

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 401 843

HE 029 693

AUTHOR Karst, Ralph R.
 TITLE The Preparation Challenge: Democratic Administration in Schools and Universities.
 PUB DATE Nov 96
 NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Southern Regional Council of Educational Administrators (Savannah, GA, November, 1996). For a related document, see HE 029 694.
 PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Accreditation (Institutions); *Administrator Education; Curriculum Research; *Democratic Values; Educational Change; Educational Research; *Educational Researchers; Higher Education; Instructional Leadership; Leadership Responsibility; *Models; Organizational Theories; *Participative Decision Making; Participatory Research; Policy Formation; Power Structure; Research Methodology; School Based Management; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teacher Education; Theory Practice Relationship

IDENTIFIERS *National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educ

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a model of a democratic paradigm for educational researchers and practitioners. It attempts to explore the kinds of thinking that would be required to create such a system, to determine what principles and curriculum theories are involved and how they would work. It seeks to relate this model to the new National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requirements, and to determine what problems must be faced in dealing with the realities of the changes in education. In looking at the historical background the paper concludes that American educators are not moving toward implementing this new model, which is so important if educators are to bring about needed change and reform that will meet the curriculum standards approved by NCATE. The paper then briefly summarizes the results of a survey conducted within the Southern Regional Council of Educational Administration (SRCEA), and proposes a list of new courses for analysis and comment by the conference attendees. The paper concludes that adoption of such a new democratic paradigm would dramatically and positively change how professors prepare potential candidates for administrative positions. (Contains 13 references.) (CH)

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ED 401 843

THE PREPARATION CHALLENGE:
DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION IN SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

Ralph R. Karst
Professor of Educational Administration
College of Education
Strauss Hall Room 112
Phone: 318-342-1356

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THE PREPARATION CHALLENGE:
DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION IN SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES
INTRODUCTION

What I propose is to provide my own model of the democratic paradigm for consideration by theoreticians and practitioners of educational administration. I will attempt to explain 1) what kinds of thinking would be required of professors interested in forging ahead with the creation of the democratic paradigm of school administration, 2) what principles and curriculum theories are involved, 3) how things would work according to the theory, and 4) how it relates to the new NCATE requirements. This new paradigm would dramatically change how professors prepare potential candidates for administrative positions in the schools as they, not us, are thrown into the gears of the 21st Century.

THE PROBLEM

It seems our profession is so tied up with traditional views of organizational theory that we can't recognize what's in front of us. The world is changing and we are not changing with it. We increasingly are paying lip service to the changes around us as though the changes swarming over us and around us aren't real. We say we are accepting technology as a new wave drastically influencing teaching pedagogies, but we do little to figure out our own roles in the reforms that are required of us. We say we are believing that site-based management will require new organizational strategies at the building level, but we do little to create

our own new attitudes and philosophies to facilitate them on a daily basis. We realize perhaps subconsciously that somehow the movement toward site-based management has some connection to democratic pedagogy, but we don't quite believe it because traditional views of authority seem so very right. We say we believe in democratic principles of administration, but it is not evident in our course catalogs.

What's wrong with us? Why are we changing? Do we need to create a new praxis? Why can't we work together toward making our profession more flexible and willing to accept the changes that are going on in American society in a way that keeps us forward-looking rather than backward-looking to worn-out views of authority and bureaucracy? Have we reached the point where only those who served as principals and superintendents in their long careers have answers to the questions being asked? Are there others among us who also have ideas, ideals and philosophies that may be more pertinent to the problems we face today in education and society?

To me it is extremely interesting that UCEA participants met in London, England, in 1974 to frame a questionnaire that would identify our curriculum problems and to solve them. After four years of study, Silver in Silver & Spuck (1978) wondered whether any of the projected changes actually would occur. After conducting a factor analysis, Silver concluded that no patterns of change

regarding the future were discerned. Nothing happened after such a big fanfare. That is quite an amazing conclusion considering all the efforts that went that study for the purposes of reform. It is highly likely, considering several "reform movements" that have come and gone in our profession, that nothing has come of them either.

With so many reform movements confronting me, I decided to focused on single problem that may be at the root of why we haven't changed our courses and our philosophy of administration since the beginning of the 20th century. But first I want to introduce some initiating ideas.

The questions generated by the reform attempts and which are behind the problems we face recently were not asked by me. The questions were asked by others in our own professional organization (SRCEA) who are perhaps recognizing that we truly do face some critical problems that demand a questionning inquisitive spirit.

