7-1-2010

Intern and Mentor Perceptions of the Internship Experience

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Academic Leadership Journal

Introduction

For more than twenty-five years reform efforts have been pervasively pursued across the nation to improve student achievement at the K-12 level. It is generally agreed that the impetus for these reform efforts was the publication of the report, A Nation at Risk, in 1983(National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This report, which concluded that a "rising tide of mediocrity" was sweeping across the educational system served as the clarion call that spurred the national efforts to reform and improve America's schools. Although these reform efforts have covered nearly every aspect of schooling and taken a variety of forms, fundamentally they have addressed how schools are governed, organized, and operated for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. Additionally, and most important, these reform efforts have focused upon the quality of personnel in the schools, especially teachers and administrators, because reformers have argued that they are the most important resource for effecting significant school improvement. Given the emphasis on the quality of personnel, many of the reform efforts have addressed the quality of both pre-service and professional development programs for teachers and administrators. Of these, the focus, structure, content, and quality of the pre-service programs have received the most attention.

Recognizing the crucial role of the principal in schools, a variety of entities have become engaged in efforts during the last twenty-five years to improve the quality of principal training and professional development, particularly the former. In response to the national effort to improve the quality of school principals, many state legislatures, state boards of education, local boards of educations, school administrator professional associations, third-party providers (i.e., New Leaders for New Schools; National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2002), and colleges and universities have been active participants in the effort to improve principal preparation. Also, the Wallace Foundation, a national private foundation established by DeWitt and Lila Acheson Wallace, the founders of The Reader's Digest, has provided support for many of the studies on principal preparation and the role of school principals. Additionally, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), an Atlanta-based nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with leaders and policy-makers in 16 member states to improve pre-K through postsecondary education, has actively supported efforts and studies addressing the preparation of school principals. SREB has also provided professional development for professors and school leaders on the preparation and professional development of school principals. Collectively, a plethora of reports and studies have been produced, principally during the last 15 years, providing advice regarding what is needed to improve and strengthen principal preparation (Hale & Mooreland, 2003; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007). The vast majority of these reports have emphasized the crucial need for pre-service programs to include a strong, well-developed, monitored, and supervised internship in which students might gain realistic experiences normally performed by school principals (Southern Region Education Board, 2007, 2007a; Milstein & Krueger, 1997).

Rationale for Professional Internships

In the vast majority of professional graduate programs in which students earn a license and/or professional certification to engage in practice in a particular field, some type of internship is normally required in which students spend a specified period of time gaining first-hand experience working under the supervision of experienced professionals in a specific field and a university-based faculty member. It is during the internship phase of the training that these students wed classroom theory and knowledge to the on-the-job realities of the profession. The most prominent theoretical foundation undergirding the rationale for internships was provided by Donald Schön (1983; 1987). In his seminal book, The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action, he uses the metaphor of the "swamp of important problems" into which students and practitioners must descend to truly understand the most difficult and messy problems they will encounter when practicing in their profession (Schön, 1983). Moreover, Schön argues that it is through practicing and performing the day-to-day work of the profession that one learns to "make sense" of the world of practice through what he termed "reflection in action." In the latter case, he argues that in world of practice, learners will invariably witness, and likely experience, some degree of failure. As a consequence, the learners will likely reflect upon and learn from these failures and thus continue to learn the science and art of the profession and how to more effectively bridge academic learning with the world of practice.

Although internships had been an integral part of the academic preparation for most professional school programs many decades before Schön presented his rationale for how entrants become socialized into a profession, his ideas and concepts are now well-grounded in and embraced by faculties in many disparate professional school programs such as architecture, engineering, law, medicine, social work, business administration, public administration, educational administration, etc. Of all of the professions, medicine is the field in which students have the most extensive, prolonged internships and residency requirements while completing their studies.

What We Know About School Leadership Internships

The internship is an interplay between four distinct, yet intertwined parties: (1) the university educational leadership professors who have taught and often mentored the interns when their roles were primarily as students; (2) the university clinical professors who direct, guide, and ultimately evaluate the interns; (3) the principal-mentors who direct, guide, and evaluate the day-to-day experiences of the interns; and (4) the interns themselves. This study looks specifically at the perceptions of the internship through the eyes of the principal mentor and the intern.

