way that is speedy, off-mission, or lacking broad buy-in from internal constituents (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997). Higher education is organized much differently than business enterprises and, unlike business, the mission of each public school is largely determined by the state. Unique processes and limitations – imposed by legislators and other external loci of control (such as professional and regional accreditation bodies) – ensure that higher education cannot operate in the same manner as private business.

Leslie and Fretwell (1996) asserted strategic planning works best when seen as a continual process of experimentation, which allows multiple decisions to emerge on many different fronts simultaneously. This suggests use of a non-linear model where feedback regarding implementation and context informs upcoming implementation efforts. In such a model, planning is actually the object of the strategic plan. Planning is a tool for setting direction and charting an ever-changing course to effectively enhance the organization's shared vision. In fact, it seems the most powerful plans use three paradigmatic perspectives: (a) a foundation in linear, rational analysis; (b) an understanding of flexibility and adaptability to changing context; and (c) an ability to articulate an intuitive, constructivist organizational metaphor that provides a future-oriented vision of the institution, or interpretive strategy (Chaffee, 1985).

Adjustment during implementation represents such a critical part of the process, it seems this fact should be clearly acknowledged in strategic planning documents. Presley and Leslie (1999) worried that much of the literature discussed only the linear rationalist model (at the expense of the others), and failed to cite the ramifications and/or shortcomings of using that one single perspective.

Similar to the three paradigms enumerated above, Kennie (2002) presented a range of perspectives which have emerged in the field of planning: (a) the formal, rational perspective which includes techniques like SWOT (Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses, Threats) analysis and STEPE to gauge Social, Technological, Economic, Political, Environmental aspects of the external environment; (b) the competitive market positioning perspective; (c) the cultural perspective; (d) the performance measurement perspective (which includes the balanced scorecard, benchmarking, and business excellence models); (e) the sensitivity analysis perspective; (f) the "emergent" perspective; and, (g) the scenario perspective.

Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1998) described two major shifts underway, both of which highlight the need for good strategic planning by universities: (a) a change in the way organizations think and make decisions to better visualize what they want to accomplish and then align resources to support that vision, and (b) a shift from emphasizing content delivery to emphasizing learning. By instituting a process of "thorough self-examination, by discovering the opportunities that exist and may be exploited by the institution's primary constituencies, and by determining the relevant niches that are available and that fit its unique capacities, a college or university can begin to shape its own destiny" (p. 48). Using futuristic thinking, universities can become "learning organizations" that continually process information to acquire and integrate new knowledge for improving practice.

CALL FOR ACCOUNTABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) indicated traditional support for higher education has been eroding. Higher education needs to adapt and change in order to maintain its position at the world's forefront, and failure to change could jeopardize the United States' position of prominence.

Traditional support waned as institutions became too removed from the needs of the larger community. "Some faculties and administrators took academic freedom as a shield for increasing autonomy and disconnection from the public they served" (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997, p. 50). As a result, states have continually required formal planning – master planning, comprehensive planning, long-range planning, or strategic planning – in an effort to "rationalize" their systems of higher education (Presley & Leslie, 1999).

The call for accountability in higher education has been on the rise since the 1980s when universities adopted strategic planning as a major vehicle for dealing with this call and with an external environment that was in transition (Presley & Leslie, 1999). Conservative politics, at work in the United States since the 1980s, have pressed for accountability and efficiency, for eliminating waste, and for balancing budgets. By undertaking various types of planning, institutions have often been able to shape change from within . . . rather than be forced to implement changes that were shaped by trustees, governors, elected officials, donors, and other outside the institution (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997).

Demand for public accountability increased steadily throughout the 1990s, in the United States and beyond. Gordon (2002) noted, globally, demands for accountability resulted from a range of shared conditions, such as: (a) new ways to assess accountability through expenditures and performance management, (b) trends to provide education for "the masses" (rather than just for elite males), (c) the increased cost of educating this larger population, (d) an ever-expanding knowledge base, and (e) various changes occurring in the employment sector.

The continually rising cost of attending college in the United States has prompted much of this pressure here at home. Ehrenberg (2002) and Kunstler (2005) noted that the rising price of attending college deters many individuals from enrollment. Kunstler attributes the closure of many universities to declines in government funding, falling enrollment due to rising cost, and pressures that push colleges and universities to run more like businesses. This pressure, he says, has often resulted in "misapplied calculations of cost effectiveness" that have wreaked havoc on many "programs and careers" (p. 173).

Strategic planning is often prompted by outside forces and external stakeholders – such as public officials and board members – but the efficacy of planning may relate to whether the effort is initiated by

forces inside, as opposed to outside, the institution. The range of voices demanding accountability in the United States often includes: state funding authorities; students and their families; various benefactors and financial supporters; faculty, administrators, and staff; those who employ graduates; a host of community businesses, residents, and officials; and board members who take legal responsibility for the actions of their respective institution (Presley & Leslie, 1999; Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997).