But traditions die hard and it is possible that too much administrative experience may be preventing many of us from addressing the difficult nature of the task of truly re-designing our curriculum to meet the growing spread of democratic attitudes and practices that need open forums and discussions that would help us all understand the central problem.

The question that was raised by our own organization is, "Are leadership preparation programs proactively

formulating new paradigms or are they focused on perpetuating the old ones?"

The Realities of Education are Changing

For the past few years there have been rumblings addressed in the professional journals [certainly not in our professional journals] that our schools no longer need principals. There are reasons for this growing attitude. Teachers want more empowerment (Parkay and Stanford, 1995). In a recent phone conversation I had with Dr. Parkay, he said his revision of their book would greatly increase emphasis on how teachers are gradually gaining more decision and policy making powers at the building level.

In the past 10 years the literature is crammed with a focus on the freedoms and flexibilities teachers are gaining every day due to the shift in philosophy to site-based management, which puts more decision power on principals who are beginning to feel that they "can't do it all by themselves." They are feeling tremendous political and social pressures to be more inclusive and open with their teachers who now want to be included in the decision process.

Technological advances have something to do with the shift also. Teachers are making needed changes in how they teach and even in what they teach due to what is happening in technology and computers. Teachers are getting impatient with restrictive policies. Many states are beginning to include "regulatory exclusions" to state curriculum guides

so that teachers and principals can experiment or try new modes of teaching and learning, such as charter schools, magnet schools, vouchers, choice of school, and others. Put in its simplest terms, teachers are seeing that they need a voice in what is happening. They want a platform in which they participate politically with decisions that influence and change school policies for the specific purpose of improved teaching and learning.

Some Historical Background

There is little doubt that the bureaucratic model of line-staff authority is the reliable paradigm that has stood the test of time, so long so that can anyone remember how far back it goes? Doesn't it seem as if it is the only paradigm we have? At department meetings do conversations ever arise that our curriculum truly needs reformation attention? Do our conversations ever discuss the possibility of new philosophies that might replace old views of how educational administrators should be trained and educated? As I have said many times, as viewed from old tenured professors, it would appear that new paradigms are frivolous theories entertained by fools and jesters who know little about leadership and organization. The attitude is the reality because they believe there's nothing wrong with the old paradigm while teachers are putting more pressures on principals to share leadership and decision making. In my opinion our profession continues to refuse to accept these pressures as the reality.

It seems a sad state of affairs that the old paradigm is supported by a philosophy of organization that originated 100 years ago in business and industry and then was mistakenly adopted almost wholesale by an unthinking mass of school practitioners who failed to analyze its logical foundations (Callahan, 1962).

Of course, Callahan was thoroughly democratic in his overall philosophy of education. He wondered why there has been so much concern with efficiency in the educational bureaucracy and why there wasn't a focus on the democratic principles of education which suggested a different kind of educational system.

The problem with history is that while we live it we have a great propensity for not recognizing what is happening around us. For example, a few years ago, I gave a paper at the Southern Philosophy of Education Society meetings in which I described Dewey's consternation with school administrators who saw school leadership as a somewhat isolationist view from the top in which authority and bureaucratic line-staff decision powers seemed both natural and logical and from which speed, efficiency, and production were the central goals of learning (Dewey, 1937).

I spent considerable time explaining his views of democracy and education and how superintendents and principals had become bureaucratic leaders after a national need grew for massive expansion of the school plant due to enormous foreign influx of citizens. I explained that

American educators failed to recognize a wonderful democratic model right there in front of them. But the corporate business model was already billed as the savior of American education. The transition of the model seemed natural: owners to workers and school administrators to teachers. I told them that the bureaucratic model would eventually fail because teachers were necessarily removed from the decision and policy process right from the beginning of the reforming of education to a business bureaucratic model.

But I was talking to educators and scholars mostly from Europe and China. They already knew the importance of democracy in education and desperately wanted to learn more about it and how it works in the American schools. There were people at that meeting who faced death but were willing to die for democracy. Romania had been going through an horrible horrible period of murders and assassinations of Romanian citizens seeking democratic ways of government. China was building toward Tianamin Square. I was both flattered and dismayed at the same time by their incessant desire to talk with me more after my presentation about democracy and education and America. It was very difficult for me to laud our merits while knowing that my own profession had not embraced the democratic model of school administration. It was hard then and its still hard for me today because, as my survey showed, we as a profession are only lukewarm about democratic administration.

