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Special Publication Announcement

The Executive Board of the International Society for Educational Planning passed a resolution in its 2016 Annual Conference governing the publication of Educational Planning as follows:

1. Educational Planning, the official publication of International Society for Educational Planning, will be published for four issues per year.
2. Starting from the second issue of Educational Planning in 2017, the journal will be published online and will be available on the website of the International Society for Educational Planning.
3. Hard copies of the journal will continue to be printed for the issue authors and for all the library/institution subscribers.

FROM THE EDITORS

This particular issue of Educational Planning is intended to be devoted to open themes of educational planning. However, incidentally, many authors thought of the same planning topic and submitted papers to the journal to discuss the planning mindset of educational leaders. The timing cannot be better. To meet future challenges, educational leaders need to be ready to plan for change. It all starts with the planning mindset.

In the first paper of this issue, Richardson, Jenkins and Lemoine claim that higher education faces its greatest combinations of challenges: economic uncertainty, accountability and globalization, overlaid by emerging technologies. Institutional changes to meet these challenges demand educational leaders to have a mindset for strategic planning.

The paper by Polka, Wolfgang and Mete elaborates the conceptual framework components of serendipitous educational planning basing on the premise that individuals engaged in developing and implementing educational programs and activities need to have a "default planning paradigm". It implies a conceptual mindset that is always ready to efficiently and effectively incorporate new ideas from the ever-changing context into educational opportunities.

The third paper reports the findings of a significant study by Clayton, Jamison, Briggs and Tekleselassie. The study examines the design elements of clinical practices and how key assessments are used in clinical practice to support candidates in an educational administration program. The findings of this study contributes to helping visionary leaders understand the problems of practice influencing student outcomes with a mindset to planning for program improvement.

Abreh's paper involves a study of school management committees' involvement and participation in school based management practices in Ghana. The findings of the study show that the current state of committee involvement and participation in school-based management is not well coordinated. Recommendation is made with plans in mind to revitalize the roles and responsibilities of the committees to improve educational efficiency.

All the papers in this issue have pointed to the direction of planning for institutional improvement with a strong mindset that is ready to initiate positive changes to meet anticipated challenges ahead. The planning mindset includes readiness for challenges and the process of organizing changing effort for improvement. It also implies planning to monitor continuous positive progress of the institution.

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PLANNING FOR INNOVATION AND DISRUPTION
IN A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

Higher education faces its greatest combinations of challenges: economic uncertainty, accountability and globalization: overlaid by emerging technologies. University leaders face the twin trials of dramatic decreases in public financial support and the increasing cost of resources to avoid technological obsolescence. Technologies continue to evolve that will disrupt higher education in the future. The challenge for traditional universities whose concentration historically has been the production of knowledge in the form of human capital, research, and scholarship is to be able to tap into the expanding need for lifelong learning. Access to higher education will be a necessity for job mobility and economic success. Survival for universities requires modification and adaptation. Traditional educational paradigms have changed and the physical university is now a combination multi-dimensional education model. All these changes demand planning, specifically strategic planning, if higher education institutions are to be competitive and ultimately successful.

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education has faced many challenges since its meager inception (Altbach, 2004). However, higher education today faces its greatest combinations of challenges: economic uncertainty, accountability and globalization overlaid by emerging technologies that are intimidating to learn and formidable to administer (Rabah, 2016; Tierney, 2014). Higher education institutions are attempting to develop the capacity to adapt and modify to the new models of knowledge and information (Lane, Lemoine, Tinney & Richardson, 2014). Therefore higher education is often depicted as an "industry," operating in a highly competitive global marketplace (Marginson, 2006).

The challenge for traditional universities whose concentration historically has been the production of knowledge in the form of human capital, research, and scholarship is to access the expanding need for lifelong learning in a digital economy (Guri-Rosenblit, Sebkova & Teichler, 2007; Staley & Trinkle, 2011). While the need for education is growing, the sustainability of all the forms of postsecondary education is a concern (Duderstadt, 2000; Graves, 2010). "In all modern contexts", Graves (2010) points out, "education is now the primary vehicle for practicing

the principle of social equity (by enabling equal opportunity) and for ensuring collective socioeconomic security and ensuring against its collapse" (p. 28).

Higher education is at a defining moment in America facing challenges from all aspects of society (Lemoine, Hackett & Richardson, 2016b). Listening to the discussion of today, one senses that very few people in America are content with the higher educational system (Slater, 2015). Rising costs, uncertainty of jobs following graduation and questions concerning the continued value of higher education contribute to a chorus expressing concern about the future and sustainability of higher education in America (Bonk, 2009). Why has this phenomenon occurred? Many in higher education have not responded to the threats of globalization, innovation and disruption (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Demillo, 2015). In the middle of the twentieth century, American education was the envy of the world, but today it ranks below most of the industrialized nations of the world (Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). Organizational and political leaders should address the concerns and plan for a changing, dynamic, and multidimensional future to be globally and locally competitive (Alagaraja & Li, 2015; McClure, 2016).

Economic considerations related to international competitiveness have become a significant stimulus behind the internationalization of higher education. Education is increasingly seen not only as an export commodity, but also as a key national brand for a nation's knowledge proficiency (Lane & Maznevski, 2014).

The VUCA World

VUCA, volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, terms coined for the military world also describe today's higher education world (Lemoine, Hackett & Richardson, 2016a). VUCA describes today's chaotic, turbulent, and rapidly changing higher education environment, which Ansell (2015) suggests is the new educational normal. The financial crisis of 2008-2009, for example, rendered many businesses obsolete, and organizations throughout the world were plunged into turbulent economic environments (Lichy & Birch, 2016). At the same time, rapid changes marched forward as technological developments like social media exploded (Charbonneau-Gowdy, 2017; Garrison & Akyol, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2016), the world's population continued to simultaneously grow and age and move (Benneworth & Cunha, 2015; Dolphin, 2015), and global disasters disrupted lives, economies, businesses, and education (Altbach, 2004; Carlisle & McMillan, 2017; Guile, 2001; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).

Higher education leaders in the VUCA world have to be activists, adaptive and flexible (Marshall, 2010; Morris, 2009). VUCA leaders confront social, cultural and educational problems that are often deeply divisive (Tierney & Lanford, 2016). VUCA leaders must build the capacity to address economically disadvantaged students who may be homeless, have a different religious background and culture, speak a different language, and arrive at school with differing abilities to learn (Mense, Fulwiler, Richardson & Lane, 2011). And, VUCA leaders must come to terms with society's contradicting ideas of equity and diversity (Woodall, Hiller & Resnick, 2014).

To be successful and effective higher education institutions need VUCA leaders who are decision-makers and courageous when dealing with the uncertainty of change (Hackett, Lemoine & Richardson, 2016). Sorting out the complexity of issues is a constant challenge; there is no normality except change (Levine, 2014). Educational leaders must act and take responsibility for the volatility and pressures for complex change, and realize change will bring ambiguity and challenges that come with setbacks, stress, and crises (Leon & Price 2016). When globalization is added to the VUCA environment, it changes the world's economy, increases diversity, and helps create the ubiquitous use of technology which has a tremendous effect on higher education (Hackett, Lemoine & Richardson, 2016; Moodie, 2016; Pinherio & Antonowicz, 2015).

INNOVATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Innovation is not a new concept of higher education. Current discussions about "innovation" may be more passionate, but innovation has long been a hallmark of American academic institutions (Tapscott & Williams, 2010). Innovation is often described as a multi-stage process whereby institutions transform ideas into new service or processes, in order or gain competitive advantage in the marketplace (Baregheh, Rowley, & Sambrook, 2009).

The innovations happening today, globalization and technology are great examples, more threatening and intimidating than those of recent years. Innovations in technology for example, have created a world market place to complete with the local market place (Serdyukov & Serdyukov, 2017). Innovations in the delivery of instruction and knowledge have led to borderless educational opportunities (Blin & Munro, 2008). The consequences of these innovations are more far-reaching than ever before, challenging established institutions and the very future of higher education (Bates, 2010).

These innovations are challenging higher education institutions to remain relevant in a rapidly changing global landscape (Brewer & Tierey, 2011; Proenza, 2010). New and innovative technology makes the world global, but most institutions are required to sustain their local stakeholders (Hearn & Warshaw, 2015). The low adoption rates for many innovations have increased costs and negatively affected productivity (Keo & Jun, 2016). Failure to implementation an innovation can become expensive with dire short-term and long-term organizational consequences (Gobble, 2016). The biggest obstacle blocking true innovation in higher education is the absence of reliable techniques to judge and monitor instructional quality (Flavin, 2016).

DISRUPTION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Disruption is not a new concept but has become one of the latest "buzz" words surrounding higher education. A "disruptive innovation," defined by Christensen and Eyring (2011), is "a process that allows a simple, affordable, and accessible product to replace a product that is complex, expensive, and inaccessible, even if the initial quality of the new product is inferior" (Casares, Dickson, Hannigan, Hinton, & Phelps, 2013, p. 11). The authors argue that technologies will keep evolving and will continue to disrupt higher education.

Higher education institutions are facing decreased funding during a time of scarce resources yet increased accountability for productivity in the development and articulation of knowledge (Jain & Purswani, 2016). Duderstadt (2000) suggested newer university roles are "an engine for economic growth through the generation and application of new knowledge" (p. 5). Colleges and universities are regarded as *a place to go*, land-based institutions where the uninformed meet teachers in a face-to-face setting to become informed (Lane, Kehr & Richardson, 2009). Students emerge from traditional universities, certificated and credentialed, with necessary tools for upward social and economic mobility (Westberry, McNaughton, Billo & Gaeta, 2015). However, technology has disrupted the traditional, formal processes of higher education (Bass & Eynon, 2017; Christensen & Eyring, 2011; Christensen, Horn, Caldera, & Soares, 2011) and e-Learning 2.0 expertise acquired from virtual class participation does not fit the traditional brick and mortar campus model (Weller & Anderson, 2013).

Traditional university educations are costly and one disruptive innovation, technology, has forced changes to existing higher education models (Christensen, Horn, Caldera, & Soares, 2011). Higher education leaders are forced to objectify, measure, and quantify persons, programs, and processes, often without the input derived from planning (Altback & Salmi, 2016). This discrepancy of quantity over quality creates an unhealthy ethos in the educational institution that threatens to destroy the very persons and programs that planning should assist (Carillo, 2016; Siu & Garcia, 2017).

Externally driven forces have subjected America's higher education institutions to demands for accountability that have not proven to be effective (Chan, Hackett, Lemoine & Richardson, 2016). Irrespective of the ineffectiveness, numerous states, particularly popularly elected state politicians, have advocated strong external accountability without understanding the low organizational capacity of the educational instructions to deliver critical productivity (Christensen, Bartman & Van Bever, 2016). The size of the accountability movement indicates that the survival of public higher education may very well hinge on the ability of educators to demonstrate productivity and accountability in a chaotic marketplace characterized by innovation and disruption (Craig, 2015; Downes & Nunes, 2014; Etzkowitz, 2003).

Technology has transformed higher education and students can take classes in Abu Dhabi, London, Los Angeles, or at a local community college, regional college, state university, or private university (Flavin, 2017). The Internet has changed the world from an industrial economy to a digital economy (Gargano & Throop, 2017). Higher education is increasingly seen not only as an export commodity, but also as a key national brand for a nation's knowledge proficiency (Lemoine, Greer, Hackett & Richardson, 2016). Knowledge institutions, whether private or public, are regarded as significant contributors to a country's global and local competitiveness (Greenwood, Hinings & Whetten, 2014).

As learning becomes increasingly borderless, higher education is likely to rank increasingly high on national agendas primarily for knowledge production and economic incentives (Lanford, 2016; Lemoine & Richardson, 2015). Developing countries view increasing higher education participation as crucial to their transition to developed country standing while developed countries view high education as a primary driver of economic viability (Guri-Rosenblit, 2010; Meister-Scheytt & Scheytt, 2005).

IS THERE A MEANS FOR ADDRESSING THESE INNOVATIONS AND DISRUPTIONS?

Planning is a fundamental key to current and future success for higher education, particularly in this age of innovation and disruption (Abdallah & Langley, 2013). However, many educational leaders often overlook and fail to use planning as a prelude to designing and implementing sustainability and productivity procedures for success in the globalized marketplace (Wheelen & Hunger, 2012). Today's educational leaders need to understand and embrace planning as essential to their personal success and the success of their institution (Teichler, 2006). In today's environment, the globalization of the 21st century fuels the current interest in planning because success or failure will determine the future of American society, and the world (Glendinning, 2014). However, in most higher education institutions there exists an incongruity between the expectations of outside agencies and the realities of higher education (Chance & Williams, 2015). This discrepancy can be addressed by organized planning.

The long-range goal of planning is to enhance productivity (Daft, 2010). A second powerful application of planning is comparing productivity across individuals, schools, universities and even competitors in private schools (Abraham, 2012). Planning is necessary to measure quantitatively the investment of education because education is about the utilization of resources. In practical planning measures, an output represents results. Efficiency and effectiveness must work together for higher educational organizations to be successful or at least sustainable. Institutions can temporarily survive without perfect efficiency; they usually die if they are ineffective. Efficiency typically implies a short-term response to change, while effectiveness specifies a long-term reaction (Drucker, 1993). According to Kohn (2000), "it is easier to measure efficiency than effectiveness, easier to rate how well we're doing something than to ask whether what we're doing makes sense" (pp. 3-4). Drucker (1974) stated, "Effectiveness is concerned with doing the right things. Efficiency is doing things right" (p. 45).

Planning gives a higher education institution the evidence and direction required to make substantial changes to enhance productivity (Aquino, 2014). Change is difficult and often produces unintended results. Educational leaders must examine organizational capacity to meet resource demands, in light of problems on university employees (Letizia, 2017). Consequently, higher education leaders need to understand and use planning, know their organizational capacity, and be able to articulate clearly, the role planning plays in their organization. Planning should be understood and used in relation to contextual reality of higher education and not just in the abstract thinking of theorists and politicians (Rothaermel, 2015).

Planning forces higher education leaders to work smarter and that concept should carry over to all employees (Wilkinson & Eacott, 2013). Leaders must empower people at the lowest levels in the institution to decide how they can best do their jobs. Empowering the people who know their work the best is one way of accomplishing "working smarter" objectives (Saxena, 2013). Leaders realize that the people, who best know how to do jobs more efficiently, are those who are doing those jobs right. Such is the essence of strategic planning, involving employees to help plan the work and the outcomes necessary for success. The most practical approach to facilitating adoption and promoting usage of planning is involvement (Mbugua & Rarieya, 2014)

"Inputs" is the term used to define the resources consumed in the production of outputs. Thus, inputs include all the tangible resources consumed (materials, supplies, and so forth), the services that support production (heat, light, space, rentals, computer time, and so forth), and the effort or labor of people who use these resources to actually produce the output. Even though the term "input" includes all these various resources and expenses, typical productivity measures commonly uses ones, or a few, major inputs. Regardless of the level of planning analysis, outputs and output quality must be measured, and are compared to measured input consumption (Knight, 2014).