Despite skepticism regarding the value of plans, the planning process seems quite necessary. With "limited resources, increasing competition, demands to enhance quality, widen participation and so on, processes are required to focus attention, prioritize action and check progress is being achieved" (Kennie, 2002, p. 72). Gordon (2002) maintains "councils and those responsible for external assessment of quality expect individuals and institutions to learn from assessment and to operate within a climate and culture of enhancement informed by reflection, monitoring and benchmarking of practice" (p. 214). A process of monitoring known as "strategic management" is now emerging in higher education, again following trends in the business sector. Monitoring and checking progress are important to both internal and external constituents, and researchers note that these checks are most effective for refining the system when they are conducted internally (Clayton & Ash, 2005; Jackson & Ward, 2004; Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1998).

In a 1995 discourse, van Vught asserted universities are assuming greater "responsibility for their own strategic fates. This proactive behavior includes quality and accountability as integral to change and the constant search for strategic opportunity" (in Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1998, p. 13).

SUCCESS OF PLANNING UNSUBSTANTIATED IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Contemporary emphasis has been on the *creation* of strategic plans in higher education. There has been a lack of assessment of products and results of strategic planning. This stands in contrast to "work on strategy in the corporate sector [which] has tended to focus on content of decisions" (Pennings, 1985 cited in Presley & Leslie, 1999, p 212). Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) emphasized that "demonstrated results" of strategic planning in higher education are uneven.

The corporate sector conducted extensive research regarding the content and payoff of strategic planning. Yet little research exists to support the efficacy of specific strategies or their link to eventual results in higher education (Presley & Leslie, 1999) or even to determine if, in fact, strategic planning is more effective than other methods (Swenk, 2001). Presley and Leslie (1999), stated:

> We do know that formal and strategic planning can produce fundamental changes in certain circumstances and when it is used in conjunction with adaptive and interpretive approaches. Certainly, though, institutions may plan formally without making substantive changes in their functions or operations. And institutions obviously make substantive changes without engaging in any explicit process of planning or strategizing. The connections between statements and outcomes are unclear at best, because there are statements without outcomes and outcomes without statements. (p. 229)

There is a general lack of literature on methods for implementing higher education strategic planning, and the tendency to implement educational plans without adequately assessing progress apparently extends beyond the United States (Gordon, 2002; Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997). Presley and Leslie (1999) raise a number of questions about how the *outcomes* of plans should be evaluated, whether the results differ depending upon reason (internal or external) to plan, and what methods of strategizing and managing plans work best in what situations. They note a number of problems that remain unstudied. For instance, they explain that strategic planning has sometimes diverted resources, attention, and effort away from other important issues. They cite times when strategic planning backfired or "wasted time" through unintended consequences – such as when universities have made poor decisions or have generated unhealthy levels of conflict through planning (p. 208).

Calling for research on outcomes, Presley and Leslie (1999) noted that institutional effectiveness appears to involve "defining and interpreting the nature of an institution's condition and in reaching consensus about its operating strengths and weaknesses. This may be as much a cultural and psychological process – an interpretive process – as it is a rational/analytical one" (p. 228). They also recommended

that an ethnographic case study could prove useful for studying strategy and institutional change. The work of Kaufman and Grise (1995) and the rubric proposed in this article could be used as tools in such an investigation.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The overall meaning of the word "evaluation" seems to be shifting. Wilson (1997) indicated that evaluation now implicitly involves a process of monitoring, with assessment generally occurring at the middle and end of an implementation process. In higher education, the implementation phase of planning most definitely requires monitoring to make sure it can overcome inevitable resistance within colleges and universities. Wilson described Clayton and Perry's (1983) definition of monitoring as "a process of measuring, recording, collecting, processing and communicating information to assist project management decision-making" (p. 32).

Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence (1997) indicated the greatest resistance to change in any setting often emerges at implementation, when the strategic planning process shifts toward the process of strategic management. Without some form of strategic management, a plan is likely to be less effective in overcoming resistance. If a plan fails to outline a way of monitoring and managing its own implementation, it seems doomed to partial or low-level success. This is particularly problematic in institutions of higher education, which have procedures that tend to suppress change. Moreover, faculty members are positioned to effectively veto change since they are the primary providers of education (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997).

Particularly helpful to educational planning is the work of Hunt, Oosting, Stevens, Loudon, and Migliore (1997) who explained the system for control and evaluation should generally: (a) be linked to strategy; (b) be simple and economical to use; (c) measure both activities and results; (d) flag the exceptions; (e) focus on key success factors, not trivia; (f) be timely; (g) be flexible as strategy changes with environmental demands; and (h) be reality-based where written reports are augmented by face-to-face follow-up (p. 193).