In a study of internship experiences embedded in an administrator preparation program, Harris (2006) reported that 83% of responding students rated the quality of the job-embedded learning activities as strong. They also agreed that knowledge and skills associated with strong instructional leadership were developed through job-embedded learning activities offered in the program.

In a report of a survey of principal-mentors and interns conducted in the SREB-focused states, SREB (2006) reported that only eleven percent of mentors were selected based on an analysis of how the mentor's skills matched up to the needs of the intern. Almost two-thirds of mentors indicated on the survey that they were selected by interns. Sixty-three percent of respondents to the survey said that their responsibility was to help interns decode administrative theory into practice, and 61 percent thought it was to help their interns complete a list of university assigned tasks. Only 38 percent of the responding mentors said that they had received training prior to serving as a mentor to their interns. Not surprisingly, more than 90 percent of mentors who were university-trained said the substance of the

training centered on program goals and objectives, and descriptions of roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the process.

More recently, in a study of the principal internship experience, Valesky, Carter, and Huene-Johnson (2007) wrote that: "The internship experiences of students of principal preparation programs have often lacked elements that are essential to the development of effective school leaders, such as purpose, structure, rigor, and oversight" (p.5). Likewise, Wilmore (2004) wrote critically about the practice of poorly aligned internships: "To continue leaving future school leaders floundering through lackadaisical internships that are not tied to standards or expectations is a shame and this practice must stop immediately" (p.138). Similarly, in a study that examined the activities of 45 administrative interns in two large Midwestern universities, McKerrow (1998) found that two-thirds of the interns' time was spent attending meetings, doing office work or supervising students and that little or no time was spent performing the leadership functions of the principalship.

No matter how much attention is given to the academic understanding of the principalship in pre-internship coursework, until the interns experience being, for all practical purposes, practicing school leaders during the internship, neither can they can really understand, nor can they internalize the critical nature of the job of principal. Dunaway (2009, p.1) wrote of the job:

As every principal experiences, the typical day is composed of a series of 15-minute problem solving segments interspersed with interruptions of tragedy, hilarity, anger, and noise. In the middle of all this the principal is expected to set the vision of the school, increase parental engagement, know the names of all the students, the birthdays of the children of faculty members, the number of students on free and reduced lunch by gender and ethnicity, and the statistics of the leading scorers from last night's boys' and girls' basketball games. The principal is expected to develop strategies for increasing test performance, convince faculty members who have little desire to solve school problems that they should help solve them and enjoy doing it, protect the constitutional rights of every student, and be able to quote special education law chapter and verse. Add to this, teacher observations with pre-conferences and post-conferences, and the hours required to write up the observation. Just the paperwork associated with the evaluation routines for a large faculty is astonishing. One must not forget the principal is expected to be at every athletic event, club meeting, and to participate in the civic life of a community after the school day is over. And being a model parent with the model family life is a community expectation. To these expectations add the paperwork required by the central office, staying up-to-date on the latest instructional materials, teaching methodology, and discipline strategies, also. With the increasing emphasis on responding to email and returning telephone messages promptly, some school systems are beginning to measure the response-time from when a parent makes a request and that request is answered (Charlotte.com, 2007).

The internship experience needs to be fashioned from a broad spectrum of activities that today's principals are expected to perform. From a macro sense, the global categories of planning, organizing, leading, and monitoring provide a framework for beginning to structure an internship (Lunenburg and Irby, 2006). However, the emergent role of principal as instructional leader provides additional specific guidance for internship content. As Lyons (2009) has observed, of the many and varied roles that principals must carry out today, none is more important than that of chief educational accountability officer. More than any time in the history of the position, student academic achievement is now the raison d'être of schools. The principal's role has now shifted to being accountable for student learning

as measured by standardized student test scores which now "trump everything else" in terms of measuring and assessing individual school performance. Thus, principals are now expected to be primarily the instructional leader in their schools, working closely with teachers collectively and individually to improve teaching and learning in classrooms (p.2). Thus, internship activities need to include opportunities for experiencing data collection and analyses, observing teachers, meeting with teachers, and assessing the curriculum as well as the more traditional experiences of student supervision, discipline, safety, and buses. Such inclusiveness requires purposeful and intentional planning and monitoring by the university supervisor, on-site mentor-principal, and the intern.