Educational planning requires that large, complex phenomena be "reduced" to objective, operational, and measurable concepts that can be displayed as quantitative expression for everyone to understand (Hayward, 2008). Single measures rarely, if ever, reflect the true state of things, as there are always multiple interests, goals, and values. It is possible to produce highly accurate and sensitive measures, inputs or outputs, but if these measures are not useful in helping people in higher education organizations make effective changes that result in productivity improvements, then that planning is useless (Chance, 2010).

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is a rational, systemic, and systematic process that requires higher education leaders to state the goals of the organization, how to attain the goals, and provide the criteria for planning, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating plans, programs and processes (Harris, Moynahan, Vickery, Henriksen, Morello & Kasemir, 2017). Strategic planning can be defined as the process by which an organization makes decisions and takes actions to enhance its long-term performance (Ololube, Aiya, Uriah & Ololube, 2016). A strategic plan identifies the markets in which the higher education institution competes, as well as the ways in which it competes. In most strategic planning the end result is to obtain competitive advantage in the marketplace (Hinton, 2012; Wolf & Floyd, 2013). The fundamental purpose of strategic planning is to transition the institution from present status to some desired future and, in the process, to develop a substantial competitive advantage over its competition (Hill & Jones, 2013). Though the process of investigating strengthens, weaknesses, and current opportunities and threats inside and outside the institution, the university leaders can ascertain the current status of the institution (Kaufman & Herman, 1991). The comparison between desired and existing situations clarifies the institution's needs related to resources. From these determinations operational programs are developed and implemented (Hu, Liu, Chen & Qin, 2017).

Strategic planning is based on the exploration of known or predicted trends, and is flexible and oriented toward achieving desired outcomes. So, strategic planning is the ideal tool for higher education leaders to use when confronting the innovations and disruptions (Hinton, 2012; Pisel, 2008).

What are the essential components of strategic planning and what makes it a technique of choice for higher education leaders? The following chart illustrates the essential phases in strategic planning.

Phases In The Strategic Planning Process

1. Initiate and develop agreement on a strategic planning protocols and process
2. Clarify mission, vision, goals and values
3. Identify organizational mandates; both internal and external
4. Assess the external environment strengths and weaknesses (PEST)
5. Assess the internal environment strengths and weaknesses (SWOT)
6. Identify the strategic issues facing the institution and formulate strategies to manage the issues
7. Establish a desired future for the institution.

Strategic planning is a valuable tool for effective response to innovation and disruption and to competently respond to these challenges (Bieler & McKenzie, 2017). As a management tool strategic planning enhances the institution's ability to move from short-term planning that is crisis-driven to broader strategic processes essential for sustainability (Butuner, 2016; Paliulis & Labanauskis, 2015). The data-based decision making inherent to strategic planning enables leaders to capture a holistic assessment of the institution's strengths and weaknesses (Cheng 2013; Davies & Davies 2010). With such information and data leaders have a reliable process to proceed with changes that are necessary for the institution to respond to the myriad of innovations and disruptions. Thus the process provides an inclusive way for facilitating communication with the multitude of stakeholder groups for involvement in planning and ultimately changes. Hence, it has the potential to enhance collaborative and collegial working relationships among all responsible parties (Chang, 2008).

Most higher education leaders spend their time planning means and not final output goals (Kaufman, Herman & Watters, 1996). Higher education institutions must assist faculty, staff and students to become successful in a world that demands knowledge, critical thought, problem solving, and competence (Kaufman et al., 1996). Continuing to allocate resources for the current system is to deny the changing conditions involving higher education in society. Reality demands administrators rethink and re-plan so higher education today can produce citizens of tomorrow. Drucker (2014) warned that continuing the current mode of planning and operation would simply make organizations better and better at doing what they have been doing. And to paraphrase Einstein, we are stupid to continue doing the same time and expect different results. Planning for innovation and disruption will help transport the institution toward a desired future, not stagnation.

In 1983, Lewis stated:

Recognizing the dynamic forces of change in global higher education, three assumptions can be made about the future:

1. It will differ from the past.
2. It will be difficult to predict.
3. The rate of change will be faster than ever before. (p. 3-4)

Drucker (1993) stated, "But one thing we can predict: the greatest change will be the change in knowledge in its form and content; in its meaning; in its responsibility; and in what it

means to be an educated person" (p. 218). In addition, Kaufman, Herman and Watters (1996) cited Albert Einstein's observation that the world is characterized by a proliferation of means and a confusion of goals.

Universities must adopt appropriate strategies or experience losses in competitiveness, students, resources, and compromise their future (Delprino, 2013). Strategic planning involves environmental scanning (both external and internal), strategy formulation (strategic or long-range planning), strategy implementation, and evaluation (Strike, Hanlon, & Foster, 2017). The study of strategic planning, therefore, emphasizes the monitoring and evaluating of internal and external opportunities and threats in light of the institution's perceived strengths and weaknesses. Strategic planning should be primarily concerned with the long-term future of the institution through the creation and maintenance of a competitive advantage leading to a favorable market position (Macfadyan & Dawson, 2012). Strategic planning demands analysis and decisions to formulate and execute policies to provide a competitive connection between the institution and its environment in such a manner for the institution to achieve organizational goals (Kealey, Peterson, Thompson & Waters, 2015).

Drucker (1993) stressed that:

To turn around any institution-whether a business, a labor union, a university, a hospital, or a government-requires always the same three steps:

1. Abandonment of the things that do not work, the things that have ever worked; the things that have outlived their usefulness and their capacity to contribute;

2. Concentration on the things that do work, the things that produce results, the things that improve the organization's ability to perform; and

3. Analysis of the half-successes, the half-failures

A turn-around requires abandoning whatever does not perform and doing more of whatever does perform. (p. 160)

Drucker's points are the essence of strategic planning. A careful examination of the institution requires objective analysis of all components and then making decisions about what can and should be done by the institution to successfully meet the threats of innovation and disruption facing higher education. Leaders should be strategic planners and compete in a continually changing and technologically impacted environment (Ololube, Aiya, Uriah & Ololube, 2016). Educational strategic planning creates a better future for individual, groups, organizations, and society (Bass & Eynon, 2017).

Finally, before the higher education institution can be structured to meet the educational challenges of the day, a decision must be made on what the challenges are, that is a necessary, functional component of strategic planning (Zhao, 2015). Today's fast-changing global environment dedicated to technological innovation brings increased competition for higher education institutions as they struggle with decreased funding, reduced numbers of students, and declining public and political support resulting from innovation and disruption. In the current knowledge based economy, higher education institutions are facing dilemmas and pressures from every direction with no end in sight (Bieler & McKenzie, 2017). How can higher education chart a path to productivity and sustainability? Strategic planning would appear to be an important tool for institutions to use to adapt themselves to the global influences of innovation and disruption in order to achieve their desired future. Desire for survival in this competitive environment makes these institutions utilize strategic planning to increase their ability to modify and adapt in this rapidly changing global environment (Fleischchmann & Koberstein, 2015).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It appears that higher education has not fully grasped the concept that all society's goals have some form of an economic content. In any society, the economy is essential. The function of higher education must be to educate individuals to function in a knowledge society by providing economic benefit to society. In order to accomplish this vision educational organization must turn around from today's practice and take additional approaches in achieving their societal visions. With constant change, educational leaders will need to be tough, courageous, know their own strengths, and be able to capitalize and build strong supportive relationships. Educational leaders will need to have fortitude to take increasing pressures to perform and realization that challenges inevitably bring setbacks, stress, and crises. Leadership is a process, not an event, and leadership skill sets can be taught.

Higher education must adapt or get left behind. Higher education reform is an ongoing discussion focused on ways and means to survive and thrive in this changing environment dictated by innovation and disruption. However, many institutions are disrupting themselves from the inside out as they attempt to deal with challenges without using techniques such as strategic planning to help inform their decision. True disruption occurs when existing institutions fail to embrace the forces of transformation.

Conceptually, higher education reform revolves around planning for today and more importantly for tomorrow. Planning is a future oriented concept that incorporates past history, present performance, and future direction to achieve organizational mission and objectives. Managing an educational organization to achieve acceptable performance standards requires the education leader to examine the relationships between planning and policy to achieve success.

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SERENDIPITOUS EDUCATIONAL PLANNING: EXPEDITIOUSLY APPLYING EFFECTIVE CHANGE ZONE (ECZ) MINDSET CONCEPTS

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ABSTRACT

Opportunities are like sunrises. If you wait too long, you miss them**. (William Arthur Ward)
The purpose of this article is to facilitate comprehension of key conceptual framework components of serendipitous educational planning using a practical example that was successfully implemented in 2015, replicated in 2016, and scheduled for 2017 at Niagara University in Western New York, USA. Serendipitous educational planning is based on the premise that individuals engaged in developing and implementing curriculum, programs, courses, and related educational activities need to have a "default planning paradigm" that they can readily apply if unexpected opportunities present themselves that are beneficial to the administration, faculty, and students of their respective organizations. The "default planning paradigm" henceforth known in this article as "serendipitous educational planning" implies a conceptual mindset that is always ready to efficiently and effectively incorporate new ideas from the ever-changing context into educational opportunities for faculty and students. This mindset is predicated on the Effective Change Zone (ECZ) conceptual framework that focuses on the human side of change and includes the following three key dimensions: organizational needs, social-professional needs, and personal needs.

INTRODUCTION

Serendipitous is defined as: *the faculty of making fortunate and unexpected discoveries by accident* (American Heritage Dictionary, 2017). Although the definition posits that those fortunate and unexpected discoveries occur by accident, it does not specify who and how the personal faculty or disposition for making those discoveries is developed or enhanced. The authors of this article contend that the personal faculty for doing so is a mindset that individuals nurture and reinforce by embracing a "default planning paradigm" consistent with well-established approaches to thinking about promoting educational changes using a conceptual framework that blends sound strategic and tactical orientations. The key components of serendipitous planning are congruent with the major components of the "effective change zone" innovation implementation process that focuses on the human side of change and includes the following three conceptual dimensions: organizational needs, social-professional needs, and personal needs (Griesmer, Lonneville, Scully, Haseley, & Polka, 2013; Lewis & Polka, 2014; Polka, 1977, 1994, 2007, 2009, 2010; Polka & Kardash, 2013; Polka, Mattai, & Perry, 2000, 2001; Polka & VanHusen, 2014; Polka, Wolfgang, Mete, Ayaga & Khokhar, 2014).

However, the authors also contend that if the planner waits too long to apply serendipitous planning principles or implementing the contemplated changes then the opportunity for success may be limited if not eliminated as adroitly identified by William Arthur Ward, a 20th Century American philosopher, who averred that, "Opportunities are like sunrises. If you wait too long, you miss them."

SERENDIPITOUS PLANNING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Organizational Needs Paradigm

Educational planners have applied various classic strategic planning principles and tactical implementation designs to develop, evaluate, and improve curriculum programs, teaching approaches, and learning experiences (Brandt, 2000; Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Cook, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Dewey, 1938/1996; Doll, 1972; Eisner & Vallance, 1974; Freire, 1973; Fullan, 1999; Griesmer, et al., 2013; Hyman, 1973; Kaufman, Herman & Watters, 2002; Lewis & Polka, 2014; Lieberman, 1986; Norton, 2005; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988; Polka, 2009; Polka & Kardash, 2013; Polka & VanHusen, 2014; Polka et al., 2014).

Several useful educational planning paradigms have emerged, however, one of the most persistent common denominators of those paradigms incorporates the four key organizational change concepts articulated by Krug (1957). Those four organizational change factors have been identified as: cooperativeness, comprehensiveness, continuousness, and concreteness. Table 1 provides updated operational definitions for each of these organizational change factors and the dispositions that each factor evokes in members of the organization if routinely practiced based on organizational research. In addition, the table identifies construct validity correlated references that provide research support for each of the organizational factors from a variety of diverse research perspectives.

Table 1.

The Organizational Needs of Individuals Promoting and/or Experiencing Innovations

Organizational Needs with Operational Definitions	Dispositions Manifested by Organizational Members	Construct Validity Correlations
Cooperativeness This factor is predicated on the human need in organizations for gregariousness, collaboration, and collegiality in developing, implementing, and evaluating opportunities and changes confronting organizations and organizational actors.	• *Knowing that the administration of my organization encourages individuals and teams to promote changes in policies and procedures based on meeting the needs and interests of clients.* • *Feeling that I am encouraged to actively interact with my colleagues and others to plan innovative program concepts and procedures.*	Chatman & Barsade 1995; Lin, Hung, & Chiu, 2008; McAllister, 1995; Rank & Tuschke, 2014; Stevens & Slavin, 2016; Van Dyne, Vandewalle, Kostova, Latham, & Cummings, 2000.

Comprehensive This factor is based on organizational and individual needs to consider various real and potential intervening variables (people, things, and ideas) that impact organizational changes in both the short-term and long-term.	• *Knowing that my administration recognizes that there are internal and external factors that impact policy and program procedures but employ sound "risk management" approaches towards innovations.* • *Knowing that a SWOT analysis is paramount in the decision-making process used by administrators in both short-term and long-term innovations.* • *Knowing that the development, implementation and evaluation of innovations require broad thinking as well as specific actions.*	Carmeli, Friedman & Tishler, 2013; Fredrickson & Mitchell, 1984; Gomez, Peterson, Adler & Weisinger, 2015; Heavey, Simsek, Roche, & Kelly, 2009; Miller, 2008; Simons, Pelled, & Smith, 1999; Thomas & Abrosini, 2015.
Continuousness This factor is predicated on the need to constantly monitor and adjust the applications of the various components associated with new changes by either adapting or adopting them into organizational orientations, policies, procedures, and mores.	• *Knowing that the culture of my organization recognizes that change is inevitable and that it may occur rapidly or slowly but change will always occur.* • *Feeling that my organizational leadership recognizes that it is incumbent on all members to seek out innovations that meet the ever-changing needs and interests of clients.*	Anderson, Dooley, & Rungtusanatham, 1994; Beddoe, 2009; Chang, 2005; Gumport, 2000; Jørgensen & Busk-Kofoed, 2007; Kusek & Rist, 2004.
Concreteness This factor is based on the human need for specific examples and/or artifacts related to applying and further reinforcing the values associated with key organizational changes.	• *Knowing that members of my organization expect to see, experience, use, and evaluate, in work settings, any innovations developed under the auspices of the organization.* • *Feeling that my colleagues want practical examples and "real time/real world" assessments of proposed innovations.*	Brown & Duguid 1991; Feldman, 2000; Geiger, 2009; Gherardi, 2000; Jarzabkowski, 2004; Jensen & Meckling, 1995.