Barnetson (2001) recommended the use of performance indicators (PIs) to promote "flexible and detail-free strategic planning" (p. 154) and to monitor the context so that anomalies can be identified and engaged. Using PIs allows organizations to simplify vast data sets and re-align themselves with the environment quickly and effectively. It is clear many organizations use performance indicators in a rigid way, implicitly and/or explicitly adopting rationalist models such as the "balanced scorecard," "business excellence model," or other varieties of the "performance measurement perspective" (Kennie, 2002, p. 78). These corporate perspectives can be used cautiously in higher education. Rowley and Sherman (2001) indicated milestone planning can be helpful to define "the most important assumptions of the plan, the important events to be completed and the intermediate stages for those events, and the sequencing or critical path the events must follow" (p. 306).

Barnetson (2001) strongly cautioned when PIs and milestones are used as conceptual technologies "they constrict information flow by designating what information will be collected and how it will be interpreted. This goal is achieved by quantifying data, thereby decreasing the importance of context" (p. 155). He noted, "performance indicators also constrict information flow by embedding assumptions about goals, values, definitions, causality, normalcy, and comparability into the structure and selection of indicators." While this practice does inherently reduce internal conflict regarding interpretation, it also discourages the organization from asking fundamental questions. Barnetson warned, a planning process which simply imposes conceptual agreement in this manner, or that is set up to reward only straightforward examples of success "may reduce the utility of PIs in planning by stifling the experimentation that leads to adaptation and innovation" (p. 155).

When planners understand the limits of linear cause-and-effect models and create systems that can proactively transform themselves to meet changing demands, they can avoid such pitfalls. Used cautiously, performance indicators and milestone assessment can be part of a healthy learning process.

Allison and Kaye (2005) provided a worksheet for "monitoring and updating the strategic plan" (p. 304-5) which involves (a) assessing overall status and summarizing accomplishments, (b) assessing status of specific objectives both short and long-term, (c) identifying and describing reasons for areas

not accomplished, (d) identifying and listing changes that have occurred, and (e) recording changes to the core strategies that have emerged.

The rubric discussed in this article is designed to evaluate the *strategic plan* rather than the *process*. The process itself can be assessed using Allison and Kaye's (2005) "worksheet for evaluating the strategic planning process" (pp. 307-8) or the work of Kaufman and Griese (1995). However, while the process of writing the plan is important, it seems that many plans do not flourish because a *process for evaluating, implementing, and monitoring the plan* is left implicit or entirely omitted. When the plan was generated for internal reasons it may have the momentum to succeed. The planning process itself may have effectively shaped a new way of thinking that can foster results. At the other end of the spectrum, where the call to create a plan came from external forces, there may not be enough momentum or sufficient shared vision to overcome inevitable resistance to change without careful monitoring and/or strategic management.

RUBRICS AS TOOLS FOR ASSESSING QUALITY

Both life-long learning and successful strategic planning require self-identity, knowledge, and action (Jackson & Ward, 2004). Chickering and Reisser (1993) indicated the importance of establishing identity, developing purpose, and generally aligning action with purpose or acting with "intentionality." These represent high-level skills in Chickering and Reisser's stage theory and these abilities are as important to organizations as they are to individuals. Rubrics provide a crucial tool for developing critical thinking and for promoting high-level self-awareness among individuals and organizations.

Developing and/or using a rubric for assessment allows one to define and evaluate a comprehensive range of issues that work together to shape overall efficacy of a proposed plan. Rubrics provide a way to achieve a comprehensive, holistic assessment of quality. They graphically illustrate relationships between performance criteria and quality standards.

> At its most basic, a rubric is a scoring tool that lays out the specific expectations for an assignment. Rubrics divide an assignment into its component parts and provide a detailed description of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable levels of performance in each of those parts. (Stevens & Levi, 2005, p. 3)

Stevens and Levi (2005) use rubrics to conduct complex projects, time-intensive assignments, and any assignment that the organizer struggles to explain in relation to expectations, directions, and grading criteria. They note that rubrics allow instructors to (a) provide crucial feedback in a timely fashion, (b) help equip students to be able to utilize detailed forms of feedback, (c) encourage students to think critically, (d) facilitate communication, and (e) help instructors refine their teaching skills. Rubrics may help "level the playing field" because they communicate expectations more clearly to students with increasingly diverse backgrounds (Stevens & Levi, 2005, p. v).

The benefits ascribed to using rubrics for instructional purposes can also be realized in planning and evaluation in organizations. Rubrics may prove helpful in weighing and evaluating the complex interrelationships involved in planning initiatives.

Rubrics also help to inform decision-making, articulate performance measures, and specify quality expectations. Used as such, rubrics can provide means for enhancing self-awareness *and* for simultaneously addressing increased demands for accountability. Strategic planning represents a "complex design assignment" for any university. The rubric described herein constitutes an ideal tool for understanding and managing the assignment. It can also serve as a means for achieving desired outcomes. Using such tools can render the plan and its results more visible to individuals both inside and outside the institution. They can improve communication among various stakeholders. Rubrics can aid in planning as well as provide a structure for assessing achievement throughout the implementation process. According to Driscoll and Wood (2007), a rubric is quite effective when it is collaboratively modified during the design and/or planning process to help define criteria, standards, and shared definitions. These approaches are ideal for fostering cybernetic or "learning" universities that – like individual students – can learn from their own experience and are able to respond to shifting opportunities in ways that are intentional and that support the long-term vision of the learner.