Rationale for the Study

Based upon the authors' research, nearly all graduate preparation programs for school principals include an internship component. However, there are very broad parameters within which these internship experiences are structured and carried out (Mckerrow, 1998; Baugh, 2003; Baugh & Matthews, 2004; Wilmore & Bratlien, 2005; Daresh, 2001). Hung (2001) found that the nature of the typical internship experience varies from one university program to the next. She noted that while some students participate in full-time internships, others must continue in a full-time teaching position while often continuing to take university course work and completing the internship at the same time. For still others, university classrooms and school settings are connected by a shorter intern-like or practicum experience supervised by a university professor. Nevertheless, far too frequently, it is argued that administrative internships lack the structure, quality, and level of learning to prepare students for this role. In weaker preparation programs, students may be allowed to choose their own internship sites and mentors and engage in whatever administrative and leadership activities that the principal-mentor wishes for them to experience. In contrast, in strong, quality programs, internships require that students work closely under the guidance of competent, well trained field-based school leaders who work in concert with a university faculty supervisor to help the interns learn and master the repertoire of skills needed to work effectively with students, teachers, parents, and school district officials.

While accepted as a best-practice, the internship is not without significant issues. Hung (2001) concluded in a review of the literature regarding the effectiveness of internships:

In summary, while there is a clear case for improving administrator preparation programs across the country, there is no clear answer on how to redesign them so that they can produce effective principals who are then capable of handling the increased responsibilities and expectations of the role. The majority of opinions and reports support the use of internships to improve principal preparation, but it is unclear what exactly works when implementing the internship (p.12, 13).

An SREB (2005) study of 61 programs in the 16-state region served by the SREB found the following inadequacies of university-school intern partnerships.

· Barely a third of the universities require aspiring principals to lead activities that create a mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.

· Fewer than one-fourth require aspiring principals to lead activities that implement good instructional practices — such as leading groups of teachers in developing assignments and assessments aligned with curriculum standards or monitoring implementation of the curriculum.

· Only 15 percent require aspiring principals to lead the work of literacy and numeracy task forces to improve student performance in these critical areas.

· Only a third of the universities require aspiring principals to lead activities — such as creating or using authentic assessments of student work — that set high expectations for all students.

· Fewer than half require aspiring principals to lead activities in which faculties analyze school-wide data and examine the performance of subgroups within the school.

· About half of the universities require aspiring principals to lead activities that support change through quality sustained professional development.

· About one-fourth require aspiring principals to lead activities for organizing and using time and acquiring and using resources to meet the goals of school improvement. (p.5)

Additionally, this SREB study reported that graduates of principal preparation programs consistently report that their most significant learning occurred during their internship experience. At the same time, many of these graduates say the internship experience was the component of their preparation program most in need of being expanded and improved (p.3).

In summary, research on the principal/administrative internships leads one to conclude that many universities with principal preparation programs need to revise and strengthen the quality of this crucially important component of the pre-service education experience. Although the research is scant, it appears that many principal interns are not spending adequate time engaging in authentic school-based experiences to become intimately familiar with the broad array of leadership and managerial responsibilities expected of building principals. Most important, principal interns can benefit greatly from having strong mentoring, supervision, and tutoring on a timely basis while they are completing this phase of their preparation.

The authors conducted this study because we strongly believe that the internship is often deemed to be the most crucial phase of principal preparation programs. Based upon the anxiety and trepidation that most students in our university expressed prior to beginning their internships, the authors were led to believe that the students were better prepared for this experience than they believed they were. Also, given this perception, the authors also believed that the interns' field-based principal-mentors would rate their performance better than these interns would rate themselves. Since no empirical research could be found that addressed this, this study was undertaken. In this study, the researchers looked specifically at the perceptions of the internship through the eyes of the principal mentors and the interns.

Method

Survey research was employed to collect data for this study. Dillman's Tailored Design Method (2000), which uses social exchange theory of human behavior to create respondent trusts and perceptions of increased rewards, was considered in designing the survey and inviting participants to respond. We were interested in the following research questions:

1. Are there differences between interns and mentors in their perception of interns' knowledge and

skills in the domains of (a) vision, (b) instruction, (c) operations, (d) external environment, and (e) ethics learning?