The Social-Professional Needs Paradigm

In addition to the above four organizational factors of serendipitous planning there exists six specialized "high-touch" social-professional needs or key normative expectation factors that must be addressed when planning and implementing changes that directly impact individuals engaged in innovations. These six needs were initially articulated in educational research and literature as: communication, empowerment, assistance in decision-making, leadership, opportunity for personal growth and time (Harnack, 1968).

Subsequent researchers have reinforced the significance of these six specialized "high-touch" social-professional needs in various contexts where innovative concepts and behaviors were studied (Beane, Toepfer & Alessi, 1986; Brandt, 2000; Griesmer, et al., 2013; Hall & Hord, 2006; Lewis & Polka, 2014; Miller, 1981; Polka, 1977, 1994, 2007, 2009; Polka & Kardash, 2013; Polka, Mattai, & Perry, 2000, 2001; Yuhasz, 1974). The successes of short-term and long-term changes have also been predicated on the specific attention given to these six social-professional

needs by planners who implemented and evaluated them (Fullan, 2005; Hall & Hord, 2006; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Lewis & Polka, 2014; Polka, 2009; Polka & Kardash, 2013). Table 2 provides updated operational definitions for each of these social-professional change factors and the dispositions that each factor evokes in members of the organization if routinely practiced based on organizational research. In addition, the table identifies construct validity correlated references that provide research support for each of the social-professional factors from a variety of diverse research perspectives.

Table 2.

The Social-Professional Needs of Individuals Promoting and/or Experiencing Innovations

Social-Professional Needs with Operational Definitions	Dispositions Manifested by Innovators	Construct Validity Correlations
Communication The need to interact with others about diverse thinking and feelings relating to learning and using new knowledge and skills.	• *Knowing that there is a direct and transparent flow of information regarding innovations between organizational members and program decision-makers.* • *Knowing that innovations will be clearly articulated by organizational leaders both internally and externally to all impacted individuals.*	Janhonen, & Johanson, 2011; Kratzer, Leenders, & Van Engelen, 2004; Kivimäki et al., 2000; Linke & Zerfass, A, 2011.
Empowerment Individuals need to have significant input relating to the learning and applications of new knowledge and skills	• *Knowing that there are opportunities to influence the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of innovations.* • *Feeling that your opinions are sought-out and that you can influence decisions that are made that alter the ways that things are done in your organization.*	Beirne, 2006; Hasani & Sheikhesmaeili, 2016; Huq, 2010; Long, 1996; Van Grinsven & Visser, 2011.
Assistance Individuals need to know that various resource personnel, in addition to the supervisor, are available to help scaffold the individual as they acquire and use new knowledge and skills.	• *Knowing that assistance is available from others in the organization to further develop innovative ideas.* • *Knowing that there are others who will support your innovative ideas and provide assistance in implementing and evaluating proposed changes.*	Belland, 2014; Hill & Hannafin, 2001; Puntambekar & Hubscher, 2005; Rojas-Drummond, Torreblanca, Pedraza, Vélez & Guzmán, 2013; Van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2010.
Opportunity Individuals are acutely aware of both the short-term and long-term benefits associated with gaining and using new knowledge and skills.	• *Knowing that the organization leadership provides opportunities for individuals and teams to develop new ideas.* • *Recognizing that there are organizational rewards for implementing changes that improve the organization's achievement of goals and objectives.*	Bhattacharya & Bloch, 2004; Leipone & Helfat, 2010; Nidumolu, Prahalad, & Rangaswami, 2009; Rae, 2003.

Time		
Individuals are given ample time to practice and apply their new knowledge and skills in a variety of diverse ways for reinforcement and enhancement.	• *Knowing that the organization provides time to flesh out details related to innovations.* • *Feeling that the organizational leadership allows innovators to go "as fast as they can" and "as slow as they must" in order to get the innovation done right.*	Butler, 2010; Karpicke & Roediger, 2008; Leonard, 2008; Murphy, 1992.

The Personal Needs Paradigm

In addition, researchers have identified that there exists five significant personal "high-touch" needs or dispositional factors that impact the outcome of proposed innovations at the organizational level. These five "high-touch" needs are: challenge, commitment, control, creativity, and caring (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; DePree, 1989; Glasser, 1990; Griesmer, et al., 2013; Kobasa, Maddi, & Khan, 1982; Lewis & Polka, 2014; Polka, 1994, 2007, 2009, 2010; Polka & Kardash, 2013; Polka, Mattai, & Perry, 2000, 2001; Polka & VanHusen, 2014; Polka et al., 2014; Stossel, 1992). These five factors have also been identified as contributing to individual and organizational successes in implementing and sustaining cognitive and behavioral changes (Fullan, 2005; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Lewis & Polka, 2014; Hall & Hord, 2006; Polka, 2009; Polka & Kardash, 2013). Since these personal needs contribute to implementation successes as documented in the behavior change literature and research then it is imperative for educational planners to incorporate them into their serendipitous planning thinking. Table 3 provides updated operational definitions for each of these personal change factors and the dispositions that each factor evokes in members of the organization if routinely practiced based on organizational research. In addition, the table identifies construct validity correlated references that provide research support for each of the personal factors from a variety of diverse research perspectives.

Table 3.

Personal Needs of Individuals Promoting and/or Experiencing Innovations

Personal Needs with Operational Definitions	Dispositions Manifested by Innovators	Construct Validity Correlations
Challenge Individuals need to see the value in learning new knowledge and skills as an opportunity not a laborious task or crisis.	• *Believing that changes present opportunities for some and crises for others in organizations.* • *Having a sense of fun in implementing innovations and helping others adjust positively to change.*	Clifford, 1990; Fulmer & Turner, 2014; Miller, 2003; Sachdeva, 2005.

Commitment Individuals need to personally experience and "see and feel" a strong belief in the value of knowledge and skill acquisition in others associated with innovations.	• *Feeling that others in the organization and those who partner with the organization in special projects share a strong belief in the purpose and value of proposed innovations.*	Calantone, Cavusgil, & Zhao, 2002; Michaelis, Stegmaier & Sonntag, 2010; Sol, Beers & Wals, 2013; Waters, 2000.
Control Individuals need to influence their learning of new knowledge and skills and the outcome of new programs according to their interests, aptitudes, and dispositions.	• *Knowing that individuals have a proclivity to believe and to act as if they are in control and can influence the course of their lives.* • *Feeling personally able to control the outcomes of special projects.*	Schiefele, 1991; Smith, 2009; Turner & Makhija, 2006; Väljataga & Laanpere, 2010.
Creativity Individuals need to envision diverse applications of concepts and strategies associated with innovations.	• *Believing that there are diverse options to existing organizational policies and procedures.* • *Knowing that unique solutions to existing problems or potential opportunities are supported by organizational leadership*	Bharadwaj & Menon, 2000; Peppler & Solomou, 2011; Sawyer, 2011; Sawyer & DeZutter, 2009.
Caring Individuals possess a strong human need to experience a nurturing family atmosphere and attitude in their learning and work places.	• *Knowing that a caring culture exists in the organization and is promoted by the leadership.* • *Feeling nurtured in the organization and encouraged to nurture others.*	Corley & Raines, 1993; Felgen, 2004; Fuglsang, 2008; Sikma, 2006.

Representation of the Effective Change Zone (ECZ)

One of the most appropriate figures designed to represent the Effective Change Zone (ECZ) is portrayed in Figure 1. Since there is congruence between the ECZ and "Serendipitous Planning" educational planners and decision-makers need to keep this figure in their mindset for serendipitous applications in order to be prepared to assess and react to marketplace opportunities in their respective local contexts. Accordingly, the most successful and sustainable innovations occur at the confluence of the three conceptual dimensions: organizational needs, social-professional needs, and personal needs (Polka, 2007; Polka & Kardash, 2013). The "sweet spot" for serendipitous planning in order to implement organizational and personal change both effectively and efficiently.
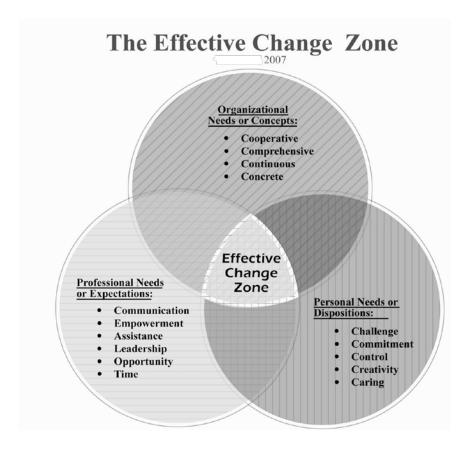
The Effective Change Zone

|2007|

Organizational Needs or Concepts:
- Cooperative
- Comprehensive
- Continuous
- Concrete

Effective Change Zone

Professional Needs or Expectations:
- Communication
- Empowerment
- Assistance
- Leadership
- Opportunity
- Time

Personal Needs or Dispositions:
- Challenge
- Commitment
- Control
- Creativity
- Caring

Figure 1. The Effective Change Zone (Polka, 2007)

THE NIAGARA UNIVERSITY CASE STUDY

A model serendipitous planning opportunity occurred in 2015 as a College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Adjunct Professor at Niagara University in Western New York was contacted by a local community organization, The Niagara Falls Country Club Porter Cup Committee. The adjunct professor, who teaches event planning in the college, was initially approached by the local golf course administrators to see if there was a possibility of using undergraduate students as "staff volunteers" for the 2015 tournament since the golf club is basically in the "backyard" of the university. The college dean was then contacted by the adjunct professor and the opportunity to partner for the benefit of the university, the students, and the golf club was identified as very appealing since it was perceived as an excellent opportunity to provide undergraduate students with practical experiences in event planning, implementation, and evaluation within an already existing course of study.

The college administration agreed to refine and approve the event planning course curriculum so that it now included a field practices or 'learning laboratory' component of the course and working the golf tournament would satisfy a "course practicum experience." Thus, students would be able to earn three hours of undergraduate credit for successfully completing the course content related to general event planning as well as the specific expectations associated with their practical experiences serving as "staff" members for this internationally acclaimed amateur golf tournament. Seven students registered and successfully completed the course in Summer 2015 semester. The feedback received was that this learning experience was not only unique and valuable to the students but also beneficial to the university and the golf club. As a

result of this initial course offering, a subsequent undergraduate course was further developed and implemented for the 2016 summer semester drawing another seven students who successfully completed it.

The Dean of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management was so impressed with the success of the partnership and the learning experiences of the students who matriculated in the course for credit as well as with the feedback he received from several other student-athletes who were encouraged to volunteer for event activities by their colleagues taking the course that he authorized the course to be offered as a regular summer curriculum offering in the college commencing in the Summer 2017 semester. Subsequently, as a result of serendipitous planning, the course: TRM 441"Golf Tournament Management and Evaluation" is now in the third year of operation.

Serendipitous Planning Case Study Correlation with Effective Change Zone Mindset Framework

The following retrospective analysis of the experiences of the key actors in this case study is presented to affirm the significance of having and applying serendipitous planning thinking within an Effective Change Zone (ECZ) mindset to quickly implement a solution to a win-win-win curriculum opportunity for the university, their undergraduate students, and a local community organization.

Applying the Organizational Needs Paradigm
Cooperativeness

The Niagara Falls Country Club 2015 Porter Cup Committee recognized that they were in need of additional volunteers to help staff their premier amateur golfing event in July so they contacted an adjunct professor who was well known to them to seek assistance from Niagara University students who may be taking classes during the summer session. The professor recognized that this was a "golden opportunity" for him to incorporate "hands-on learning" into his event management course. Subsequently, he explained the opportunity to his Dean who encouraged the professor to further develop this opportunity in cooperation with the Porter Cup Committee and university personnel where necessary. The initial transparent and encouraging cooperation between all involved parties facilitated the development and implementation of the concept of having university undergraduates, mostly athletes on campus for summer training, participate as volunteer staff members at a local country club to produce a major amateur golfing event that draws over 80 golfers and hundreds of visitors during the three days of the tournament.

The cooperative spirit promoted by the three key actors in this partnership: the adjunct professor, the Dean of the College, and members of the 2015 Porter Cup Committee was also instilled in others who participated to make the program a success. For example, the CEO of Niagara Falls Country Club gave a tour of club facility to students during one of the class sessions held on the golf course. He explained the importance of the Porter Cup Tournament to Niagara Falls Country Club and the greater Niagara region in terms of international recognition and tourism dollars. The Chair of Executive Committee for Porter Cup explained the Volunteer Committee Structure and the work assignments that students would be asked to perform. The Professional Golf Pro at the Niagara Falls Country Club also provided golf tournament information including scoring, golf course layout, and player organization via on campus lectures and he also provided golf course tours to students, many of whom had never been to or on an outstanding country club golf course that was being especially well groomed for the high-level international amateur tournament. In addition, many country club members interacted with the undergraduates who gained valuable insight into country club behaviors and golf course etiquette. The cooperative spirit among the key partnership actors as well as the will to make this experience happen was a key factor for its success.

Comprehensiveness

The adjunct professor initially utilized a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) approach to consider the viability of approaching the Dean with a suggestion to incorporate a practicum type of learning experience, using the country club, into his course in event planning. His assessment was that when considering all SWOT factors that this was still a very viable opportunity for his students. In subsequent conversations with the Dean it was determined that this was, indeed, a feasible option at this time for the students in this specific course. In working with the Porter Cup Committee, the adjunct professor also highlighted the results of his SWOT analysis and they were also convinced that this was a very good opportunity for them to fulfill a staffing need at minimal cost to them since there would be no reimbursement for the student labor but there would be additional volunteer food costs and expenses for other related supplies.

At the first class meeting, the general issues of the traditional event planning process were presented to students as well as other specific issues related to the Porter Cup Golf Tournament including: purpose, design, and structure of the tournament, possible student event roles and assignments, planning for the actual implementation of the event, public information protocols and student interactions not only with the public who attend the event but also with the golfers, media reporters, club membership, and club personnel. Personal planning, grooming, and time management approaches were emphasized at subsequent class sessions on campus to the students so that they would be at their designated work locations on time and appropriately dressed to represent themselves and their university as well as the country club. Security issues were specifically addressed as the event commencement approached so that every student had knowledge of safety plans and a sense of safety at the event in order to manifest that sense to the players and spectators as well as to provide directions for security purposes if needed.

The course professor also focused on the opportunity that this event presented to the students in terms of their "real world" learning about situations that occur in contexts that may be new to them, how to cope with new situations and learn from these new experiences. Since so many of the amateur golfers who participate in the Porter Cup Tournament are from countries other than the USA and Canada, the instructor focused on the need for the students to understand and appreciate diversity at international events such as this one. The comprehensiveness associated with this preparation also included the presentation and review of SWOT analysis with specifics related to the Porter Cup and the partnership between the university and the community.