Philosophical Concerns

I want to summarize what I said at the Southern Philosophy of Education Society meetings last year. My philosophical concerns relate specifically to what has happened to the profession of educational administration. I have been a high school teacher and a professor of physical education. I was older than most educational administration students when I decided to enter the educational administration field to earn another advanced degree. I am no stranger to the problems of education. I listened and learned about the administrative side of education from some great educators at the University of Wisconsin.

Since coming to Northeast Louisiana University almost 20 years ago I have been studying and teaching educational administration. I do not apologize for what may for some seem like radical views in favor of democratic administration. I have been witness to some of the most bureaucratic mean spirited autocratic leaders imaginable. I never liked them nor wanted to emulate them. The sorry part was that they felt justified in their actions, thus making them conscience-free, because that's how the bureaucratic line-staff model works. When Max Weber created his model of line-staff authority, he created justification for unconscionable decision making perhaps without realizing it. The model encourages weak individuals to become strong because they know they can lean on the model to maintain their own power base and survival rather on their own

abilities and wisdom to maintain the driving force of leadership within an open honest environment of learning.

I believe strongly in the democratic spirit of life in all phases of human communication and development. I also believe what Dewey said that if teachers aren't smart enough to help in the construction of policies that drive education then why are they considered smart enough to carry them out? No single person in any organization is wise enough or bright enough to make singular decisions effecting everyone in that organization.

Democratic administration is group-oriented and is the counter-balance of centralized political power, as well as being the best possible means for creating a relevant new model of educational administration. Site-based management, or better yet, site-based leadership may contain the seeds of our rejuvenation. My survey results are encouraging in pointing out how much the bureaucratic model has been declining in education.

Here is what I said at that meeting with some re-writing, deletions, and changes of context.

We need to go back to our own colleges and universities as educational philosophers and administrators, take a hard look at our College of Education catalogs and course syllabi, and examine their content for our democratic heritage. What do they contain that includes courses on democratically directed classrooms or democratic

administration? There was some interest in working toward department discussions of such attempts.

We need to begin talking about ways to incorporate democratic thinking into our curriculum because so much is happening to the public schools and what this means to principals we prepared as students. There is almost no flexibility in what a principal is and what he or she should do. The attitude is hard to describe. The barrier that has existed between teachers and principals is declining and we have not recognized this as an opportunity waiting to happen.

There are powerful and marvelous sources of knowledge and experience teachers could bring to the table of administrative decision making. Just as we ourselves have much to bring to the roundtable of discussions. Our problem is that we have learn how to deal with educating our students to these new realities.

Almost every rule or regulation or policy comes down from the superintendent or school board or from state education departments. Principals feel like enforcers of the rules and have gradually been removed from teacher interests and problems. There was a time when the term "principal teacher" had a powerful meaning. But that meaning died long ago.

I believe the biggest fault of practicing supintendents and principals today is accepting passively what is and denying what could be. I always think of Chester Barnard's

great statement in this regard, "Not to try is never to know what could have been." It was such a powerful statement that Barnard included it at the forefront of his book, "Functions of the Executive."

And since we as professors are in an ideal setting to influence young scholars who would be principals and superintendents, we should be more aware of the current state of reality. Our students could be lead to consider experimental possibilities surrounding their leadership potential and this attitude would sustain their will and patience against those who immediately want quick results and easy answers. They would gradually become immune to the spastic and often frenetic fury that surrounds innovations that are rarely given enough time to be tested for their value and durability.

Our students could develop their democratic leadership skills through accumulation of what is good, true and fair, the same concepts Dewey stated so well in the context of children gaining experiences that are refined and accumulative. Truly, as I said before, it would be an opportunity that converts practical reality into pragmatic reality.

True reform will happen when school principals have been trained and educated to make research and experimentation part of their daily enduring function, not to mention the education they could receive from their professors in educational administration.

I believe that at no time in our history has there been so much concern about change and reform, particularly change affected by technology and the reforms it can bring. We are, indeed, in what we call "the technology society" because things are changing in a multitude of ways we believe will replace current philosophies and methods of education.

But the technocrats under-estimate the kinds of resistance they are dealing with regard to educational reform. They have no idea of how resistance to school reform works. But certainly they do understand how technology is dramatically changing how teachers teach.

Technology cannot change people. People change people. Dependence on technology gives rise to scholars who find it easy to be critical of professors and public school people because we ourselves have not found our way out of our struggle to find a proper relationship between teachers and administrators. We are at the point where we don't even recognize that a struggle is indeed going on.