2. What are the three areas that interns and mentors identified as having the strongest and weakest preparation for the principalship?

Participants

The targeted population for this study was 160 students (referred to as interns) who completed the 10-month principal internship in the Masters in School Administration graduate program in a large southeastern university during the last five years. Thus, these principal-interns represented a convenience sample, meaning they may not be representative of the general population of principal-interns. The responses of interns were not matched with the responses of their field-based mentor-principals. A total of 59 of 160 interns completed the survey resulting in a 37% return rate. There were 42 females (71%) and 17 males (29%) respondents. The distribution of respondents across the age range was 64% (n=38) between 30-39 years old, 20% (n=12) between 40-49 years old, 9% (n=5) between 50-59 years old, and 7% (n=4) under the age of 30 years old. Most of the respondents identified their race as Caucasian (n=42, 71%) and 17 (29%) respondents identified themselves as African-American. Over half of the respondents currently held administrative positions at the elementary level(n=32), 31% of respondents held positions at the middle school level (n=18), and 15% (n=9) held a position at the high school level. The average number of years teaching and experience as a school administrator, respectively, was 10.4 years (SD=4.9) and 1.7 years (SD=1.4).

The second targeted population was 136 building-level principals who served as mentors for the intern participants during the last five years. Thus, these principal-mentors represented a convenience sample, meaning they may not be representative of the general population of principals who supervise student-interns. The responses of the principal-mentors were not matched with their assigned interns. A total of 36 of 136 mentors completed the survey, resulting in a 26% return rate. There were 17 males (47.2%) and 19 female (52.8%) respondents. The distribution of respondents across the age range was 22% (n= between 30-39 years old, 28% (n=10) between 40-49 years old, 44% (n=16) between 50-59 years old, and 6% (n=2) between 60-65 years old. Most of the respondents identified their race as Caucasian (n=24, 67%), 11 (31%) respondents identified as themselves as African-American, and 1 (3%) respondent identified as Hispanic. Nearly half (44%) of the respondents currently held administrative positions at the elementary level (n=16), 22% of respondents held positions at middle school level (n= and 22% served at the high school level (n=8). Four respondents (11%) did not specify their school levels. The average number of years teaching and experience as a school administrator was 12.6 years (SD=8.4) and 12.4 years (SD=7.6). Over half (n=23, 64%) of the respondents reported they currently held a Master's in School Administration, 28% (n=9) held a doctorate degree in Leadership, and 4 had an add-on principal certification.

Procedures

Interns and mentors were sent a letter via email inviting them to complete an on-line survey. The letter was sent using university logos which identified the nature of the study, the names of the researchers, the link to access the survey, information concerning rights of participants, and contact information if they had questions. Separate letters were sent to each group of participants. A follow-up email was sent approximately one week after the initial email thanking those who completed the survey and

reminding those who had not completed the survey to please do so. Electronic mail addresses were not associated with responses so all participation was anonymous.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was designed to measure principal interns' self assessment of the degree of acquisition of knowledge and skills during the internship program, and a second questionnaire was developed from the intern questionnaire to measure the principals' assessment of the interns' attainment of knowledge and skills.

The intern survey contained 75 items presented in three sections of the questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire asked participants their age, gender, race, highest degree earned, work position, and years of teaching and administration experiences. The next part asked respondents to rate their perception about how much the intern learned during the internship program (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). There were five domains of learning examined: (a) vision (4 items), (b) instruction (7 items), (c) operations (7 items), (d) external environment (4 items), and (e) ethics (5 items). The final section of the questionnaire asked the respondents to list their top three most and least well prepared areas on entering the internship. Domains and item development were based on five leadership areas consistent with ISSLC and ELCC standards: vision, culture, instructional leadership, school management, involvement in the external environment, and issues of ethics and values.

The principal-mentor survey was similar to the intern survey. The first part of the questionnaire asked participants their age, gender, race, highest degree earned, level of current position (elementary, middle, high school), and years of teaching and administration experiences. The next part asked respondents to rate their perception about how much the intern learned during the internship program (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). The same five domains of learning that were presented in the intern survey were used for the principal-mentor survey. The final section of the questionnaire asked the principal-mentors to evaluate of the top three most and least well prepared areas of the intern on entering the internship.

