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ABSTRACT

The current rate of technological change demands changes in the ways educational administrators are trained. On one hand, administrators need more systematic inservice programs to update their skills and they themselves must provide their staffs improved inservice training. On the other hand, increasing specialization precludes administrators from mastering all the activities they manage; preservice education must therefore ground them in the fundamentals of learning theory, pedagogy, communication, and leadership, but most importantly, teach them how to learn. Accompanying these changes, the accelerating pace of life and increasing transience will affect schools' counseling services, organizational dynamics, and employment practices; telecommunications will alter the physical and social structures of both work and learning; and job obsolescence, particularly affecting unskilled workers, will increase pressures for more effective schooling. Obviously there is no simple answer to this challenge, but two concepts combine to provide a general model for administrator education. The first of these identifies fundamentals of management: systems theory, decision theory, understanding of group and individual behavior, and distilled managing experience. The second describes foundations of curriculum development. These concepts can guide a cohesive and articulated program to prepare administrators for the 21st century. (MCG)

PREPARING EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS FOR THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND

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Introduction

At first glance "American Education in Perspective: A Celebration of Excellence," the theme of this 1984 Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, appears to suggest a review of past philosophies, practices, successes, and unrealized success in American education. However, of what use is this historical perspective if not to serve as a foundation for analyzing the present and for better preparing us to meet the challenges of the future? Consequently, my colleagues and I have seized upon this opportunity to meet with other concerned professionals, such as yourself, to share perceptions as to the relationships between the preparation of educational administrators, as it has been done in the past and as it is currently achieved, and the foreseeable changes which will have to be effected in order to prepare administrators to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

To accept the popular media rhetoric that rapid change is a recent phenomenon and a concern almost unique to our times is to ignore a rich history and valuable literature on the topic. For example, John Dewey's Liberalism and Social Action, written half a century ago, voiced strong concerns regarding the development of methods to direct social change. Harold Benjamin's 1939 classic, The Saber-Tooth Curriculum, took a humorous, yet pointed, stand regarding the need for educators to perpare pupils to be capable of meeting the challenges of the future rather than the past.

However, it is true that there is an unprecedented proliferation of resources available which can assist us in orienting our perspectives in the future. Don Glines recently estimated that "there are 5,000 books, articles, audio and video tapes, films, classroom kits, magazines, games, and materials from information groups that are related to futures-oriented inservice and instructional activities." This volume of material is increasing on a daily basis

At the same time that it represents a tremendous resource, it is this same volume of information which proves to be one of the most significant barriers to those of us involved in charting new courses for the preparation of educational administrators and leaders. The task of reviewing this constantly growing body of thought, identifying key issues, and evaluating the varying perceptions on each of those issues is nothing less than monumental.

This very problem exemplifies the fundamental precept of this author's

philosophy regarding the preparation of tomorrow's educational administrator. As elaborated upon by Alvin Toffler in his 1970 best-seller, Future Shock, the RATE of change is more sigificant (and more predictable) than is the direction of change.

The Rate of Change and its Implication

One of the most well-documented rates of change is the pace at which new knowledge is accumulated. Already posing significant problems in other fields, this technological "snowball" portends a number of significant changes for our approaches to training educational administrators.

As Dubin pointed out in Professional Obsolescence, technological change is so rapid in some scientific areas that engineers trained in graduate programs can expect to be professionally obsolete in less than five years. If one looks at current certification practices for educational administrators, it is not uncommon to find that certification can be valid for the remainder of that administrator's career, which may be forty years! While most states and /or school districts impose requirements for periodic in-service beyond that necessary for continued certification, these in-services are often informational rather than skill-building, often are designed to acquaint administrators with changes in policy, legislation, or procedures, and are generally of very brief duration, so as not to "interfere" with the administrator's daily responsibilities. Within this context, then, the question must be asked as to what changes must be made in certification renewal and in-service practices to assist practicing administrators to accompany the accelerating pace of change. Concomitantly, what changes in job structure must be considered to permit the administrator to participate in ongoing recycling activities?

This same issue extends into the administrator's role vis-a-vis the faculty and staff. As an efficient continuous in-service program truly becomes recognized as a survival need rather than a formality, the administrator must become fully qualified in human resource development skills. At the same time that the rate of expansion of technology and knowledge accelerates, so does the degree of diversification and specialization. It is less likely that the specific needs of future educators and staff members can be met in the heterogeneous environments of so many of today's in-service activities. Tomorrow's administrator must be capable of performing individual needs assessments, of tailoring an expanded range of learning opportunities to the needs and characteristics of specific employees, and of accurately evaluating the tactical and strategic effectiveness of the selected activities.

This diversification and specialization will create new challenges for the faculty as well. With the continued erosion of common subject areas, teaching strategies, materials, and even professional interests, perceptions of organizational homogeneity may be weakened. In his/her role as formal, and hopefully informal, leader, the administrator must be sufficiently well-versed in organizational development to recognize and counteract these forces.