Continuousness

The Niagara University College of Hospitality and Tourism Management course, TRM 441: "Golf Tournament Management and Evaluation" is now in the third year of operation and is a well-established course that may be used by students to complete their college graduation sequence requirements in various hospitality and tourism programs such as: Hotel Management, Sports and Recreation Management, Hospitality-Restaurant Management, and Tourism Management. The class has been evaluated by students for the past two years and based on their experiences they have suggested changes in student participation at the tournament including having updated event management materials and more volunteer committee participation. In addition, the partners in this experience including Niagara University faculty and administration as well as the Country Club Porter Cup Committee all share in the belief that changes will occur in this event operation and look forward to working together to make the learning experience for students and the sporting experience for golfers and spectators an even more respectable world class event.

Concreteness

The "proof was in the event" for the past two years as students successfully completed the four-week undergraduate course that included three days of volunteer work at the tournament

as well as several hours of pre-event planning at the country club and post-event debriefings and evaluations both at the club and on the campus. They received three hours of undergraduate credit and valuable "hands-on" experience in event planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Applying the Social-Professional Needs Paradigm
Communication

Communication was a major factor in the success of this serendipitously planned experience as the major actors established the importance of open and honest interactions from the beginning. The professor constantly interacted with members of the Porter Cup Committee to determine their event needs and role assignments for the students. In addition, he utilized the on-campus classroom time to buttress the various themes of the event planning course in light of the local golf tournament expectations. Speakers to class reinforced for students the importance of their roles in planning, implementing, and evaluating the event and included professionals in the event planning field such as: a certified event planner, a director of athletics, a secondary school principal, and the Niagara County Tourism Director. Students were well versed in the importance of effective communication in staging major events and they internalized the lessons very well as they effectively practiced their communication skills at an intense level during the three days of the actual golf tournament.

Empowerment

The adjunct professor was empowered by the College Dean to work with the Porter Cup Committee to establish the best learning experiences possible for undergraduate students pursuing a degree in the travel, tourism, and event management industry and was given wide latitude in determining the newly revised event planning course syllabus, objectives, activities, and assessments. The Porter Cup Committee also empowered the professor to use his judgment regarding the deployment of students as volunteer staff throughout the tournament and authorized him to also serve as their "work experience coordinator" representing the country club. The professor in turn empowered the students to gain inside information about real world event operations by connecting them to various tournament committees and giving them key roles before, during, and after the actual tournament play including: housing coordination, meal and special social event organization, score reporting, transportation, and public relations.

The students were also exposed to valuable leadership lessons through practical working interactions with various country club leaders. Several country club members particularly enjoyed sharing their sage leadership advice with young aspiring entrepreneurs. Thus, there were multiple dimensions to the social-professional factor of empowerment that emerged as this serendipitously planned event developed, including some life-long empowering advice from individuals who came from diverse professional backgrounds.

Assistance

Country club employees including the CEO and his staff were available throughout the 16 course meeting days especially during the Porter Cup Week to provide information to the students about club operations, event preparations, and implementation procedures. The club golf pro served as a valuable resource to the students in terms of explaining the finer points of the game as well as rules that the athletes must follow during the tournament rounds of play. The adjunct professor was provided additional help from the university as needed to schedule and track student participation at the event, both on campus and at the country club. The adjunct professor was available at the various functions of the tournament to directly supervise the students and receive feedback from the Porter Cup Committee members and country club staff regarding student needs from their professional perspectives.

Since this was a new partnership experience for all of the key actors, obtaining and giving assistance was of paramount concern. The success of the experience was attributable by most participants to the amount and quality of assistance given to the students by country club members, administration, and members.

Leadership
The Dean of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management modeled key leadership attributes by his quick approval of the real world experiential concept associated with this event planning course for the Summer of 2015 and facilitating the acceptance of this type of approach to teaching and learning by other administrators and faculty members. The country club Porter Cup Committee played a key leadership role in reaching out to the adjunct professor to help them with their pending staffing needs for the 2015 event. The professor demonstrated creative leadership throughout the experience by not only serving as the course teacher with excellent event management knowledge but also demonstrating his vast interpersonal skills serving as the "on-site supervisor" for the course practicum at the golf course.

Opportunity
This serendipitously planned experience was definitely a "win-win-win" experience for the key participants in this unique partnership. The 2015 Porter Cup Committee was able to accomplish its objective of appropriately staffing the golf tournament with minimal additional costs to the country club. The College of Hospitality and Tourism Management was able to provide a creative hands-on learning experience for its students, especially student-athletes, during the short-term summer semester, and the undergraduate students completed a three-hour event planning course in 16 days and had an immersion in real world unique experiences and personal contacts that will last the students throughout their careers. The students expressed their appreciation for the experience and specifically identified their knowledge growth in event planning as a result of this learning experience. They also gained valuable lessons in how to encourage volunteer participation in events and how to manage themselves and others for the good of organizational goals and objectives.

Time
"Tempus Fugit" is the Latin term for "time flies" and that definitely applies to event management as the Niagara University students adroitly learned during their Porter Cup experience. They began the event-planning course during early July but were immediately cast into the pre-event planning process for the Porter Cup. They quickly gained an appreciation of personal and organizational time management due to resolving pre-event and event scheduling issues. Their time in the campus course was compressed into a summer session of 16 days of three hours each for a total of 48 hours of course-related instructional time including the practicum experiences. Several students indicated that 'the time seemed to fly-by because we were so involved in the activities of the golf tournament.'

Although the adjunct professor was compensated for his time and energy, it was quite an extensive and intensive teaching role for him in terms of re-structuring the course and operationalizing the supervision of the students during the practicum experiences at the country club. But, he possessed an extraordinary passion for the Porter Cup Golf Tournament having served as the Chair of the event in the past and he has a quintessential commitment to both event management and his Niagara University students. Thus, he was clearly the right person at the right time to lead this serendipitous planning opportunity. This reflects the significance of the "Good to Great" concept of getting the right people on the right seats of the bus so that they can appropriately drive innovations (Collins, 2001). Time will always be an issue in educational planning and curriculum implementation but with serendipitous planning less time is spent on the

actual organizational approval processes for change so that more time may be spent where its impact is the greatest---at implementation stage.

Applying the Personal Needs Paradigm
Challenge

The challenges associated with this program were mostly centered on issues related to student awareness of country club informal rules and expected behaviors. But, these challenges were overcome by careful attention to the needs of the students. Although most of the students in the initial 2015 program were college athletes, most of them had never been to a country club or experienced a competitive golf match on a finely manicured golf course. Some had initially expected to sit in class and learn about event management from the instructor and the textbook but this course definitely, 'threw them a curve ball.' However, students are used to adjusting to diverse curriculum orientations and course activities; so they adapted very well to the 'hands-on' approach of this course.

The adjunct professor spent considerable pre-country club time in class instructing students about appropriate volunteer dress and behavior as well as the customs and atmosphere of country clubs. Since several of the amateur golfers who would be participating in this international golf tournament were from countries other than the USA and Canada, the adjunct professor utilized a three hour "diversity appreciation" curriculum guide that facilitated greater understanding of the differences that the students might encounter as they served as volunteers at the event. Again, the background and experiences of the professor were tantamount to overcoming some of these student challenges. In addition, as he observed behaviors that were not consistent with country club behavior at the golf course, he immediately addressed the situation with the individual involved. Of course, there were a few times when he had to also remind the country members and other volunteers that these students were "newbies" to the environment and were learning as they were working. However, due to the instructor's persuasive style and awareness of the needs of his students, all challenges were successfully overcome. Several students later identified that, 'they learned some things they had never thought about before' which is the value of practical real-world experiences and, also, demonstrates another serendipitous aspect of serendipitous planning!

Commitment

All participants in this unique university-community organization partnership displayed a tremendous amount of commitment to the event management course and the country club practicum. The adjunct professor who developed the course with the hands-on practicum and implemented it both in the Niagara University classroom and at the country club golf course obviously evidenced his ubiquitous commitment to the program and his students as well as the Porter Cup Golf Tournament. The Dean of the College of Hotel and Tourism Management demonstrated his commitment to the program by his initial approval of the course concept and his facilitation of the university acceptance of the course for credit in an efficient and effective manner. The members of the Niagara Falls Country Club 2015 Porter Cub Planning Committee and the administration and staff of the club itself displayed a focused dedication to the experience. And, the students who successfully completed the course and the country club members who assisted their volunteer work reflected a robust commitment to the program and each other. It was stated from the various partnership perspectives: Niagara University faculty, College Administration, Country Club Porter Cup Committee members, country club administration, and country club members that the 'dedication to make this program work by everyone involved contributed to its outstanding success'. This commitment, borne out of the serendipitous planning approach, is another key aspect that educational planners need to keep in mind when opportunities such as this one occurs in their respective contexts.

Control

The undergraduate students had distinct opportunities via this experience to test their personal management skills as they were involved in various work on the golf course during the event such as: crowd control, player scoring processes, social event planning and implementation, transportation, communications with media personnel, and event evaluations. By all accounts the students performed their tasks admirably and demonstrated excellent interpersonal skills, not only with the public but also with the international golfers, many of whom were also their peers. This was, indeed, a very unique opportunity for the students to assert themselves as event workers and learn much about event management as well as about themselves personally. This control factor could be planned into an elaborate strategic plan for the event but because it was at the forefront of the initial planner's thinking, it was seamlessly integrated into both the course academic focus and the practical learning experiences. This is another indication of the value of having a 'default planning paradigm' that includes the key elements of the Effective Change Zone (ECZ) as a mindset framework and trusting in the serendipitous planning model.

Creativity

This partnership is evidence of creative, "out of the box" thinking on the part of both Niagara University and the Niagara Falls Country Club and their respective representatives. The adjunct professor was the main cog in this partnership as he played key roles within and between both organizations. His personal and professional creativity manifested itself throughout this experience as he developed unique and diverse classroom activities for the academic component of the course and used his ingenuity to deploy and supervise the students at the country club based on their individual interests and learning needs. The Dean of the University displayed his creativity by providing his students with a unique opportunity to earn college credit in a combined academic and pragmatic focused fashion. The country club staff and administration as well as the 2015 Porter Cup Planning Committee demonstrated creativity with their proposal to use Niagara University students as volunteers and creating the climate for them to be successful in a new and different environment. Thus, the importance of the human quest to be creative in problem-solving and decision-making was amply addressed via this unique experience. The initial use of the serendipitous planning approach based on the Effective Change Zone conceptual framework by the key actors and their trust in each other and the process speaks volumes about their personal and organizational creativity.

Caring

All participants in this unique university-community organization partnership displayed a genuine and generous amount of caring for each other and to the event management course and the country club practicum. The professor continuously displayed an authentic caring student-centered disposition throughout the course and golf course practicum. This attitude was transparently transmitted to students on a daily basis and became infectious to them as they began to emulate his caring attitude with each other and those with whom they had contact during their volunteer assignments. The Dean of the College often queried about student feelings regarding studying and working in event management and showed not only his genuine interest in the partnership but also his authentic caring for the individual students. The country club administration, staff, and Porter Cup committees all cared for the welfare of the students and provided a 'high-touch' personal climate designed to enable the students to feel comfortable. Caring in organizational development strategic plans is not often highlighted but it is an integral aspect of the serendipitous planning model as reflected throughout this case study. It is an essential aspect of the personal needs approach to facilitating innovation implementation and sustainment and at the forefront of serendipitous planners mindset.

SUMMARY

Therefore, this retrospective analysis of a unique partnership between Niagara University's College of Hospitality and Tourism Management and the Niagara Falls Country Club has provided evidence of the successful application of the key principles of serendipitous planning within the conceptual framework of the Effective Change Zone (ECZ). It truly was a 'win-win-win' experience that most importantly resulted in personal and career development wins for undergraduate students in terms of their academic and pragmatic event management learning in intense summer session that also was 'different and fun' for them according to their reflections and course evaluations. This experience was also a success for The Niagara Falls Country Club and the 2015 Porter Cup Planning Committee that was able to appropriately staff their Porter Cup Golf Tournament with additional volunteers at minimal cost to the total operation. Additionally, it was a positive experience for the Niagara University College of Hospitality and Tourism Management by providing a unique, 'learning by doing' addition to one of their existing courses to further enhance their curriculum. The course also met the limited time needs and interests of student-athletes who were on campus for their summer training and orientation and, thus, was an attraction for students who were considering majoring or developing a minor in the college's various programs of study. The success of this specific partnership program is evidenced by the fact that it has become institutionalized into the curriculum in the college and was again offered for undergraduate credit in 2016 and will be offered again in July of 2017. Thus, the partnership and the events management course with pragmatic experiences at the country club's annual Porter Cup Tournament is another excellent demonstration of the value of serendipitous planning based on the conceptual framework of the Effective Change Zone in order to develop and implement major curriculum innovations.

In addition to this case study, other research related to the application of the Effective Change Zone (ECZ) conceptual framework have confirmed the significance of those three human side of change dimensions: organizational needs, social-professional needs, and personal needs for innovative success and sustainment (Griesmer, et al., 2013; Lewis & Polka, 2014; Polka, 2009; Polka & Kardash, 2013; Polka, Mattai, & Perry, 2000; Polka & VanHusen, 2014; Polka, et al., 2014). Each of those studies related to educational marketplace opportunities for innovation at a most propitious time and in a most common context. The use of serendipitous planning as a "default planning paradigm" as articulated in this case study was imbued in the mindset of the leaders of those previously researched innovations. Timing, the right people, and excellent relationships are keys to making and sustaining meaningful changes in education. But, those promoting changes also need to incorporate serendipitous planning into their 'leadership toolbox' so that they can react to exigent opportunities efficiently and effectively. There may not be time to re-work a well-designed strategic plan for change in an organization when an urgent opportunity arises but having a well-thought-out mindset for change such as expressed in this article is a valuable precursor. Changes in education often occur serendipitously, however, just like the predictable rising sun, if you wait too long, you could miss it!

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LINKING RESEARCH TO CLINICAL PRACTICE: INSIGHTS FROM THE TRANSFORMATIONAL PATHWAYS IN AN ADMINISTRATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study is situated within a larger research initiative in a university-based School of Education that is continuing accreditation with the Council of Educator Preparation Programs. With a focus on candidates in the educational administrator program, this study examined how key assessments were used in clinical practice to support candidates. This includes the development of research, knowledge, skills, and critical reflection as candidates grow into their roles as visionary leaders who understand the problems of practice influencing student outcomes. The specific research questions that informed the broad study included the following:

1. *What design elements of clinical practice allow candidates to understand problems of practice in educational administration through adaptable, contextualized, and authentic strategies?*
2. *In what ways do these elements and measures align with the taxonomy of best practices, theory, and research in assessing candidates and clinical practice?*
3. *How do candidates perceive the effectiveness of these measures in clinical practice to assess their understanding of the problems of practice in educational administration?*

As we considered the research influencing this study, it was clear that two major gaps in existing literature warrant investigation. First, there is dearth of research examining the knowledge, skills, and dispositions candidates gain in educational administration preparation programs and the second is possible changes that occur in schools led by the graduates of these programs. Such paucity in scholarship creates the need for a new research agenda—examining the design elements of clinical practices and candidate assessment measures in an educational administration preparation program. This understanding will inform how preparation influences candidates' abilities to shape the instructional culture to improve student learning.