METHODOLOGY: FOCUS AND STRATEGY

Allen (2006) discussed the use of a course alignment grid to (a) assess how a specific general education program addresses its specified objectives and (b) look for gaps, discontinuity, or "misalignment" so that these areas may be identified and aligned. Driscoll and Wood (2007) promoted a similar matrix – for use in designing a course – that charts how each class session, reading, activity, or assessment item reinforces a range of specified learning outcomes.

The assessment rubric presented in Figure 1 is just this sort of alignment grid. It is intended to help assess the long-term viability of a strategic plan in higher education. It reflects the general format used by Allen (2006) and Driscoll and Woods (2007). It also incorporates Holcomb's (2001) five critical questions as a guide for thinking about what an effective strategic plan should contain. These five questions – "Where are we now?" "Where do we want to go?" "How will we get there?" "How will we know we are (getting) there?" and "How will we sustain focus and momentum?" cover all of the essential aspects of planning described by Allison and Kaye (2005). The planning questions also offer a framework for understanding the function and importance of various components of a plan. Thus, this rubric looks for evidence that all stages recommended by Holcomb (and others discussed earlier) have been considered and addressed in a given plan.

BIRTH OF A RUBRIC

An initial rubric was developed after studying planning theory, investigating two existing university plans in detail, and discussing other educational plans during class meetings. The rubric was then field-tested using recently developed strategic plans created by two institutions of higher learning in the United States. For one university, a draft plan had been completed and disseminated for review and finalization. For the other, a finalized plan had been disseminated by the university and was being implemented. The overall goal of this investigation was to create a useful assessment instrument (in the form of a rubric) designed to achieve an accurate, high-quality evaluation of existing plans.

A paper was developed to briefly describe the two organizations, explain the rationale for this particular comparison, put forth a rubric for evaluating strategic plans, and discuss the findings of using this rubric for evaluating and comparing the organizations' current plans. A comparison of these two very recent planning documents revealed topics of common concern and shed light on the issues, concerns, dreams, and values of two very different east coast universities.

The focus of the first paper was to compare and contrast the strategic plans developed by two different universities. Convenience sampling was used to select the institutions for comparison; two universities were identified as being heavily engaged in developing and implementing strategic plans and as having comprehensive plans readily available for review. In addition, each university's commitment to the planning process was evident. It was projected that comparing plans developed with apparent enthusiasm and broad-based commitment at two very different institutions of higher learning would yield useful findings. These expectations were confirmed in the process of studying and evaluating the two plans, wherein some intriguing commonalities were discovered which will be discussed further.

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY AS A STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING VALID ASSESSMENT

The overall strategy for the project involved using Bloom's Taxonomy as a basic outline for determining process. The levels of Bloom's Taxonomy increase in intensity from *knowledge, comprehension, application,* and *analysis* to *synthesis* and *evaluation* (Bloom, 1995/2005). Evaluation, according to Bloom, constitutes the highest order of knowing. It is the most difficult to achieve. Evaluation requires careful integration of each other type of knowing. Drawing on all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy to create an evaluation promotes confidence in the overall assessment by helping ensure consideration of multiple perspectives.

The Internet was used to obtain two existing strategic plans for comparison, and the student researchers gained *knowledge* and built *comprehension* by reading each plan. They also read and discussed the theoretical basis for strategic planning and the current practices used in the field (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Holcomb, 2001). Each of the doctoral researchers read both strategic plans and then identified and discussed critical aspects and components of each plan.

The *application* level of Bloom's Taxonomy involved using the knowledge gained in the previous steps to develop an initial scoring rubric. The resulting draft was used to *analyze* each of the two plans separately. This analytic process involved assessing various isolated aspects of the plan (as outlined on the rubric), modifying the wording of the rubric, and then writing text about pertinent aspects of each plan.

The process fostered *synthesis* in several ways. During this field-testing phase, the rubric was refined to integrate theory and practical application (as reflected in the two existing plans). In fact, the rubric itself was initially developed though a process of synthesis using a matrix to cross-reference ideas regarding planning theory proposed by Holcomb (2001), Allison and Kaye (2005), and course handouts.

Using this rubric framework, the students were able to discern similarities and differences between the plans. Both of the plans evaluated were judged to decline in quality following the goals and objectives sections. Both plans seemed effective in articulating a vision for the future, but each lacked information regarding the resources to guide practice, evaluation, and refinement after implementation. Additional plans would need to be assessed using the rubric to determine if this pattern is consistent among university plans. This observed decline does support claims of this nature by Holcomb (2001), Allison and Kaye (2005), Wilson (1997), and others.

The rubric was used to determine a score for each evaluation category in addition to an overall evaluation. This overall score does not represent a simple average of the individual scores, but a holistic assessment of how the strengths and weaknesses complement or undermine each other. A plan that has consistently excellent scores but includes a number of marginal components or even just one or two major omissions or conflicts might be given a poor rating overall.