Recommended principles for constructing a questionnaire were used in this study (Dillman, 2000). For example, questions were created in a way that minimized the need to reread portions in order to comprehend the response task. The questionnaire was reviewed by the research team and changes made in the questionnaire that satisfied the principles of questionnaire design. To evaluate the clarity of the questionnaire items, two interns were asked to talk-aloud as they responded to the items in the questionnaire. The results indicated that items were not ambiguous and easily understood by potential respondents. Cronbach's coefficient alphas for the five domains ranged from .74 (operations) to .87 (vision), which suggest reasonable internal consistency for the domains.

Design and Data Analysis

The research questions examined differences between interns and mentors on their perception of the interns' knowledge and skills in (a) vision, (b) instruction, (c) operations, (d) external environment, and (e) ethics. All data was summarized using means and standard deviations for interns and mentors. Inferential statistics were used to detect statistically significant differences between the groups across items and domains of items. The open-ended response questions were analyzed by two researchers developing common themes across all respondents.

Results

The survey items, mean score for mentors and interns, and the effect sizes (i.e., Cohen's d) indicating the magnitude of difference between the mentor and interns means scores are reported in Tables 1-5. The effect sizes for items examining vision (Table 1) were very small, ranging from -.11 to .13, indicating there were very little differences between the mentors and interns on their perception of the interns' ability to development and implement a school vision, use the school vision to guide decisions, or working with school staff, parents, or community in developing or revising the school vision. The same trend was noted for the items examining instruction (Table 2); that is, mentors and interns tended to have very similar perception of the interns' ability to evaluate instruction, develop strategies to improve student achievement, and analyze and employ models of effective instruction. For items examining operation (Table 3), there were two effect sizes that suggested a moderate level of disagreement between the mentors and interns. Mentors tended to rate the interns higher than the interns rated themselves for operation items of develop and manage a school budget (effect size of .48) and manage school support functions such as transportation, food service, facilities, etc. (effect size of .45). For external environment (Table 4), there was one item (work with diverse school population) that mentors tended to rate higher than the interns. There were very small differences in means between the mentors and interns on all ethnics items (Table 5), with effect sizes ranging from .13 to .27.

The five domain scores were calculated by averaging the item values that were aligned to each domain. Five t-tests were conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the mentors and interns on the domain score level of learning. A Bonferroni adjustment was made to reduce the chances of a Type I error due to multiple tests, which resulted in a nominal alpha level of .01. The means, standard deviations, t-values, and effect sizes for the mentors and interns are reported in Table 6. Before conducting the analyses the data were screened for normality, outliers, and homogeneity of variance. Results from the screening suggested that there were no outliers and the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were tenable. The independent t-tests results indicated a statistically significant difference for the mean values between the mentors and interns on the domain means of operations. Mentors reported a much higher level of interns' knowledge and skills for operations than the interns, with an effect size of .52. Mentors tended to view the interns as having higher levels of monitoring and evaluating school operations, developing and managing budget, and maintaining other important school operations. While not statistically significant, there were small to moderate effect sizes for environment and ethnics.

Information gained through participants responding to open-ended questions informs university preparation program design. When asked to identify areas in which interns believed they were strongly prepared for their internship, they most often cited school law, curriculum and instruction matters, and working with teachers. Conversely, they cited school finance/budgeting, personnel issues, and general operations as areas in which they reported being least well-prepared.

Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications for Research and Practice

Mentors clearly assessed the learning taking place during the internship experience at a higher level than did the interns. Mentors reported higher levels of learning than interns on 22 of 27 items in the survey. While the two groups did not have an accompanying rubric to guide their responses, patterns

emerged. The areas of most difference were on items dealing with budget, school support operations, and working with diverse school populations. The mentors and interns were most alike on items relating to interviewing and recommending teachers for employment; using the school vision to guide decisions and daily actions; and, evaluating instructional programs.

Interns assessed their learning levels as stronger in areas of school operations that are more related to teacher activity than administrator activity. They had higher level of learning means than mentors in working with school staff to develop or revise the school vision; articulating and implementing the school vision; and, analyzing teacher instructional practices. Interns reported their lowest level of learning means in areas of school budget, working with parents and community to develop the school's vision, and summative evaluations and recommendations for continued employment of teaching staff. Reflecting a novice's proclivity to comply and to do things right, the interns had their highest level of learning means in operating within a framework of laws, policies, and guidelines; acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and applying ethical principles in decision-making.