INTRODUCTION TO THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This work explored how administrative interns bridge the gap between theory and practice as a candidate engages with and learn from an experienced mentor to navigate problems of practice, as well as to gauge the effectiveness of the internship experience. Adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980) and job-embedded learning, which may be referred to as clinical practice, internship, practicum, or fieldwork, provide useful frames through which to view the work. Like other fields, to meet the needs of adult learners through job-embedded experiences, such as the administrative internship, an understanding of adult learning theory is imperative. The following sections outline how adult learning theory was used as a theoretical lens to conceptualize job-

embedded learning to understand how administrative interns identify problems of practice, utilize best practices, and assess the overall effectiveness of the administrative internship.

Job-Embedded Learning and Adult Learning

The early work of Lindeman (1926) and Dewey (1938) influenced the centrality of actual experience in knowledge creation as the hallmark of adult learning in education. This concept is perhaps a present-day axiom in schools of education that provides opportunities for students enrolled in educational administration programs to develop understanding through action (Schön, 1983; Wilson, 1993). Related theories of situated cognition describe knowledge built from authentic activity embedded in specific situations (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Schön, 1983). Examples include "cognitive apprenticeships" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and cycles of experiential learning that are concrete and active (Kolb, 1984). Self-directed learning can address what Knowles (1980) described as adults' needs to learn and connect new learning to prior experience, solve real-life problems, and apply knowledge. In other words, adults are far from a *tabula rasa*; their slates are full of experiences to build on as they progress through learning opportunities, and they are motivated to do so.

Consistent with adult learning theory is the use of job-embedded learning (also known as clinical practice, practicum, fieldwork, and internships). Well-designed job-embedded learning that is practical beyond passive shadowing exercises can allow aspiring school leaders to authentically engage in leadership responsibilities (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007; Fry, Bottoms, O'Neill, & Walker, 2007; Levine, 2005; Southern Regional Education Board [SREB], 2005). As seen in other fields, such as medicine and business, these culminating experiences serve as an authentic setting for a final rite of passage before becoming a professional (Education Development Center, 2009; Task Force on Teacher Preparation and Initial Professional Development, 2004). Job-embedded learning for aspiring school leaders exploring the complex nature of school leadership vary widely in depth, emphasis, and quality (Perez, Uline, Johnson, James-Ward, & Basom, 2010). In some cases, it has been described as a system of shallow compliance activities, lacking in quality practical activities to prepare future educational leaders (Levine, 2005; National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2010; Perez et al., 2010; SREB, 2005; Wallace Foundation, 2008). Previous literature about the design elements of job-embedded learning is often unclear about the extent to which these practices are associated with effectiveness or impact of preparation as this insight is included as part of discussions/conclusion sections of research reports.[1] The literature does point to the following features in how job-embedded learning is structured:

- **Active engagement** in learning offers authentic field-based opportunities that are scaffolded on a developmental continuum where aspiring school leaders gradually engage in more independent leadership experiences as they progress through the program (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; SREB, 2005).
- **Integration of theory and practice** allows aspiring school leaders to apply their knowledge/skills and helps them grapple with linking theory and practice (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Grossman, 2010).
- **Collaboration with school districts** enables joint ownership of leadership preparation and offers support for candidates to practice essential competencies in the current P-12 context. Handbooks or guidance material, as well as regular interactions among stakeholders, help set expectations and develop processes ensuring a high quality experience (SREB, 2005; Wallace Foundation, 2012).

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[1] Assuming these considerations are "best practices" perhaps overstates a presence of evidence that firmly supports these practices will lead to effective preparation.

- **Ongoing input from expert practitioners** can include intensive guidance from both university-based field supervisors who have supervision expertise and time for frequent formative feedback (SREB, 2005) and site-based mentoring leaders who are expert practitioners with desired leadership skills (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; NCATE, 2010).
- **"Substantial" and "sustained" experiences** that begin early in the preparation program and provide ample time for in-depth learning is important (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Fry et al., 2007; Levine, 2005; SREB, 2005); however, there are not specific details on the ideal duration and, arguably, the quality of the experience is more important than the total hours clocked (Grossman, 2010).
- **Multiple contexts in real-world settings** (including various performance levels, diverse populations, and different locales) provide a range of experiences in solving actual problems in P-12 settings (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Fry et al., 2007; Grossman, 2010; Levine, 2005; NCATE, 2010; SREB, 2005).

Some examples of the collective effort in job-embedded learning include districts scheduling release time for internship activities; developing specific policies for field placements; integrating internship experiences with district- and state-specific professional development programs; and developing procedures to select, prepare, and support site-based mentoring leaders. Preparation programs play an important role in providing training; working with districts to analyze needs; selecting/preparing site-based mentoring leaders; and arranging university-based supervision to evaluate aspiring school leaders' performance (SREB, 2005).

Requisite Skills, Knowledge, and Dispositions for Educational Administrators

Many leadership practices linked to instructional improvement from the recent past are still applicable to current P-12 settings: working with teachers to improve effectiveness; providing resources and professional development; monitoring teacher and student progress; participating in discussions on educational issues; and promoting parental and community involvement in the school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Similarly, the skills outlined by Thomson (1993) that span across functional, programmatic, interpersonal, and contextual domains include relevant aspects for contemporary educational administrators. School leaders have historically faced challenging circumstances to meet often-insurmountable demands such as these, but they have come under increasing pressure during the last few decades. They are expected to fulfill a continuously expanding set of roles—visionary change agents leading their team to dramatic improvements, human resource managers recruiting and retaining high-quality staff, small-business executives balancing budgets, front-line building supervisors ensuring safe school climates, and instructional leaders managing teaching quality (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007; Hambright & Franco, 2008; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Calls by policy experts and officials for dramatic improvement in student achievement and teacher quality have led to elevated expectations for school leaders to combine their managerial responsibilities with instructional leadership (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2011; Elmore, 2005).

King-Rice (2010) acknowledges complex multidimensionality of the principal role noting that it, "depends, in part, on their sense of efficacy on particular kinds of tasks and how they allocate their time across daily responsibilities" (p. 2). Relevant skill sets are presumably contextual based on school level, region, urbanity, school size, and school performance status, among many other considerations. Experts have specified what a turnaround principal needs: motivation to achieve, persistence in the face of obstacles, ambitious goal-setting abilities and detailed planning skills (Steiner & Barrett, 2012). Additionally, research from Curry, Pacha, and

Baker (2007), Darling-Hammond et al. (2007), and Fry, Bottoms, O'Neil, and Walker (2007) point to the following expectations of principals:

- **Curriculum**: Serve as curriculum facilitators to assure the curriculum is aligned, implemented and assessed for a coherent educational program across the school; and provide scheduled opportunities for teachers to work on curriculum planning and alignment.
- **Staffing**: Arrange the school schedule for common planning time among staff; arrange for meaningful, sustained professional development that stems from school needs and goals including new teacher mentoring; and employ a well-defined teacher evaluation process for instructional improvement.
- **Instruction**: Foster an atmosphere of "no excuses, no escape" for student learning; understand the need for and encourage the use of differentiated instruction; support/remediate poor performers; and develop a school mission that all students will be prepared to succeed in college and careers.
- **Progress Monitoring**: Use multiple observations (formal and informal) and student achievement data to inform teacher evaluations and track school-wide progress; set assessment expectations/strategies; and guide teachers to use student data on an ongoing basis to identify mastery and deficiencies.
- **Recognition and Rewards**: Celebrate students' academic and positive behavioral successes; use awards and motivations for students (including individualized supports); provide time for staff to problem-solve collaboratively; and value and support every student.
- **School Climate and Culture**: Foster a learning-centered environment based on collegiality and collaboration; acknowledge the teachers' knowledge and abilities; and practice distributed leadership that blurs the traditional lines between administrators and teachers; and maintain support from the school district office staff, community members, and parents.
- **School Improvement:** Use time and resources in innovative ways to meet school improvement goals; lead well-informed change processes; call regular school improvement meetings; and leverage the use of new research and proven practices.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIP

The field experience, or internship, in educational administration is the primary vehicle for learning. Therefore, it must provide quality opportunities for interns to gain new insights and have hands-on opportunities to experience being a school administrator (Barnett, 2004; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Cunningham & Sherman, 2008; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Roach, Smith, & Boutin, 2011; Sherman & Crum, 2009). The administrative internship is considered the capstone experience of the preparation program and occurs when the student can demonstrate applications of the national standards in a real world environment (Hall, 2008; Hines, 2008; Risen & Tripses, 2008), as well as knowledge and skills acquired during their coursework (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Erich, Hansford, & Tennet, 2004).

Browne-Ferrigno (2003) states that the administrative internship is a socialization experience that connects administrative interns with practicing administrators in actual settings to create a new community of practice. Conversely, critics have stated the internship is lacking and does not provide administrative interns with quality experiences (Dishman & Redish, 2011; Gaureau, Kufel, & Parks, 2006; Levine, 2005). Levine (2005) criticized the preparation of aspiring principals as disconnected with principal work and that most administration preparation programs range from inadequate to appalling in quality (p. 23). Key features of criticism include

low quality faculty, weak connections between curriculum and practice, and low standards for admission to degree programs (p. 24). Other critics stated the administrative internship is usually no more than an opportunity for interns to log hours and perform menial tasks (Dishman & Redish, 2011; Fry, O'Neil, & Bottoms, 2006; Gray, Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neil, 2007; Levine, 2005;). Fry, Bottoms, and O'Neill (2006) stated interns mostly observed tasks and concluded their internship without a clear understanding of the principal's role. These researchers recommend internships apply current knowledge, concepts, and skills through meaningful, purposeful, and well-designed experiences with trained and accomplished school leaders who model best practices (p. 30). Some researchers even state the internship experiences should be the primary vehicle for learning, with coursework designed around those authentic experiences, not vice versa (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Cunningham & Sherman, 2008; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennet, 2004).

The administrative internship is not a one-size-fits-all process. Hung (2001) states internship experiences vary across institutions and that some experiences are full-time and grant funded, while others are part-time during hours the intern is not working in their full-time job. The administrative internship is an integral part of an educational administrator preparation program and has lasting effects on candidates' future roles in administration (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Thessin & Clayton, 2013). It is the responsibility of the educational administrator preparation program to provide administrative interns with authentic learning opportunities and mutually beneficial intern/supervisor pairings. This necessitates preparation programs collaborate with school districts to design internship experiences that provide interns with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to step into a leadership role as an administrator (Pounder & Crow, 2005; Thessin & Clayton, 2013).

Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2004) stated that creating authentic, transformative internship experiences for aspiring administrators, mentoring throughout the preparation process, and offering in-service professional development is crucial to the successful development of educational administrators. Although there are many approaches to the administrative internship, researchers found administrative interns value their internship experiences to prepare them for future leadership roles (Dunaway, Flowers, & Lyons, 2010; Orr, 2011). Exploring the different elements of the administrative internship through the lens of job-embedded learning as a facet of Adult Learning Theory guided this study to understand the journey of the administrative intern as they transition from students to future educational leaders with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to recognize and navigate through problems of practice.

METHODS

This qualitative study utilized two methods for gathering data: semi-structured participant interviews and document analysis. Interview participants were selected from Educational Adminstration Program candidates enrolled in their final capstone internship course of a university. Following existing norms in qualitative research design (Creswell, 2007), twenty candidates: three males and seventeen females completing internships at the elementary, secondary, and central office levels were selected for the interviews representing informants from all locations, including online, where the internship courses were offered.

Document analysis included a theory-guided content analysis and axial coding (Maxwell, 2002) of ten documents including key clinical features and assessments of the field experiences, practicum, and internships used in preparing educational administrators. Each document represented a key assessment completed by participants as partial requirements to completing their degree or certificate program in educational leadership and administration. For each document, aspects analyzed were learning outcomes, the presence or absence of standard-based characteristics, as well as anecdotal notes that justify the absence or presence of each characteristic. Based on insights drawn from the document analysis, the second data source entailed verifying evidence with stakeholders through interviews. The data set developed through

this process also provided a platform for deeper inquiry into the assessments of candidates during their clinical experiences that provided key data on how that they were impacting learning for P-12 students.

Data Analysis

Within the context of Adult Learning Theory, this study is rooted within the overarching epistemology of constructivism, a perspective that focuses on "the meaning making activity of the individual mind" (Crotty, 1998, p.58). Per this perspective, "reality is socially constructed as there is no single, observable reality" (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). This epistemological mindset values everyone's interpretation and description of his/her experiences without critical judgment of his/her perspective (Crotty, 1998). Candidates in the educational administrator preparation program are exposed to courses and clinical practices commonly provided to all candidates; however, their personal values, background experiences, and their schools' cultures play a key role in determining the way in which they situate, interpret, and utilize their experiences.

Parallel to such subjective nature of constructivism, this study employs an interpretive qualitative research approach to address the research questions: 1) What design elements of clinical practice allow candidates to understand problems of practice in educational administration through adaptable, contextualized, and authentic strategies?, 2) In what ways do these elements and measures align with the taxonomy of best practices, theory, and research in assessing candidates and clinical practice?, and 3) How do candidates perceive the effectiveness of these measures in clinical practice to assess their understanding of the problems of practice in educational administration? These questions guided our inquiry as we sought to discover how our candidates "make sense of" knowledge, skills and disposition gained through clinical practice in our preparation program (Merriam, 2009). Such inductive approach to data analysis will help unpack what participants (candidates) value in their "life worlds", resulting in what Guba and Lincoln (2005) call the construction of accumulated knowledge through "sophisticated reconstructions" of participants' experiences (p. 194).

A team of four researchers coded and summarized interview data according to the interview questions and themes that emerged with regard to: 1) assessments that tap knowledge, skills, and dispositions that provide evidence of impact on student learning and the learning environment; and 2) assessments of candidate learning that are unique to the program. Data analysis followed the protocol outlined by Maxwell (2004) to identify ways participants (candidates) account for and "make sense of" their clinical experiences to interpret how "their understanding influences" their perceptions and actions. Following Maxwell's (2005) recommendations to connect the data analysis process to the research questions and theoretical framework, the researchers consistently considered the following factors throughout the data analysis process: (1) "Rich" data, (2) Respondent validation, (3) Intervention, (4) Searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases, and (5) Triangulation concerning the validity of research findings.