Tabulating the individual scores on the rubric thus requires *synthesis* to reach a comprehensive and holistic *evaluation* score. Comparing and contrasting the completed rubrics and producing a written analysis for each plan enhanced the evaluation. Integrating newly discovered perspectives constituted another level of *synthesis* intended to enhance the quality of the *evaluation*.

Having a clear and conscious process for reaching evaluation is critical to producing a valid and reliable evaluation. Bloom's Taxonomy highlights the difficulty in formulating valid evaluations, because it places this level of understanding at the summit. One cannot have confidence in an evaluation process when it does not reflect all lower levels of this taxonomy. While the authors of the initial paper had little prior experience in evaluating and critiquing formal strategic plans, they developed and followed a clear and iterative process for making evaluative assessments. The intention was to achieve an evaluation grounded in theory that could be replicated by other scholars.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED RUBRIC

Figure 1 shows the rubric developed for this project. The format of this rubric is consistent with recommendations by Driscoll and Wood (2007) where "each component is described with levels of performance, much like standards, into ratings" (p. 108). In this rubric, the top of each column indicates a specific level of quality. Each row represents a different component that should be included in a strategic plan. The block representing the intersection between a column and a row provides detail about what constitutes that level of quality for the given component.

VERTICAL COLUMNS: LEVELS OF QUALITY

The first three levels of quality shown, the headings for the vertical columns in this rubric, are fairly standard – representing categories of "excellent," "good," and "fair "(Driscoll & Wood, 2007). An item in the excellent category strengthens the overall plan. At this level, the component is clearly and thoroughly addressed and is well coordinated with other components in the plan. An item in the good category is addressed in the plan in a helpful way but may be somewhat under-developed. Too many scores at the good level will indicate instability of overall plan. A component in the fair category ultimately weakens the plan. It inhibits success of the overall plan by including information that contradicts other items or omitting some pieces of information that seem critical.

This rubric posits one unique category designed to accommodate a certain level of interpretation among planning teams, which is labeled as "inconsequential." When an item ranks as inconsequential to

the plan, the component may either be missing or be greatly underdeveloped but without severe detriment to the plan. While omission of that single item may not hinder implementation and/or institutionalization of the plan in and of itself, too many omissions indicate instability of the overall plan.

HORIZONTAL ROWS: COMPONENTS OF A STRATEGIC PLAN

Each row represents a specific component typically found in a strategic plan. This list was derived from Allison and Kaye's (2005) recommended components and from a class handout compiled by Williams (n.d.). The order of the recommended items was established using Holcomb's (2001) five questions as a flow chart, in an effort to make sure each step of initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing the plan would be addressed in the strategic planning document.

These questions ask: Where are we now? Where do we want to go? How will we get there? How will we know we are there? How can we keep it going? It is interesting to note, Holcomb actually refined the last two questions in a way that summarized the intent of our assessment model: How will we know we are (getting) there? How will we sustain focus and momentum?

Typical components of a complete plan have been nested within Holcomb's (2001) framework, and include the following: introduction, organization's history and profile, executive summary, summary of core strategies, goals and/or objectives, support, process for evaluation of the outcomes and refinement of the plan, appendices, and the overall, holistic assessment. The rubric does not mention planning assumptions, thus constituting an area for further research.

INTRODUCTION

A clear and concise statement of rationale for planning should be included at beginning of the plan. According to Allison and Kaye (2005), the introduction is usually written by the president of an organization's board to convey support for the plan.

Organization's History and Profile

A plan should convey pertinent information about the organization and its history. Its text should provide clear evidence that organization's culture and context have been considered and integrated into plan.

Executive Summary

Each plan should contain a well-organized executive summary, which – in one or two pages – references the mission and vision and highlights the core strategies of the plan. This section should brief readers on the institution's planning process and the most important aspects of the plan.

Mission, Vision, and/or Value Statements

Every plan must include a clear vision statement. A high-quality statement of vision and values is inspirational and is expressed in passionate terms; it enhances the overall mission of the organization and enthralls readers to explore the plan further.

Summary of Core Strategies

Core strategies of the plan should be clearly stated and developed with both depth and breadth. They should align with the organization's mission and to be feasible to implement.

Goals/Objectives

Specific goals and/or objectives should be presented with enough depth and breadth to provide direction and ensure feasibility. The document should provide evidence that consideration has been given to financial, administrative, and governance mechanisms in the development of goals and objectives. It should include a convincing strategy for achieving action, with a reasonable indication of who, what, when, where and how the goals will be addressed.

Support

The plan should ensure feasibility by delineating specific goals and/or objectives regarding finance,

administration, and governance to enhance progress during implementation.

Strategy for Evaluating Outcomes

The plan should indicate mechanisms, schedule, and/or key performance indicators for assessing progress during multiple stages of the implementation and institutionalization process.