Among domain scores, the area of operations was clearly assessed higher by mentors than by interns. Perhaps operational activities are easier to judge or more self-evident than progress in the other domains. Operational activities are also more tangible and real time than the more cerebral activities of vision, school environment, and ethics.

From the results of this study, it may be concluded that principal-mentors perceive that principal-interns are more effective in performing administrative/leadership tasks and responsibilities than the interns themselves believe they are performing them, which may be a positive factor. On the other hand, it may also indicate that the principal-mentors did not provide the interns sufficient, timely feedback regarding how they were performing. It may also indicate that, due to their lack of experience and confidence, interns may have been anxious and fearful that they were not able to competently perform these new and different administrative/leadership responsibilities since they only had experiences as teachers. These findings suggest that university faculty supervisors, field based principal-mentors, and administrative interns should all have a clear, unambigous understanding of the knowledge, skills, and competencies that interns should develop, hone, and demonstrate during this phase of their training as well as the type, amount, and frequency of feedback that should be provided to interns. It is then and only then that interns can learn how to function as the instructional leaders that they are expected to be.

Additionally, the findings suggest that these interns did not believe that they sufficiently mastered the areas of school budgeting, leading school stakeholders in developing a school vision, conducting teachers' summative evaluations, and making recommendations on the continuing employment of teachers, presumably unternured and/or marginal teachers. Possibly, this may mean that these were areas in which the principal-mentors provided the interns no or only limited exposure to or involvement in. Given that principals often believe that these are some of their most crucial responsibility areas, the principal-mentors may have been reluntant to "loosen the reins" in them for fear that something might go awry. We can only definitively conclude that interns did not perceive they had much experience in these areas.

Coursework offerings as well as coursework content need to be responsive to such data. Alignment of university talents and intern program needs should have strong correlation and its articulation may require course assignment attention, curriculum revisions, course syllabi reviews, and even faculty recruitment and selection criteria adjustments. Specific deficits such as master scheduling, budget

management or principal office triage are difficult to simulate in meaningful ways from a textbook exercise or a classroom role-playing activities. Perhaps the intervention to shore up these weaknesses depends upon careful internship experience planning among interns, principal-mentors and university supervisors. Identifying and developing specific experiences that address intern skill sets could play a pivotal role in providing rich praxis between theory and practice. Such planning is both staff and time intensive and might require resource allocation enhancements in some school leadership programs.

Recommendations for Further Study

The relationship between level of involvement and perceived learning of interns is intriguing, but it is difficult to separate them. One would reasonably assume that observing an activity is a less intense learning experience than participating in an activity. Likewise, one would assume that leading an activity holds even more promise for learning to take place. Although we did not analyze the interns level of involvement in various tasks normally carried out by principals in this study, exploring the interaction of involvement levels and perceived learning is fertile ground for future study.

Universities and school districts need to create more meaningful experiences for interns to immerse themselves in building level budget development and management processes. Perhaps textbook and software publishers can be persuaded to produce viable exercises for professors, mentors, and interns which devote more attention to this area, as most textbooks do not currently clearly present practical information for developing and managing budgets at the school level.

The pattern of principal-mentors consistently scoring intern learning activities higher than the interns may point to a need for better pre-internship experience training. The literature review highlighted the dearth of such activities. Agreement of prescribed activities, desired outcomes, and assessment scales among universites, school districts, and students should occur prior to the start of the internship experience. It appears that a better job is needed to more clearly define the roles, expectations, responsibilities, and levels of learning that administrative interns need to experience and demonstrate. Potentially, this effort can serve to greatly stengthen the internship experience and better prepare principal-interns before they descend to the "swamp of important problems" where they can truly learn the role expectations for contemporary principals and how to "reflect and think in action" as Donald Schön recommends.