Trustworthiness

This research adopted multiple practices to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research consistent with recommended aspects including credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Morrow, 2005). To ensure credibility, multiple methods of triangulation and multiple analysts corroborated findings (Creswell, 1998); it also allowed us to unpack the topic from various angles. Specific triangulation methods utilized included peer review, characterizing researcher bias prior to data collection, and rich, thick descriptions (Creswell, 2007). The rich descriptions provided by participants allowed findings to be applied in other contexts, as appropriate; these practices in transferability are consistent with standard approaches (Creswell, 1998). Additionally, the audit trails we created helped to establish a

framework by which others could produce similar results in repeated studies and are key functions of dependability and confirmability (Merriam, 2009; Morrow, 2005).

FINDINGS

Through the examination of assessments and interviews, as well as a rigorous process of qualitative analysis, two key themes emerged from the interviews and document analysis that directly tied to the research questions in this study.

First, candidates emphasized the importance of the site supervisor/mentor and intern relationship. School-based mentors were frequently cited as critical and essential to a high-quality clinical experience, even in smaller course projects. Students described feeling a lack of interaction with some mentors as a blockade to authentic feedback and experiences. This finding ties directly to the first research question regarding the candidates' ability to identify problems of practice, and the second research question, which centered on tying best practices to internship experiences.

Second, the mutual expectations for assessments in terms of requirements and evaluation were key to the impact of the assessments. In addition to these two themes, there was clear and immediate response by the educational administrator preparation program to understand more about the results of the document analysis and the feedback of students. This finding emerged from research question three, which focused on the candidates' ability to assess the effectiveness of utilizing taxonomies of best practices in clinical practice to lead to better understandings of problems of practice in educational administration.

Relationship and Interactions with Site-Based Mentors

Throughout the interviews, most participants described valuable interactions they had with site-based mentors.[2] This section details the nature of relationships between participants and site-based mentors, the learning experiences that occur, and insights about how the program can improve. Understanding the role that site-based mentors play is critical; as one individual stated, "They are going to set the stage to what you actually get to do or not get to do…. They are the gatekeeper of having all of these experiences." This finding is deeply rooted in adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980), as participants were internally motivated to learn, and took a problem-centered approach to clinical practice experiences due to the nature of their relationship with their site-based mentor.

Nature of Relationship. In many cases, the site-based mentor is at the participants' current school of employment. Advantages to this are that the participant has existing rapport with administrators and teachers as well as familiarity with the context. One participant described being able to, "do a whole lot more because I already have those relationships." A few participants shared how their site-based mentor was mentoring them for anticipated openings for assistant principal positions. Participants working with a site-based mentor they already knew reported that they deepened existing relationships and anticipated continuing to seek advice from the site-based mentor. As a candidate shared, "it is nice to have somebody who is mentoring me professionally, that's looking out for me."

In the situation where the participant is completing clinical practice with a site-based mentor he/she is unfamiliar with, there is reluctance for the participant to take on leadership roles without having built trust with the administrators or teachers at the school. On the other hand, a few participants discussed the importance of having mentors from various schools as reflected in the following statement: "I've made it a point to have different mentors of different personalities,

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[2] In this paper, site-based mentors refers to practicing school leaders (such as principals, assistant principals, or district leaders) who offer guidance to participants during their culminating internship experiences.

because I've wanted to see how each person handled different situations." Another participant discussed the value in having many site-based mentors to establish a network of support.[3]

Many candidates spoke about the value of site-based mentors who were recent graduates of administrator preparation programs. Those who completed the program at the same university had particularly useful insight about the program design and coursework. Site-based mentors who recently graduated programs at another university offer similar advantages to the knowledge base and their clinical practice experiences. As one participant stated, "[My site-based mentor] is just so phenomenal because she just went through the process of the internship."

Learning Experiences with Site-Based Mentors. Participants detailed various experiences they had with site-based mentors to learn valuable school leadership skills. Many participants appreciated being permitted to take leadership with flexibility in decision-making. In some cases, the site-based mentor was nearby to guide and advise participants; in other instances, the site-based mentor was unavailable forcing participants into "baptism by fire," as one participant described it. Participants seemed particularly appreciative of site-based mentors who were invested in them and tried to expose them to as much as possible. A few participants talked about how their site-based mentor helped them apply what they were learning in class as well as provide early experiences for information they later learned in coursework. The following statements capture this unidirectional learning experience: "You can talk to [the site-based mentor] about it to see if you're applying what you learned just so they can keep you on the track;" and "We talked about things in class and I saw them in practice in our building…. Having someone model the things that I was learning in my classes was very helpful."

Participants described that the clinical practice is relatively open-ended, but that their site-based mentor helped them learn specific school administrator skills. Two participants specifically described how their site-based mentor helped them understand how to deal with discipline. One participant shared that he/she learned the importance of gently delivering observation feedback after seeing the harsh approach of his/her site-based mentor. Others emphasize the value in attending administrator meetings to learn how to engage with other administrators.

Regardless of the skill that participants were learning, feedback and support facilitated participants' growth as school administrators. One participant described debrief sessions with his/her site-based mentor stating, "He did not sugarcoat anything for me. When I did mess up, he wasn't mean about it, but he certainly called me on it. I think that's important.... He gave me feedback constantly."   Other participants shared how their site-based mentors were very encouraging.

Addressing Existing Challenges with Site-Based Leaders. Some of the data that emerged from the interviews pointed to existing challenges as well as recommendations for improvement. A few participants described frustration about their site-based mentor not knowing the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards. Some site-based mentors were also unaware of the experiences participants should have during clinical practice. One participant suggested the program offer more guidelines for site-based mentors about what participants need to be exposed to. In other cases, site-based mentors were not able to afford participants much attention given other demands for their time. As one participant stated, "That's a key component is the [site-based mentor] is engaged in and really involved and wants to lead." As a key element of adult learning theory, (Knowles et. al, 1998) adult learners need to know what is expected of them and what they must learn, preferably at the beginning of a course (p. 68).

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[3] Related themes that emerged from these data point to participants seeing value in clinical practice in different settings (including various school levels, different districts, schools of different performance levels, and district offices) and various points of time in the school year. This finding is beyond the scope of this paper, but will be explored further in forthcoming articles.

Perceptions of Key Assessments

Participants expressed their perceptions about the key assessments for each course in their administrator preparation program, along with the expectations and feedback provided by their course instructors. This section outlines those descriptions, as well as participants' feelings and reactions to those elements of the program. Understanding how participants perceive the expectations of and the assessments themselves will lead to a better conception of the role they play in the overall degree or certificate programs, which is a foundational element of adult learning theory, as previously stated.

As students complete key assessments in each course to synthesize and demonstrate the knowledge and skills gained during the course, participants shared their thoughts about each key assessment and how they effected their experiences. Out of the ten key assessments, three were discussed during many participant interviews. The first of these assessments, addressed by nearly every participant in the study, was the mock Individualized Education Plan (IEP) assignment students completed in the Authentic School Law course. Many participants stated this assessment was useful to building their knowledge of school law from a leadership standpoint. One participant shared:

> Developing the IEP . . . was very, very useful working as a team and coming up with the different things because every school district does handle it differently and looking at it from the eyes of an administrator is a little bit different.

Another participant shared that the IEP assessment was enlightening and a few participants described it as "eye opening." Conversely, for participants certified in special education, the assignment was not as valuable. For example, one participant stated, "I've done IEP's even when I was student teaching, so for me, 15 years of IEP's, I'm like, I know what their purpose is." Another said, "I don't know that that was helpful to me because I've done probably a hundred." These participants also felt like they completed most the work for the group assessment. One participant, an individual not certified in special education, echoed these feelings by describing her experience with this assessment with having someone certified in special education in her group:

> We had a special ed teacher in each group, and unfortunately because she had the knowledge base that was necessary to complete the project, she ended up doing the majority of the work, and I felt that was really unfair.

Although perceptions of the Applied School Law mock IEP assessment varied, most participants expressed gratitude for the knowledge gained in the course. "School law is . . . a class that will definitely save my life if I'm practicing in the field."

The second key assessment that greatly influenced participants was the curriculum and instructional analysis assessment for the Instructional Needs Analysis course. For this assessment, students were asked to take a piece of the written curriculum, conduct a pre-conference with a teacher who would teach it, observe the teacher teaching the content, and then conduct a post-conference with the teacher and provide feedback. Many participants described this assignment as the most helpful in preparation to become an educational administrator. One participant summed up what many participants stated by saying:

> It gave me that experience of having to do it with someone. Even though I knew the person, it developed a more intimate relationship and builds on what we already had as colleagues working together. That took me to a different level. It builds trust as well if you do it correctly, so I could see how that would be beneficial as an instructional leader in the building.

Many participants expressed this assessment helped them further understand instructional problems of practice; specifically, it served as a way for them to help teachers, as well as themselves, identify gaps between the written, taught, and tested curricula.

The third assessment discussed by most of the participants was a Vision power point presentation during the Site-Based Leadership course where they, as educational administrators, communicated a vision to teachers and staff members, as well as the steps they believed would help them achieve that vision. Some participants designed a presentation for the first faculty meeting, while others designed a Vision power point presentation for an educational program, such as community outreach or after school programs. Participants appreciated the flexibility of the assessment and that they could choose to frame their vision around their interests. When reflecting upon this assessment, one participant stated, "It made me think of what type of leader I wanted to be."

Expectations and Feedback from Instructors. Expectations for key assessments were primarily expressed to students through the syllabus for each course. In general, when participants expressed negative feelings about the expectations for a course or assessment, it was about the Mock IEP assessment. Many participants felt it was geared more toward special education and that the course did not balance the content with school law that does not concern special education services. Additionally, a few of the participants felt the expectations were too high and the workload was too overwhelming in the school law course. Other concerns about the instructor's expectations identified by students were that the instructor did not adhere to what was in the syllabus, or that the instructor used a syllabus from a previous semester, leaving students confused about when course assignments were due.

Throughout the participant interviews, it became clear that instructor feedback was valuable, as is reflected in the principals of job-embedded learning. Whether participants expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the feedback provided or the absence of feedback, it was a common theme discussed when they described the key assessments. Most participants would tie their statements about instructor feedback to specific instructors, while others expressed more generalized feelings about feedback provided throughout the coursework. Overall, statements about instructor feedback were positive. When one participant questioned her instructor about a grade she received on an assignment, she said:

> She worked through it with me, and she gave me some really good feedback and suggestions. That was really helpful because I can get an A in the class, but it's not going to help me if I don't understand where I need to go.

Negative feelings regarding instructor feedback centered on instructors who did not provide timely feedback, or did not provide feedback at all; however, those cases were few and isolated to specific instructors. Even in cases where students received an A in the course, participants expressed the need for instructor feedback on assignments to help them develop their knowledge and skills. "I feel like most of the assignments were very good . . . but there were some where feedback was given so late that I didn't feel like I was fully able to . . . get the most out of the assignment."

Response by Leadership Preparation Program

As the accreditation efforts forged through this innovative design help programs move from compliance to improvement, it was helpful to understand what changes the leadership preparation program discussed because of this study, and other data that informed the accreditation work, grounded in the foundations of adult learning theory and job-embedded learning. Two specific areas arose because of these findings. First, faculty discussed inter-rater reliability and implementation of assessment rubrics and created an ongoing review of syllabi and key assessments to consider best practices in the field and the voice of students. Second, faculty

discussed ways to improve the alignment across sites of internship mentor/mentee matching and preparation. While each of these were carefully considered and appropriate changes made, it is important to note that no changes were made solely because of the interviews in this study due to the low N; however, the findings did inform a deeper investigation into issues raised.

Participants raised concerns about the clarity and consistency of rubrics used for key assessments, as well as the assignment descriptions. In response, faculty took the time to place all courses on a review cycle that includes reviewing the syllabus, vetting assessment instructions with both faculty and students to ensure clarity, and updating assessment rubrics to allow for better translation between ELCC standards and the university grading system. The process resulted in an overall curriculum audit that also highlighted some important voids, as well as overlap that the program is beginning to address.

The second immediate response dealt with inconsistency of internship experiences reported by students particularly as it related to mentor/mentee relationships. The program began to convene all internship university-based instructors to discuss how to improve the communication to mentors, as well as to improve the placement process. This resulted in a more elongated internship application that required students to communicate desired placement and objectives. Additionally, reflective practice readings were incorporated, as were one to one conversations between interns and their instructors prior to entering the placement. These served to clarify expectations and brainstorm how to communicate through challenges. Although several offers were made to provide training to site-based mentors, it was declined by several districts due to a lack of time for their administrators therefore the program must rely on written communication such as the internship handbook.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Findings revealed in this study led to several recommendations for practice at both the school district and university levels. It is important for universities and school districts to develop strong relationships as administrative interns are paired with experienced mentors. Because of this study, the university now requires an elongated internship application; however, the same effort must be given to recruiting, training, and supporting mentors to lead to more consistent internship outcomes. Additionally, based upon experiences and perceptions described by participants in this study, strong lines of communication between the university and the intern and mentor must be established to address the needs and expectations of all parties involved, thus leading to a more successful internship experience for all stakeholders.

Further research is needed in educational leadership preparation at the university level. As ambiguity existed in the interpretation and utilization of key assessments in this study, the researchers recommend the development of quantitative methods to measure how these assessments are interpreted and utilized. This measure may lead to a more targeted approach to improving these assessments. Additionally, further research is recommended to collect data from participating mentors during and following the internship. Furthermore, studying intern and mentor pairs may lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how key assessments are used during the internship, as well as how these assessments could be approved upon from the mentor's perspective.

CONCLUSION

At the apex of reform efforts are a plethora of literature that call for change in educator preparation (AACTE [American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education], 2011). Specific focus is on assuring high quality clinical experiences and assessments that prepare educators for their expanded professional and leadership roles. Findings add to the expanding body of literature on preparing leaders who are knowledgeable, supported, and confident to enter leadership roles in this ever-changing educational climate. For a more holistic understanding of what is needed to build and sustain successful schools, teachers, educational administrators, and school counselors

must be able to work together to assess student needs, design appropriate curriculum to meet those needs and create the learning environment that blends the right conditions for learning (Grossman, 2010; Levine, 2005; The Wallace Foundation, 2008). This study provided one lens through which to begin to understand the clinical experiences and how best to prepare educators. Not only was it important to understand the intended design of clinical experiences and assessment, but also it was critical to solicit feedback on the experiences of candidates to identify areas of needed improvement. This study represents a step in the cycle of continuous improvement including immediate steps to rethink the clarity around assessment expectations and the strategic placement of candidates with site-based mentors. Various related themes that emerged from this study will also enable further inquiry into topics such as the placement settings of clinical practice and additional mechanisms for enhanced feedback.