Strategy for Refining the Plan

The document should outline who will implement the plan, monitor and confirm progress, and refine inadequate aspects so as to institutionalize the plan in a proactive, adaptive, and healthy way.

Appendices

The appendices of a plan should be well organized and should allow the reader to easily locate information necessary for understanding and/or implementing the plan.

Holistic Assessment

Circling or color-coding the level that a plan attains regarding the quality of each component can provide a holistic assessment derived either visually or mathematically. While the method used in this particular study involved a graphic analysis of the overall pattern of quality ratings for each plan, it would also be possible to analyze plans more quantitatively. In such a case, an assessor could assign scores for each quality rating and then weight and average the scores.

This rubric defines an excellent plan as one that provides a comprehensive vision addressing most content areas in a strong way and contains few, if any, areas that are inconsequential or weak. A good plan addresses most content areas at the level of good or excellent and contains only a few inconsequential or weak areas. A weak plan fails to adequately address several pertinent content areas (e.g., when more than a few areas of the plan are weak and/or many are omitted, the overall plan has weak chances for success). An inconsequential plan actually constitutes a weak plan, by using an organization's planning resources without return on investment.

OBSERVATIONS FROM FIELD-TESTING

In comparing the team's assessment of two university's plans, a number of patterns emerged. There is a need to assess additional plans using the rubric to determine if the patterns identified hold consistently among strategic plans developed in higher education.

Both plans started with a clear introduction that explains why a plan was needed. A clear rationale indicating the support of upper leadership appears to be important in fostering the development of a university-wide strategic plan. Both of these plans expressed strong support from upper administrators and widespread investment of planning time and other resources.

Both plans provided some indication of "where they want to go." Each plan included a convincing vision, which can guide future decision-making. It appears planning teams generally know to include this element as part of a formal strategic plan. Stating a clear and inspirational vision constitutes a first-step toward motivating widespread efforts toward common goals. Unless these common goals are also clearly and convincingly delineated, individual efforts to contribute to the general vision will not be as coordinated and therefore as effective as they could be (as seemed to be the case in both plans assessed).

Both plans reflected some confusion in communicating "where they are now." While it makes sense that some groups might omit information on "where they are now," thinking that the current context is obvious to all internal constituents, this information is quite helpful for describing the pre-plan context for internal audiences. It also allows external constituents to understand the plan . . . and it provides a snapshot to allow future comparison (i.e. to gauge change that has occurred since conception of the plan).

Neither plan effectively articulated "how they will get there," "how they will know they are getting there," or "how they will keep it going." Both of the plans studied showed further weakness in explaining "how they will get there." While this tactical component is essential to all plans, neither of these two organizations included adequate information about how they will get where they say they want to

go. Both omitted critical information regarding the financial, administrative, and governance factors necessary to support change. It appears that even plans with high attention to detail in opening phases may have inadequate delineation to ensure appropriate action, assessment, and refinement of programs.

Overall, both plans started stronger than they ended. Despite clearly noble intentions and intense initial efforts, both plans ultimately achieved lower overall probability for success by omitting or under-developing too many crucial components. Based on personal and professional experience with planning in various educational programs and on ideas proposed by Holcomb, it appears that many plans follow this pattern of neglecting to address critical stages of assessment and refinement. This critique of two plans developed by institutions of higher learning further supported this belief.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The most comprehensive conclusion of this project is strategic planning is a means, not an end – it requires flexibility and calls an organization to persistently ask "fundamental questions" that require it to continually learn and adjust (Swenk, 2001). Unfortunately, monitoring and learning have been under-recognized in the planning arena and those who develop plans generally underestimate or fail to allocate the time and resources needed to successfully monitor, evaluate, and re-align their plans (Kennie, 2002). The project described in this article involved a review of literature on strategic planning combined with development of a rubric for assessing the quality of plans developed for higher education. With further field-testing, the rubric holds promise for widespread use. Many of the findings were consistent with the review of literature that was compiled before, during, and after development of the rubric. The addition of a "task description" as recommended by Stevens and Levi (2005), which would briefly describe the "assignment" of a strategic plan and would be placed directly above the matrix, could also help clarify the intended use of the rubric and the overall point of producing a strategic plan.

The assessment rubric proffered here may serve as a point of reference for evaluating a variety of types of plans, although, it has been designed and field-tested for use in higher education. The rubric may be useful: (a) at the beginning of a planning initiative, (b) as a checklist for planners when drafting and finalizing a plan, (c) to facilitate movement from "strategic planning" to "strategic management," (d) as a means for checking progress at milestones throughout implementation, and (e) as a framework for continually and purposefully re-aligning the plan to meet changing opportunities and conditions.

While acknowledging the potential utility of this tool, the developers of the rubric are cognizant of Presley and Leslie's (1999) caution that the blanket application of any tool could actually lead to higher levels of standardization. Using standardized methods could inadvertently weaken the goal of promoting continual feedback to increase self-awareness, purposefulness, intentionality, and ability to act upon changing opportunities.