Increased specialization by both the professional and non-certified staff can also portend new challenges to the leadership role of the administrator. As contrasted to the original concept of "principal teacher" or "master teacher," the rate of growth of knowledge and technology in all fields precludes the

administrator from accepting such a role. At the same time, it forces the administrator to define his/her leadership in terms non-related to overall technical competence, to work effectively enough with faculty and staff to establish recognition and acceptance of this role, and to ensure that all faculty and staff have sufficient access to technical assistance and resources in their fields of specialization. It seems obvious that these trends will diminish the importance of specific content and skills in the administrator's preparation and will increase the need for extended preparation in the fundamentals of learning theory and instruction, communication, and leadership.

The development of new technologies, rapid growth of knowledge, and corresponding specialization will also be reflected in administrative structures and job descriptions. For example, much of the content of traditional academic programs (e.g. school finance, class scheduling, enrollment projections) will represent areas of such technical complexity that they will become the domain of district-level specialists, with the typical school-level administrator requiring only a degree of "literacy" in these areas and instructions on how to submit the data necessary from his/her school into the central data system.

The challenge to preparation programs will be to shift emphasis from the learning of specific content and skills to working with prospective and practicing administrators in "learning how to learn." Not only will research and library skills assume a more prominent role, but directed and non-directed individual study opportunities should be incorporated into each student's program. Such individualized study programs will not only allow the student to delve into specialized content areas, but will also provide opportunity to develop learning strategies which will be necessary for continued professional development beyond the formal academic setting.

The Pace of Life and Increased Transience

Accompanying this rapid growth of knowledge and technolgoy is predicted to be an acceleration of the pace of life and of the degree of transience. Not only will the permanence of ideas be curtailed, but so will links with others, with places, and with organizations. The threat that this will represent to students will increase the necessity of the school providing guidance and counseling services, either directly or through community agencies. Special emphasis must be given in preparing administrators to diagnose, understand, and work with the instabilities originating from these causes. Organizational dynamics may be altered by considerably higher turnover rates among the students and faculty, which can greatly affect the administrator's role.

Selection of personnel will become a more significant issue, with the administrator faced with complex decisions ranging from the assessment of individual candidates' compatability with organizational philosophies and values to the assessment of the candidates' competency in highly specialized areas corresponding to the organization's needs.

New Environments for Working and Learning

The rapid development of tele-communications and tele-educational technology augurs pronounced changes in the physical environment of both the

labor market and educational system.

The need to concentrate workers in prescribed areas is no longer a paramount consideration for communications and information-sharing. Computer/tele-communication technology is becoming sufficiently cost-effective and cost-efficient to permit many industries to employ physically isolated, independent work stations. Perhaps of greater significance than the technology itself, this new mode of operation requires a substantially different worker profile. Social interaction skills and the ability to conform to group norms and values may assume secondary importance to self-discipline, self-motivation self-direction, individual problem-solving skills, and the ability to function independently.

These new emphases will require corresponding modifications in school curricula and environments. Traditional classrooms will continually give way to individualized learning environments, many of which may be far removed from the school campus.

In addition to the planning and scheduling challenges inherent in such a system, the educational administrator must be prepared to assist faculty members make the transitions necessary for them to adapt their instructional behaviors and professional expectations. The teacher's role may well shift from a developer and presenter of materials to a diagnostician of individual needs and an evaluator of available alternative materials. Likewise, the administrator, as instructional supervisor, will be faced with new challenges in curriculum development and program evaluation.

Accountability

Without question, accountability has been a watchword for educational administrators over the past several decades. However, in looking at the future ore must ask: "What will failure mean to a student in the 21st Century?"

Technological advances may virtually eliminate the labor market for unskilled workers. In fact, the rate of technological advancement may make job obsolescence a terrible reality for any worker who has difficulty in learning new skills or adapting to new technologies. Increased productivity within the demographic constraints of non-expanding markets threatens to raise significantly unemployment rates which are already socially unacceptable. The potential crisis that improperly or inadequately-prepared youth represent can be apreviewed in examining today's uarban minorities. However, this crisis will be greatly magnified in the future and the pressure on the educational system will continue to mount.

What Does All This Imply for the Preparation of Administrators?

Obviously, the complexity of this future perspective refutes any simplistic solutions; however, some implied generic program emphases appear to be inescapable in this projected context. To help structure this analysis, Taba's foundations of curriculum development and Koontz and O'Donnell's conceptualizat on of the management process offer promise when combined into a program model.

The Management Process

Koontz and O'Donnell described the bases of management as: systems theory, decision theory, group behavior, and distilled managing experience. A brief discussion of each component may help to clarify its role in the overall preparation of the school administrator.

Systems Theory

In addition to developing a systems perspective of education (from the macro through the micro levels), through a thorough knowledge of theoretical principles, the administrator of the future will need to be competent in the actual skills of system design and analysis. An obvious pre-requisite would be sufficient computer literacy and skills to facilitate the mathematical and information processing aspects of such tasks.