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INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES IN SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT: EXPERIENCES FROM TWO DISTRICTS OF GHANA

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ABSTRACT

In this study, School Management Committees in Akatsi South and Upper Manya Krobo of Ghana to examine their involvement and participation in school based management practices. A phenomenological approach was used to unearth four variables that links to school-based management that is carried out by SMC members. The findings of the study showed that the current state of stakeholder involvement and participation in school-based management within selected communities in these two districts are not well coordinated. Besides, school governance structures were not fully operational at their best. The work of the School Management Committees was usually left to the Chairman and in some cases to the Parent Teachers Association chair. There was a limited collaboration between the entire SMC membership and the schools they serve. Additionally, committee planning and implementation issues were significant concerns. The study recommended that SMCs be revitalised and their roles and responsibilities are unpacked for better targeting. The study also suggests changing the management activities to transform the face of activities of SMCs to improve educational provision and administration in the localities they operate.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Schooling and learning outcomes are at the crossroads in Ghana. Several factors have either been accused or excused at one point in time or the other. The persistent widening gap in performances among state approved schools (characterised by the public and private schools; endowed and less endowed schools; resourced and under resourced schools) is alarming. It is due to large stocks of teaching and learning resources in the private schools as against the public schools. Also, ongoing collaborative partnerships parents and guardians show in private schools are different from what happens in the public schools.

Education and training play a unique role in human capital development that tends to have a considerable effect on the economic development of nations (Abreh, 2011; Venkatraja & Indira, 2011). Besides, formal education is a social institution that seeks to equip individuals with essential cognitive, psycho motor and affective abilities which in turn influences the economic well being of nations. Thus schools become the hub for training and graduating enrollees. At the school level, some activities capitalised as either school management or operation issues as denominators of school effectiveness and efficiency. The formative years of future leaders, technocrats and indeed human capital needed for accelerated economic development is contingent on foundations of education and schooling. For instance, lifelong learning processes of the child begin from the early years where basic literacy, numeracy and essential life skills are acquired. Furthermore, Colclough (1996) and Blaug (1970) confirm the need to manage education and schooling well as education is both beneficial to the individual undergoing it and the society as a whole where the person resides or operates from.

To achieve the group goal that education and schooling present to the next generation of leaders, provision of essential human capital demands for effective management and operations of schools makes the need to examine the role that communities play in the management and operations of schools all the more important. The hard truth is children spend the majority of their time at home than in schools. In Ghana, the Ministry of Education (MOE) supports the operations of schools basically through the Ghana Education Service (GES). The development partners, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), have made several efforts to make school-based management efficient and effective. One area of school level management activities that stands out relates to partnerships and collaborations between the school and the community. Usually, it takes the combined efforts and contributions of stakeholders involved in the process to work towards making the school systems functional.

One of the characteristics of effective institutions depends on the extent to which their administrative, governance and management strategies make a practical contribution to the organization (Arnwine, 2002). Historically communities have played a vital role in the development and provision of education to children worldwide, and Ghana has not been an exception in this experience (Miller, 1995; Roekel, 2008). The community partnership in educational provision became even more functional in Ghana particularly during the era of the Whole School Development (WSD) project (MacBeath, 2010; UNESCO, 2005). Most basic schools in Ghana were initiated by communities, which willingly provided accommodation for teachers and pieces of land for the construction of the schools and also supported the upkeep of those schools and the children in them. In time, most of those schools were absorbed into the public system with the government taking over their management (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975), thus shifting the management and regulation of the schools to Ministry of Education structures and making communities loosely involved in the process. The centralised control model of education management often had the tendency of weakening the extent of community commitment and participation in the management of education in the country.

The Ministry of Education (MOE), as well as its other major agencies including the Ghana Education Service (2011), recognises the importance of mutual partnership between community leadership and school level leadership for effective school governance. The MOE and GES over time have developed systems that are intended to make community input in school management efficient and effective. The introduction of the Whole School Development (WSD) project was thus "viewed as a strategy to counter the paralysis that had come to characterise local decision-making in basic education by devolving control of education to districts, schools and communities" (Akyeampong, 2004a, p.4). The WSD attempted a strategy to improve the partnership that should exist between District Education Office (DEO) structures, head teachers, teachers and the community. Consequently, individuals who attended training programmes to introduce the WSD concept were taught approaches in developing a "Whole School Action Plan" that emphasises the aforementioned partnership arrangement in addressing teaching and learning needs and school based management issues in general.

In recent times, School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) has become an integral part of the life of basic public schools in Ghana. Its preparation has been tied to the propensity of schools to receive capitation grants[1], which makes it easy for every public school to own one. It is apparent

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[1]Capitation grants here means money given to every public school that meets a specified criteria of the award. The number of students enrolled in a school

that until this time, most public basic schools in Ghana operated without any school level plans to guide their actions. The SPIP was therefore meant to ensure that schools would be conducted in their operations. The WSD effort supported the drawing of action plans that educated participants on target preparation and appraisal of structures of schools. It also helped with designing and preparing school budget for inclusion in District budgets. The same effort supported the planning of activities to promote community involvement in the work of the school (Akyeampong, 2004a; WSD Training Programme Document, 1999). One need that WSD programme thus addresses is that it brings about community ownership of schools and as well as influence the extent of community participation in school activities. Akyeampong argues that the WSD programmes have sought to sensitise the school community to help address such problems as poor pupil learning and achievement outcomes usually apparent in primary schools but more profusely in the rural areas. Ghana's Ministry of Education has established governing structures at the various levels of education as a result of the WSD efforts. For instance, at the basic school level, these structures, either formally instituted or recognised include the District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC), School Management Committee (SMC), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), District (Municipal, Metropolitan) Assembly, District Education Office, Development Partners and Non-Governmental Organizations. In support of these structures to enable them to function more effectively, handbooks have been developed to guide their operations and various forms of training organized by different interest groups to the members of the DEOC and SMC which are expected to play leading roles in these governance processes.

The establishment of District Education Oversight Committees (DEOCs), School Management Committees (SMCs) and to some extent Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) is all directed towards rejuvenating the status of communities and their members in school level management (Akyeampong, 2004a). This essentially springs from the fact that communities assist the school in following ethics and compliance aimed at promoting management efficiency and effectiveness. Changes and reforms in education are warranted since Sustainable Development Goal 4 aimed at ensuring the provision of inclusive quality education for all and is situated at the heart of effective school-based management.

School Management Committees (SMCs) are the managerial hand of basic public schools in Ghana, and these are governing agencies of the school, and their roles are central to the main activities and operations at the school level. The SMC is supposed to work for the enhancement of the school and its community by working in the interest of the school. By law, the SMC is the governing body of basic schools in the various communities in Ghana and are supposed to promote the interest of the school and its learners for the children to receive the best education. Every public school has such a committee constituted based on state agreed for formation and operations of the SMC.

In recent times, the education sector in Ghana has been fraught with such issues as teacher absenteeism, lateness to school, and refusal to give proper attention to teaching and learning activities. Many of these problems are some of the major causes for low student learning outcomes (Basiru, 2013; Gyansah, Esilfie, & Atta, 2014). Some training opportunities have been provided in the past to head teachers and SMC members to enable them to adequately and effectively perform their expected functions. Various incentive packages such as teachers' quarters have been given to teachers deployed to remote areas so that they will be closer to the environment of the school (Casely-Hayford & Ghartey, 2007). However, this problem still exists as a core challenge in the education sector in Ghana.

Learning outcomes of private school pupils are high as compared to those of public schools (Ankomah, & Hope, 2011; Etsey, Amedahe, & Edjah, 2005; Ntim, 2014; Okyerefo, Fiaveh, & Lamptey, 2011). Furthermore, parents of children in private schools are noted to be very actively involved in school management whereas parents of pupils in public schools are in general not motivated to actively take part in school level management (Ankomah, & Hope, 2011). Weak supervision from district education offices tends to weaken the commitment of school head teachers and teachers in carrying out their duties (Mensah, 2008). The provision of Capitation Grant to schools, the preparation of School Performance Improvement Plan and the organization of School Performance Appraisal Meetings are all geared towards improving school management and performance. However, there has not been corresponding visibility regarding school level management output and improvement in learning outcomes for pupils in public schools. This low-performance issue raises concerns about how the school management structures are functioning. For instance, are activities carried out as planned? How are the processes of implementation monitored and evaluated? Who are the custodians of the benchmarks and how do they carry out their benchmarking work? These and other issues create an opportunity for auditing and interrogating how accountable the existing structures in public schools are and of course how the community supports the realisation of it.

The researcher has examined the procedures that the School Management Committees (SMCs) in Ghanaian basic schools[2], employ in varied contexts to see the differences. From these studies, it became evident that Ghana inherited decentralisation as one of the legacies of the British Policy of Indirect Rule. Furthermore, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana contends that power and decision-making should be transferred to the decentralised authorities[3] (Opare, Egbenya, & Kaba, 2009). Opare, et al. supported the argument that one of the surest means to increased decentralisation is the guarantee of democratic governance at various levels of operations. Legitimate provision has been made in the constitutions of Ghana since independence to allow for this to occur. The quest for decentralisation was to help accelerate growth and equitable spread of development in rural communities and to urge the participation of the communities in decision making that relate to the overall management of development in their localities (Egbenya, 2009). However, how this process of harnessing community resources with the view to speeding up growth and equitable distribution of development to communities in Ghana are confronted with challenges and especially in the education system. Snapshots of some reviewed empirical accounts on the Ghanaian context are presented in the following paragraphs.

Akukwe (2003) found that with dynamic leadership backed by robust community member support in planning processes and effective communication, school improvements were achieved. However, in both well-performing and underperforming communities, there was underachievement of transparency and accountability objectives. This was found to be largely due to passive parental involvement that was typical of PTAs and SMCs. The study further noted that the lack of capacity on the part of many SMCs made them feel unable to understand the expected decision-making as well as protocols for deploying those set strategies.

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[2] Basic education in Ghana is made up of Kindergarten (4 and 5-year-olds), Primary (6 to 11-year-olds) and Junior High schools (12 to 14-year-olds). The indicated ages are legal ages of the

[3] The decentralised structures in Ghana include the regional, district and circuit and community (where the schools are located) levels.

Akyeampong (2004b) in contextualising decentralisation in Africa found that decentralisation in systems that are not appropriately adjusted to its fundamental requirements for effectiveness can lead to outcomes that undermine the very reason why they were introduced. Akyeampong (2004b) further contends that decentralisation practised in developed countries where their socio-economic status and pace is advanced may require just grappling with parity and equity issues as warranted by the government. This is not the same in sub-Saharan Africa where circumstances differ broadly. For instance personnel, material and technology are usually considered basic variables before issues of equity and parity come into the picture. The Ghanaian situation is not any different. It is characterised by imbalances including those related to the "so called – base, secondary and tertiary" variables. In a study conducted by Tayi, Anin, and Asuo (2014), District Education and Assembly Officers asserted that inadequate funds/resources, difficult terrain and lukewarm attitudes on the part of the community level stakeholders were the major challenges adversely affecting community participation in the District Education Sector Planning (DESP) process.

In their assessment of factors affecting the standard of education Upper region, Nsiah-Peprah and Kililiyang-Viiru (2005) revealed that SMCs were operationally non-existent in 14 of the schools visited to formulate policies, ensure environmental cleanliness in schools, monitor regular attendance of teachers and pupils, as well as ensure adequate supply of teaching and learning resources. The absence of SMC and ineffective PTAs were found as the possible cause of the increasingly poor performance. The researchers noted that the capability of communities to participate should be distinguished from their willingness to participate. On the economic and social factors that underpinned the variations in community involvement and participation, they found the educational background of the school community, as well as social conditions and economic factors as important influencing agents. Kamaludeen (2014) examined the influence of the Ghana School Feeding Programme on access and retention and found that the SMC and its School Feeding Sub-Committee (SFC) directly managed the programme at the school level. The author found that each school had an SMC made up of the head teacher as the secretary, a chairperson who is a parent, and other members. Although the study could not pinpoint how operational the SMC was, it revealed the extent of SMCs participation in the administration of the school-feeding programme.

The role of collaboration among critical stakeholders in the provision of educational services cannot be overstretched since it provides the route to higher performance and achievement. The persistent widening gap in achievements of public and private basic schools is not merely due to large stocks of a variety of teaching and learning resources in the private schools as against the public schools alone, but also due to the visible concern and collaboration parents and children in private schools show in the education process. Educational provision and management cannot be undertaken by the school head and teachers in the school alone but by all the wider stakeholders together to ensure effectiveness and eventual success. This is the essence of the decentralisation concept in education seeking to bring stakeholders on board to play their varied and collective roles to promote efficiency and effectiveness toward improved learning outcomes.

The expectation has been that with these structures in place, there would be more effective supervision of teaching and learning, effective management of resources and facilities, all culminating in improved learning outcomes for pupils. This would be further evidenced by high performance in various examinations, particularly in the public schools. Thus to promote effective governance and supervision at the basic level and ensure improved general learning outcomes, formal structures of educational governance have been set up within the communities. Pieces of training have been given

to the members of these formal structures by the MOE/GES and other organizations like Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to enable them to understand their roles and discharge them effectively. Various supports and incentive packages have been provided in various forms for the schools; and their teachers and head teachers in the basic public schools. These include the giving of capitation grants to schools, the preparation of school performance improvement plans, the introduction of school feeding programme, as well as the provision of staff bungalows for teachers in remote areas, among others. In spite of all these, however, the realisation of the key expectation of improved learning outcomes seems to be only a mirage.

In recent times, there have been notable cases of very limited teacher time-on-task and teacher absenteeism in basic public schools across the country leading to disheartening performance outcomes in BECE results. It appears that the structures of educational governance and accountability at the basic level are malfunctioning and deficient.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Most of the theoretical basis of school-based management studies focus on three dimensions as theorizing the role communities plays in them. According to Hanushek and Woessmann (2007), the three dimensions are namely: (i) choice and competition; (ii) school autonomy; and (iii) school accountability. In this current study, relationships among school-level management committee members were examined. The conception of this study hinges on Moustakas (1994)'s thoughts "to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived". The four identified variables are: 1. plan preparation for school-level governance; 2. implementation of plans prepared, 3. setting benchmarks for monitoring and evaluation performance indicators, and 4. providing window for transparency, openness and accountability popped up in the school. Indeed in its most true sense, phenomenological approach describes other than to explain phenomena and does not engage in probing hypothesis and conducting inferential analysis or to deliberate about the preconceptions of others (Husserl, 1970). Phenomenology was applied in this study to examine the first two identified themes around SMCs and their influence on improvement in school based management.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study was to investigate the current state of stakeholder involvement and participation in school-based management within the communities of the two selected districts in Ghana. To realise what the study was set out to do, a research question is developed: "How do school management committees operate to achieve a high level of school management in the Akatsi South and Upper Manya Krobo, Ghana?"