To avoid misdirected standardization, the authors of this paper recommend that organizations should conscientiously assess the applicability of each descriptor in the rubric to determine its appropriateness. This rubric can (and indeed should) be adapted – in a spirit of collaboration and collective refinement described by Driscoll and Wood (2007) – to enhance a university's effectiveness in strategic planning.

One conscious attempt to promote variation among plans while using this rubric is the inclusion of the "inconsequential" category; however, this column also represents an area for future research as there is no evidence of this type of category being used in assessment rubrics. Further research is needed to assess the efficacy of this category in permitting a reasonable number of omissions per plan. It is important for planners to discuss and denote which components will be critical to include in a given strategic plan.

According to the rubric, only a few of these specific components are absolutely required in creating a strategic plan. The rubric does not allow for an "inconsequential" assessment for the core strategies and goal/objectives components. These particular components seem essential to a strategic plan and imperative for guiding organizational change. Rubric users should be aware that "core strategies" and "goals/objectives" might be identified in a given plan with those terms or with any number of other terms. Similar descriptors include: priorities, initiatives, strategies, goals, or objectives.

Regardless of the specific term used, it is important that these components are included in the plan to focus efforts through a continuous and dynamic process of self-analysis (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence,

1997). The rubric promotes "action research" that links internal, self-evaluation to daily practice. Researchers indicate this type of learning behavior is essential to overcoming the traditional gap between evaluation and practice (Gordon, 2002). In fact, when self-assessment is used formatively – when it continually re-informs the process and updates the vision – summative evaluation is often unnecessary (Barnetson, 2001). Using valid self-assessment techniques prompts learners – be they individuals or institutions – to make conscious, intentional choices that align with and reinforce their overall vision for the future, and that thus enhance their sense of purpose and identity.

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Figure 1: Rubric for Assessing Quality of a University's Strategic Plan

Assessment of the Strategic Plan proposed by (Enter Name of University)	**Excellent** - Strengthens Plan (Item is clearly and thoroughly addressed and is well coordinated with other components.)	**Good** - Helps Plan (Item addressed but somewhat under-developed; too many scores at this level will indicate instability of overall plan.)	**Poor** - Weakens Plan (Inhibits success of overall plan; includes information that is essential but missing, or information that contradict other items.)	**Inconsequential** to Plan (May be missing or greatly underdeveloped without severe detriment to plan, in and of itself. Too many omissions indicate instability.)
INTRODUCTION	Clear and concise statement of rationale for planning is included at beginning of the plan.	Rationale for planning is understated/implied or difficult to locate (i.e. covered in a later section of the plan).	Provides poor rationale for planning or indicates organization's unreadiness for change.	Item may be missing or greatly underdeveloped without severe detriment to plan.
Does plan answer: ***Where are they now?***				
ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY and PROFILE	Plan conveys pertinent information about the organization and its history. Text provides clear evidence that organization's history and context have been considered and integrated into plan.	Plan includes some information about the organization and its history, including enough information about the existing organization for reader to understand the plan's context.	Plan fails to recognize history and/or organizational context to the point that omission of this information hinders the reader from understanding aspects of the plan.	Item may be missing or greatly underdeveloped without severe detriment to plan.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Plan contains a well-organized executive summary which, in one or two pages, references the mission and vision and highlights the core strategies of the plan. Readers are briefed on the process and the most important aspects of the plan.	Plan contains an executive summary which, in one or two pages, references the mission and vision and highlights the core strategies of the plan. Key features may not be clearly outlined, but text still prepares reader for the strategies, goals, and objectives to come.	Plan contains a brief executive summary which does not give readers proper insight into the mission, the process, or importance of the plan and hinders reader from understanding aspects of the plan.	Item may be missing or greatly underdeveloped without severe detriment to plan.
Does plan answer: ***Where do they want to go?***				
MISSION, VISION, and/or VALUES STATEMENT	Mission statement is clear -- vision and values enhance the overall mission of the organization and statement enthralls readers to explore plan further. Mission and vision are inspirational and expressed in passionate terms.	Mission is clear -- vision and values align with the overall mission of the organization while drawing some interest from readers to explore plan further. Purpose, business, and guiding principles are well articulated.	Mission, vision, and/or values are vague, inconsistent or lacking. Statements create little interest for readers to explore plan further.	Item may be missing or greatly underdeveloped without severe detriment to plan.
SUMMARY OF CORE STRATEGIES	Core strategies of the plan are clearly stated and are developed with both depth and breadth. They align with mission and to be appear feasible.	Core strategies of the plan are adequately developed and align with mission. Feasibility may be questionable based on information presented in the plan.	Core strategies of the plan are poorly developed, inadequately explained, and/or unrealistic.	Not applicable -- omission of this core planning component cannot be inconsequential.
Does plan answer: ***How will they get there?***				