Decision Theory

A logical extension of, and complement to, systems theory, decision theory must also be a significant component of administrative preparation programs. A dual emphasis should be given to the social aspects and to the technical aspects, including research skills, mathematical modeling, management information systems, needs assessment, cost analyses, and evaluation. Again, a pre-requisite background in both statistics and computer literacy would be essential.

Group Behavior

Recognizing that schools are merely organizations with a specific mission, the administrator of the future must be well-versed in group behavior. Incorporated into this component must be a firm basis in organizational psychology, organizational development, leadership, change theory, ethnic-cultural sociology, and communication theory. However, since many of these skills cannot be developed through more traditional classroom methods, experiential laboratory classes would be an essential part of this component.

Individual Behavior

Again, as organizations are comprised of individuals, leaders of schools must be well-versed in the psychology of individual behavior. This expertise must encompass not only adult behavioral psychology, but also specific knowledge concerning the age ranges of the student population and the behavioral psychology of any special populations which might be represented in the school.

Distilled Managing Experience

Koontz and O'Donnell cite the need for both study of the historical perspectives and for actual field-based experiences in this component. The former aspect is a standard element of most current programs and, therefore,

represents less of a challenge in designing future programs. The field experience, however, is another matter. While such emerging technologies as video taping or computer-interactive video discs can allow for simulations to be much more realistic and complex than traditional paper-and-pencil "in-baskets" or role- playing, there will also be an increased need for meaningful field experiences.

The cooperating school administrators will need to be better prepared to work with prospective administrators; districts must be prepared to delegate authority, responsibility, and resources to these administrators-in-training; and "internship" programs must be both comprehensive and on-going, throughout the students' administrative programs of study. This suggests a more extended time frame for the program of studies, increased interaction between universities/colleges and the public school districts, and a professional commitment from experienced administrators to prospective administrative candidates.

One potential solution is a program similar to the one currently under experimentation at Butler University, in which a student's admission to the program is contingent upon securing the contracted cooperation of a certified administrator who will agree to participate in special in-services and to provide specific types of administrative opportunities for the student over the span of his/her program.

The Educational Process

If one accepts the scenario provided earlier, the educational demands of the future will become more complex than ever. The rapidly increasing knowledge and technology bases will compound the role of the school administrator as instructional leader. Nevertheless, it is this author's contention that the basic areas of knowledge and skills demanded for such a role do not differ vastly from those identified by Hilda Taba, decades ago.

Thus, the administrator of the 21st Century must be able to: interpret the "educational implications of the analysis of the culture;" apply "learning theories as a foundation for the curriculum;" relate "the concept of development" and "intelligence and mental development" to curriculum and instruction offered by his/her school; provide valid experiences for "social and cultural learning;" direct and interface with teachers and specialists; in the diagnosis of achievement, learning, and curriculum problems; and "select curriculum experiences," "organize curriculum content and learning," and "evaluate the outcomes of curricula."

Is This So Different From What We Are Doing At The Present Time?

The answer to this question is a definite "NO!" followed immediately by an equally emphatic "YES!" Obviously the two models chosen to give structure to the proposed program are not recent. While the information and knowledge which go into those models has certainly been updated and expanded upon since Taba and Koontz and O'Donnell originally conceived them, the structure they provide appears tailor made for the administrator of the 21st Century.

As we look around the country to the myriad of programs currently preparing educational administrators, we can readily identify institutions which incorporate strong components in one (or, in rare cases, even more than one) of these areas. However, the real key to future programs will be their ability to integrate all of the components into a cohesive, articulated whole.

Taba's educational orientation has long formed the basis for a number of administrative preparation programs, although this has generally been accompanied by a lesser emphasis in research and quantitative areas. Other institutions give emphasis to high-level technical competencies in research, statistics, mathematical modeling and operations research, but generally eschew equal emphasis on organizational development, individual psychology, or even the foundations of education.

Even within exemplary institutions propounding an integrated approach, department or program faculty generally ally themselves with one specific component rather than the full systems model. For example, how many operations research professors incorporate into their courses relevant topics on organizational development or individual psychology into their courses? How many professors are sufficiently conversant with the current research and thought in each of these other program components to effectively demonstrate their integration during each class session?

The continued rapid changes predicted for the public schools will also signify a greater need for increased direct involvement of university personnel. The ever accelerating pace of the growth of knowledge and development of technology will result in an equally accelerated rate of professional obsolescence among university personnel unless new means and structures for professional recycling and growth can be found and instituted. Just as the focus of future administrators' educations must be to equip them with the attitudes and tools necessary to permit continual development and learning, so must university personnel approach their own profession.

In summary, the future promises great challenge. If we can meet that challenge, tomorrow's educational administrators will bring the necessary skills and approaches to their profession to turn the societal developments into previously unequalled educational opportunities for our descendents. If we fail to meet the challenge, the changes predicted in our society may well snowball beyond control and lead to educational and social crises of unprecedented proportions.

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