METHODOLOGY

The study uses the phenomenological approach to examine qualitative data gathering, management, analysis and reporting. This approach ensures thorough, credible and a more persuasive research output since it offers the researcher the privilege of describing an incident, activity, or phenomenon. Thus the phenomenological approach to the study made a combination of methods, such as interviews, focus group discussions, documentary analysis, and visits to the research sites to enable the researcher to gain an understanding that made the study possible. The approach af-

forded determinable results that provide a lead on the systemic audit of how school management committees play their role on the realisation of school goals in school-based management. Data were collected from a broad range of respondents representing various categories of school-based management stakeholders to offer varied perspectives.

Data was collected from teachers, head teachers, PTA members, SMC members, parents and community members, as well as DEOC/DA members and representatives of NGOs and Development partners. It was intended initially to have 10 head teachers from each district totaling 20 head teachers in all, 2 teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) members, Parent Teachers Association (PTA) members, parents each from both districts totaling 40 each of the designated categories, 2 each of Circuit Supervisors and District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC)/ District Assembly (DA) totaling 4 each and 1 Non Governmental Organization or Development Partner whose project activities focuses on education from either district, totaling 2. This would have yielded an overall total of 190 participants with 95 for each district. However, some of the expected respondents failed to turn up leaving a final total of 183 with a shortfall of 7 individuals, three of the 7 were from the SMC members; and one each from PTA, DEOC, NGO (in Upper Manya Krobo) and one from the parents and community members in Akatsi South were not available for the interviews and Focus Group Discussions. The participants were purposively sampled from the districts with support from the Circuit Supervisors in charge of the selected circuits of the two districts. Ten schools each from Akatsi South and Upper Manya Krobo Districts were involved in the study.

The research data collection instruments were developed with the expert support of colleagues at the Ghana Education Service (GES) headquarters. This approach afforded a set of streamlined research data collection instruments for the study in the two districts. The instruments were primarily made up of interview guides and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides which were pre-tested in Komenda Edina Akuafo District in the Central Region of Ghana that has similar characteristics as the two Districts where the study was conducted. After that, the instruments were revised to reflect what it seeks to measure and rated valid and reliable when subjected to reliability and validity tests. The instruments that were used came from the following categories of respondents Interview Guide for Head teachers, Circuit Supervisors, District Education Oversight Committee/ District Assembly, Development Partners/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); and Focus Group Discussion Guide for Teachers, SMC members, PTA members, and Parents and Community members. Beyond the data emerging from interviews and Focus Group Discussions, secondary information in the form of reports on the activities of School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs), Circuit Supervisors and District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) as well as Non Governmental Organization and Development Partner whose project activities focuses on education were examined. The reports were requested from the relevant institutions and underwent thematic review to strengthen the data from the primary sources.

The research data collection instruments were profiled according to the themes that the framework for the study pointed out. This exploratory study collected the data on the four thematic areas from the various data sources in a complementary manner. That is, whereas data were collected from some of the respondents on all the profiled areas, other targeted respondents responded to a cross section of the four profiled areas. The respondents were engaged through interviews and focus group discussion, and after draft reports had been ready, the feedback was shared with the respondents using an engagement with the respondents to validate the feedback that has been captured in the draft report. During the engagement, permission was sought from the respondents

to audio-record all the interviews and focus group discussions. The process afforded the researcher an opportunity to resort to more probes for detailed information. The head teachers were met at the various schools where they were engaged individually in interview sessions. Similarly, teachers in each school were engaged on Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The parents and community members, PTA Executives, as well as SMC members, were met in their respective categories at the circuit center schools for the FGD sessions. The remaining respondents – DEOC leadership, Circuit Supervisors and Non-Governmental Organizations and Development Partners were interviewed at the premises of the District Education Directorates in the two districts. The audio files were transcribed and made ready for coding and theme building using NVivo software for qualitative data analysis. Two of the four profiles were highlighted in this study. The researcher used themes and narratives to report the findings.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study resulted in many findings related to school-based management issues that are peculiar to the two Districts under review. The indicators that were examined at this level included stakeholder involvement and participation in plan preparation and plan implementation strategies used in school level management at the reference districts. The feedback from all the respondents helped answer the research question. Additional specific examples illustrate how lines of accomplishments have occurred in the contexts of the Districts.

Plan Preparation for School-level Management

All the 20 schools visited had copies of the SPIP to exhibit. Teachers and head teachers reported that plans were prepared for the execution of school level activities. It was noted that issues captured on the plans were highlighted to strengthen the schools to compete for the capitation grant through the District Education Offices (DEOs). It was identified that 23 out of 37 School Management Committee (SMC) members that participated in the study did not join in the preparation of the SPIP. Rarely were they invited to participate in the preparation of the SPIP. In some cases, the secretary and the chairman happened to be SMC members involved in the SPIP preparation. But in some cases, even the SMC chairman was not involved at all. Seven out of ten SMC chairmen in one district said they were not involved in the SPIP preparation process. The head teachers were only presented with the prepared SPIP for their signatures.

Thus information provided by SMC members, circuit supervisors and PTA members suggests that SPIP preparations were done without the needed involvement of the SMC membership. This is an indication that several of the plans did not reflect the voice of the governing committee of the basic schools for which the plan had been prepared. The following three examples illustrate how schools involved in this study were not following the same procedures when it came to the involvement and participation of the SMC and other structures within the community during SPIP preparation:

> "The SMC chairman, PTA chairman, SMC and PTA secretary and the staff are the people involved in the SPIP preparation meeting. The SPIP is done after school at the beginning of the academic year [FGD and SMC]."

One SMC chairman lamented that:

> "I am not invited for the SPIP [preparation] meeting, and I do not have the opportunity of

sharing my input. It's the same with my other colleagues on the SMC; all I get is I am invited by the head teacher to sign my portion on the completed SPIP [FGD with SMC]."

The situation is hwever different in other contexts:

"The head teacher informs the SMC ahead of time about meeting to prepare SPIP [FGD with SMC]."

However merely informing an SMC about the date for the preparation for the SPIP meeting does not necessarily mean that the SMC was involved in the actual preparation of the SPIP document.

Two out of the four Circuit Supervisors involved in the study admitted that they were rarely present during SPIP preparation sessions for the schools under their jurisdiction. Similarly 13 out of the 20 head teachers admitted not inviting their CSs to their SPIP preparation sessions. Prominent among the reasons that the head teachers gave for not inviting the CSs include the fact that the CSs were usually busy. Twenty-seven (27) out of 40 teachers knew about how SPIP was prepared but 17 out of 27 of those who now is prepared said they were not involved in its preparation. At least a teacher in 7 out of 20 schools said they were involved in the preparation of SPIP. Relatedly, one SMC member said:

"In my school all the relevant stakeholders were invited and involved during the preparation, execution and evaluation stages of SPIP. The team preparing the SPIP do the planning on the basis of the three terms in an academic year. Besides, all teachers are involved during such stakeholder meetings. Due to assigned duties to all teachers during the preparation of the SPIP [it] made them to be actively involved in the process which to a large extent positively affected their performance in the classroom."

It was again noted that 17 out of 20 schools reported that they did not share information on SPIP with the community. This is not unexpected given that some SMC members and PTA members do not know what activities have been put in the SPIP.

There seem to be general awareness (18 out of 20 schools) among head teachers, teachers, and their SMC members that they had one School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) in the academic year of the study. However, there seem not to be any discernible pattern of conducting SPAM sessions in the communities. In some schools, it became evident that before embarking on SPAM, teachers were assigned responsibilities to brainstorm and come up with issues to be discussed during the SPAM. Also in other schools, head teachers asked teachers to diagnose pupils' reading and numeracy achievement levels before the SPAM. Elsewhere, teachers help head teachers to think through pupil performance to adequately assist the students. More than half of the community members agreed that they were invited to participate in SPAM sessions. Commenting on the wider stakeholder involvement in the SPAM, one head teacher had this to say:

"We organise SPAM in the school. During the SPAM, the assemblyman … attends in addition to other stakeholders in education. We meet and discuss the BECE results each year. Stakeholders such as pupils, teachers, parents and educational authorities who fail to play their role in the delivery of quality education are encour-

aged to sit up. This is what is done to help improve upon th-e performance of the pupils in exams."

Regardless of the findings on the involvement of wider stakeholders in the SPAM sessions, it was realised that 13 of the 20 schools did not maintain up-to-date minutes of their meetings. For the seven schools that maintained minutes for the SPAM sessions, the entries into the files were not updated on a regular basis.

Generally, beyond the SPIP[4], schools rarely prepare action plans that spell out details of duty bearers, timelines, achievement indicators and guarantee of completion. The two schools that said they had something close to action plan said they did not call for the action plan. Action plans were not drawn for PTA-funded activities although teachers and community members see the importance of having such a document in place. The study additionally revealed that in general new head teachers and teachers find it difficult to articulate procedures and structures for SPAM, SPIP and action planning. It is worthy of note that as a result of planning (through SPAM and SPIP), some schools formed reading clubs in the various classes except KG to help address reading problems common to most low achieving schools. Some teachers were involved when it came to improving numeracy and literacy in the reading clubs organised on the class basis. English, Mathematics and Science were subjects that posed a problem for the pupils, which may be attributed to their low readability skills, lack of logistics (TLMs) and the use of untrained teachers at the lower primary levels.

Implementation of plans for school level management

It was found that the activities planned in the SPIP are financed from the vote emerging from the capitation grant provided to schools by the government. Eighteen schools reported that the capitation grants were delayed in coming and sometimes did not come at all during the school year and hence the schools were not able to carry out the activities planned in the SPIP as scheduled. The vast majority of teachers, head teachers, and SMC members involved in this study revealed that their schools could not achieve up to half of the activities they set out to accomplish due to either delay of arrival and unavailability of the capitation grants. Besides, the SMC members, head teachers and teachers blamed in-completion of activities on the rising costs of budgeted items caused by the delays in the arrival of the grants.

The District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) and the District Education Office (DEO) members indicated that the schools prepared their SPIPs based on the guidelines provided them. The practice according to the DEO is that failure to follow the instructions would cause the finance and administration unit of the DEO not to approve the SPIPs. To ensure efficient use of the money, one of the districts has designed a form that the head teachers have to fill in and submit to the office before they access the money. The accountant and the director have to sign or endorse this form. The head teacher is expected to account for the previous grants awarded before a letter of authorization is issued to enable the school to access the grant at the bank. It became evident that each school had an account at the bank and that was the only channel through which capitation grants were released to the schools.

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[4]SPIP are prepared based on a preset template thus although schools have SPIP what they have do not reflect duty bearers, timelines, indicators of achievement and guarantee of completion

The signatories to a school's bank account were noted as the Head teacher and Assistant Head teacher. In a particular instance, a head teacher was found to have forged the signature of the SMC chairman to enable the prepared SPIP to meet the acceptable format of the DEO. The DEOs in the two districts have a system in place for cross-checking how school funds were disbursed and how they were accounted for. There were scheduled officers including mostly teachers, the sports secretary, the school health coordinator and others serving as spending officers of the capitation grant at the school level.

To determine the extent to which participants are accountable to the community, the respondents were asked whether they share information on school management with the community members and parents. Although most of the respondents agreed that the community needed such information, it was apparent that informing the community rarely occurred. Statements that respondents gave such as the following illustrate the reason why members of the community need such information.

> "*Parents need to know what is happening at the school to enable them play their role. I think so and I am sharing such information with them. Everybody needs to know what is happening in the school, not only the executives.*"

Nonetheless, some respondents felt that such information should be shared with SMC members only. Furthermore, other respondents felt sharing school management information with members of the community was not necessary. One head teacher said,

> "*I don't think it is necessary. It is the parents who appoint the executives so if I share information with them then that is enough. However, if any parent is interested, I can provide the records*."

Evidence seems to point to the fact that the organization of information sharing session was an undocumented activity and it happened much haphazardly for the most part in places where headteachers indicated they organised it. More than half of the schools that indicated that information sharing occurred SMC and PTA were not able to validate the claim made by head teachers.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this study seem to connect with the findings of the study by Haddad and Demsky (1995) regarding the planning in attainment of institutional and systemic educational goals. According to Haddad and Demsky (1995), a rigorous analysis of methodological approach tends to capture the complexities of the policies and processes. Additionally, studies conducted by Chen and Chandler (2001), Gonzalez (2012) and Norton and Nufeld (2002) indicated that involvement of parents and school management committees had reciprocal effect on learning outcomes of students on the whole. In this study, however, most SMCs were found apathetic to the course of school-level management as practiced in schools. Again, this study made it clear that most schools in the two Districts did not have operational School Management Committee (SMC) in place. Furthermore, the findings of this study resonate those of several other studies confirming the lack of SMCs in developing countries (Abreh, 2015; Akyeampong, 2009; Grauwe, 2005; Keith, & Menzie, 1998, Kiprono, Nganga, & Kanyiri, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The study uncovered the current state of stakeholder involvement and participation in school-based management within selected communities of Akatsi South and Upper Manya Krobo districts. The state of community participation in school level management activities was discussed in this paper to afford an understanding in school based management processes in the two districts. The existing structures for school-level management have been duly documented. The roles and functions of DEOC and SMC structures were available, but capacity building for members on these roles and functions did not seem to be well situated. Invariably every school visited in this study had prepared SPIPs but generally, the participation of the SMC membership in the preparation process was in question, and the schools did not feature the extent of completion of activities listed in the SPIP documents. All the schools conducted School Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAM) to discuss school matters with the various school stakeholders within the communities. The discussion was focused on the academic achievement of the pupils and how to improve it with special attention to BECE results. Most SMCs had structured meetings particularly at the beginning and at the end of the term, yet membership attendances at these meetings were found to be low and rarely forming a quorum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A few recommendations are made because of the evidence that the study brought about. It is noticed that most School Management Committees (SMCs) and District Education Oversight Committees (DEOCs) are quite dysfunctional and there is a need to activate and breathe life into them. This would require that DEOC and SMC members be informed of the issues critical to management decision making about the school. This might call for the change of management activities of DEOC and SMCs to re-orient them of their roles in educational provision and management in the localities. Community initiated accountability frameworks that tend to support grassroots activities should be put in place. Such structures may end up serving as a performance appraisal scheme that promotes delivery of quality teaching and learning services.

Teacher time-on-task and learning outcomes monitoring mechanisms need to be deployed in all the community schools. DEOC structures should be empowered to continuously conduct evaluation of the monitoring mechanisms put in place in the schools. By the use of the community structures (SMCs and PTAs) and the district education office to carry out such functions, the system of accountability can be strengthened. Furthermore, District Assemblies and District Education Offices may need to put in place measures that can help curb the incidence of apathy in and among members appointed to serve on the school governance committee.

It is recommended that all the on-going activities and incomplete activities should be completed by all schools with the support of school community members who have been so chosen for that function. Such a document should be made available to all major stakeholders in school-based management. Schools need to put in place a unified standard code for stakeholders in the school and its communities. The code can serve as guidance on all the details of how to follow in conducting regular meetings. Schools and school governing bodies should be resourced with the appropriate guidelines detailing practices that show transparency, openness and accountability in their school management operations.

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

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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.

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