While there is no reason to conclude that these principal-interns and principal-mentors are dissimilar to the general population, the case cannot be made in this study that they are similar. Consequently, the findings from this study cannot be generalized to the general populations of both principal-interns and practicing principals who supervise and mentor them. Thus, the results of this study must be interpreted with some caution. Moreover, we would recommend that similar studies be conducted using much larger random samples of principal-interns and mentor-principals so that the findings might be generalized to the general population in both of these groups. If possible, subsequent studies should also match and compare responses of principal-interns with the responses of their assigned mentors.

Lastly, we would recommend that some qualitative studies be conducted in which researchers study and monitor the experiences of administrative interns and their field-based principal-mentors on an ongoing basis during the duration of this experience—from beginning to end. These studies could provide some very rich, illuminating data that could be used to improve principal preparation programs and enhance the knowledge base.

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Tables

Table 1

Vision Items Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes Level of Learning by Mentors and Interns

		Mentors		Interns		
	Vision Items	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Cohen's d*
1	to develop, articulate, and implement a school vision	3.94	1.24	4.05	.79	-.10
2	use the school vision to guide decisions and daily activities	4.14	.99	4.13	.81	.01
3	work with the school staff to develop/revise the school vision	3.89	1.28	4.02	.86	-.11
4	work with the parents and community to develop/revise the school vision	3.94	1.19	3.79	1.07	.13

Table 2

Instruction Items Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes Level of Learning by Mentors and Interns

		Mentors		Interns		
	Instruction Items	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Cohen's d*
5	evaluate instructional programs	4.03	1.08	4.06	.92	-.03
6	develop strategies to improve student achievement	4.28	.88	4.23	.87	.05
7	develop a school improvement plan	4.31	.71	4.20	.97	.13
8	analyze teachers' instructional practices	4.28	1.00	4.34	.69	-.06
9	process/procedures of effective teacher observations	4.36	.83	3.99	1.34	.36
10	assess the effectiveness of instruction as a result of internship experiences	4.22	.83	4.15	.98	.09
11	employ teacher supervision models and processes	4.08	.81	3.97	.88	.14

Table 3

Operation Items Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes Level of Learning by Mentors and Interns

		Mentors			Interns		
	Operation Items	Mean	SD		Mean	SD	Cohen's d
12	monitor and evaluate school operations	4.28	.61		4.05	1.00	.30
13	develop and manage a school budget	3.47	1.00		2.94	1.22	.48
14	handle school personnel functions of interviewing and recommending teachers	4.00	1.12		4.00	.98	.00
15	school personnel functions of summative evaluations and recommendations	3.92	1.02		3.82	1.15	.09
16	manage school support functions such as transportation, food service, facilities, etc.	4.25	.77		3.85	1.05	.45
17	manage and supervise school safety issues	4.22	.68		4.14	.92	.11
19	use technology to support school operations and processes	4.31	.71		4.16	.74	.20

Table 4

External Environment Items Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes Level of Learning by Mentors and Interns

		Mentors			Interns		
	External Environment Items	Mean	SD		Mean	SD	Cohen's d
18	engage parents and community representatives in accomplishing the mission	4.19	.79		4.02	.92	.21
20	work with diverse school populations	4.47	.56		4.16	.95	.44
21	involve appropriate stakeholders in school decision-making	4.08	.77		4.03	.83	.07
27	various governmental entities influence and affect schools	4.06	.98		3.98	.76	.08

Table 5

Ethics Items Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes Level of Learning by Mentors and Interns

	Ethics Item		Mentors		Interns		
			Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Cohen's d*
22	apply ethical principles to decision-making		4.47	.61	4.39	.69	.13
23	model a personal and professional code of ethics		4.54	.56	4.37	.74	.27
24	act with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner		4.58	.50	4.42	.90	.25
25	operate within the framework of school laws, policies, and guidelines		4.58	.55	4.46	.56	.22
26	protect student rights while administering appropriate disciplinary measures		4.44	.65	4.36	.62	.13

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Table 6

Five Domains Means, Standard Deviations, t-values, and Effect Sizes for Domain Scores for Mentors and Interns

Domain	Mentor		Intern		*t*-value		ES
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Vision	3.98	1.06	4.01	.75	-.17		-.03
Instruction	4.22	.63	4.08	.72	.98		.21
Operations	4.06	.61	3.72	.70	2.49	*	.52
Environment	4.20	.64	3.95	.65	1.81		.38
Ethics	4.52	.49	4.33	.57	1.73		.37

*Note. *p<.01*