Does plan answer: ***How will they get there?***				
GOALS/OBJECTIVES	Specific goals/objectives are presented with enough depth and breadth to provide direction and ensure feasibility. There is evidence that consideration has been given to financial, administrative, and governance mechanisms in developing goals/objectives. A convincing plan for achieving action is described (i.e. there is reasonable indication of who, what, when, where and how the strategies will be addressed).	Specific goals/objectives are presented with some depth and breadth. Some consideration has been given to financial, administrative and governance mechanisms in developing goals/objectives. A fair plan for achieving action is provided (i.e. there is some indication of who, what, when, where and how the strategies will be addressed).	Specific goals/objectives are not included or are presented with inadequate depth and breadth. Little or no consideration has been given to financial, administrative and governance mechanisms in developing goals/objectives AND/OR a weak plan for achieving action is provided (i.e. there is no plan for determining who, what, when, where and how the strategies will be addressed).	Not applicable -- omission of this core planning component cannot be inconsequential.
SUPPORT	Plan ensures feasibility by delineating specific goals/objectives regarding finance, administration, and governance to enhance progress during implementation.	Plan enhances feasibility by delineating some goals/objectives regarding finance, administration, and governance.	Conflicting or missing information regarding finance, administration, and/or governance is evident that will likely hinder coordination and implementation of the plan.	Item may be missing or greatly underdeveloped without severe detriment to plan.
Does plan answer: ***How will they know they are getting there?***				
STRATEGY FOR EVALUATING OUTCOMES	Plan indicates mechanisms, schedule, and/or key performance indicators for assessing progress during multiple stages of the implementation and institutionalization process.	Plan provides some information regarding mechanisms, schedule, or key performance indicators for assessing progress in the future.	No plans are evident for checking progress.	Item may be missing or greatly underdeveloped without severe detriment to plan.
Does plan answer: ***How can they keep it going?***				
STRATEGY FOR REFINING PLAN	A feasible plan is outlined regarding who will implement plan; monitor and confirm progress; refine inadequate aspects; and institutionalize the plan.	Good information is provided regarding who will implement plan; monitor and confirm progress; refine inadequate aspects; and institutionalize the plan.	No information is provided regarding who will implement plan; monitor and confirm progress; refine inadequate aspects; and institutionalize the plan.	Item may be missing or greatly underdeveloped without severe detriment to plan.
Does plan provide necessary supporting documents?				
APPENDICES	Appendices are well organized and allow reader to easily locate supplemental information that assists in understanding and/or implementing the plan.	Appendices are fairly well organized and allow reader to locate supplemental information.	Appendices are of poor quality or are missing where needed. Supplemental information is inadequate to support understanding and/or implementation of the plan.	Item may be missing or greatly underdeveloped without severe detriment to plan.
OVERALL ASSESSMENT				
HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT	An excellent plan provides a comprehensive vision that addresses most content areas in an strong way. It contains few if any areas that are inconsequential or weak.	A good plan addresses most content areas at the level of good or excellent and contains only a few areas that are inconsequential or weak.	A weak plan fails to adequately address several pertinent content areas (i.e. when more than a few areas of the plan are weak and/or many are omitted, the overall plan has weak chances for success). An inconsequential plan actually constitutes a weak plan, by using an organization's planning resources without return on investment.	Not applicable -- an inconsequential plan constitutes a poor plan.

Sequence of questions in boldface was adapted from Holcomb (2001). Specific criteria were developed using Allison and Kaye (2005) and Holcomb.

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Walt Polka, Conference Chair
wpolka@niagara.edu

Conference Hotel
Sheraton Four Points
Single/Double Rooms - $140.00
Telephone: 912-721-1280
www.sheratonhotels.com

Mention ISEP for Conference Rate

FUTURE CONFERENCES

2010 – Washington, DC – 40th Anniversary Conference
Virginia Roach, Chair - vroach@gwu.edu

ISEP
MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM
(Please Print)

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Organization/Department _____
_____

Mailing Address: _____

_____
City Province/State

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Fees: Professional Membership and Subscription to *Educational Planning* = $100.00 USD

Student Membership and subscription to *Educational Planning* = $50.00 USD

Payment by check, money order, or Purchase Order required with application.
NOTE: Annual Membership is based upon the calendar year – January to December.

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: ISEP
RETURN MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND PAYMENT TO:
Dr. Glen I. Earthman
Secretary/Treasurer, ISEP
2903 Ashlawn Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060-8101
USA

ORGANIZATION

The Society was founded December 10, 1970 in Washington, DC. Over 50 local, state, national, and international planners attended the first organizational meeting.

Since then its continued growth demonstrates the need for a professions organization with educational planning as its exclusive concern.

PURPOSE

The International Society for Educational Planning was established to foster the professional knowledge sand interests of educational planners. Through conferences and publications, the society promotes the interchange of ideas within the planning community. The membership includes persons from the ranks of governmental agencies, school-based practitioners, and higher education.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE SOCIETY

Membership in the society is open to any person active or interested in educational planning and the purposes of the Society. To join the Society or renew a membership please complete and submit the enclosed form.
Please forward check/money order/PO to:

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