True educational reform cannot occur in our public schools until the business management model of school administration is reformed through a renewed evaluation of how democratic administration in the public schools is related to our claims as a democratic nation. I personally believe that how to do this in a pragmatic environment is our responsibility to figure out and develop. If we don't do it someone else will do it for us, and then the question

becomes "What good are they?" That question has already been asked and acted upon in growing instances.

Implications for NCATE

As everyone involved with accreditation knows, considerable efforts are made to meet the curriculum standards approved by NCATE. As one might expect, an examination of these standards emphasize current trends in the educational environment. The guidelines indicate that business managers are no longer welcome. Further, while emphasizing the special talents required of school leaders, the focus of a school leader, according to Patterson (cited in the guidelines) is on "the process of influencing others to achieve mutually agreed upon purposes for the organization." This statement is a significant change in school leadership from a bureaucratic point of view, although it could be argued who is "mutually involved."

The key to realizing that the new NCATE requirements are shifting emphasis to democratic processes is the reference to failure among many of our preparation programs to "learned skills and strategies for taking initiative to proceed with strategies for managing change. In my opinion, it is reference to change that is the key to the realization.

In light of an environment in which educational leaders must recognize the changing roles of administrators and teachers, the NCATE guidelines also emphasize ethics and moral standards as needed for dealing with the changes that

are creating more difficult decision and policy making. There is also the suggestion that perhaps we had better start including more practicing school administrators into our curriculum planning so that there are assurances we have not lost touch with what is happening in the schools, particularly with more use of research and scholarly activities that focus on, among other things, collaboration, negotiation, multiculturalism, ethnic diversity, and the sharing of policy making. NCATE officials are recognizing the things I have perhaps over-emphasized here. But these things are important to us all, particularly those of us of a younger age.

Implications from the Survey

My role today is one of chairing a "Roundtable Discussion" of democratic administration. Many of you know that I conducted a little survey of our profession and got 70 professors and administrators of educational administration from 42 colleges and universities in the SRCEA region to respond. The questionnaires were well-completed and I lost very little data in the analysis process. So we have some pretty good data to look at. You'll have been given copies to talk along with me.

The general conclusion of the data indicates that we as a profession are luke-warm toward democratic administration. It may be lukewarm, but it is encouraging.

Some interesting information is shown. For example, most of us believe teachers shouldn't get involved in

decision making and policy development (mean=3.4), tied as the highest score on the rating scale. Unfortunately, from all the literature I have uncovered, the fact is that they're doing it at a fantastic rate. The most encouraging finding in the survey was seeing that we believe our students should receive more education in democratic administration regarding policy and decision making (mean=3.4). Is this a contradiction?

But we also believe that the bureaucratic should remain our staple. That is the reality. Only a few years ago, there would have been no standard deviation and the mean at the very top of the scale (4.0) in favor of maintaining the bureaucratic model. A mean of 2.8 in favor of maintaining the bureaucratic model is not exactly a strong showing in favor of it, because many of us say we are offering coverage of democratic methods in our required courses now (mean=2.5). So that is a very significant shift away from the bureaucratic model.

Much more could be said about other items on the rating scale, but we have a more important job to do here today. What I would like to do is propose several ideas about how we might begin to change our thinking about what we offer and how this might impact on our relationships with State Education Departments and school boards.

First, I will make suggestions about new possibilities and then we will conclude with your participation in offering other ideas or concepts, both in support and in opposition.

We know from the rank-ordering where our priorities in class offering are located. Leadership theories and practices, by far, is the most amenable to democratic administration (88%), then follows organizational theories and practices (61%), elementary (56%), secondary (46%), school law (38%), and then, as the table in the survey (page 4) shows, an array of other courses that are subject to considerable discussion, if not debate.

Below should be considered courses, and not additional units to courses. An additional page is included that can be completed and returned before the end of the conference in which your curricular analyses, input, and comments are sought:

1. A Leadership course with emphasis upon collaborative and negotiation philosophy and techniques, as well as human relations in the context of leadership only
2. A course in Democratic Administration in Theory and Practice with special emphasis upon the principles of democracy
3. A course in Organizational theories and practices with special emphasis upon comparisons between the two key models of educational administration, bureaucratic and democratic, but also including other models of less significance
4. Two courses in the principles of Site-based Leadership, one elementary and one secondary, both based upon appropriate psychological and social environments that distinguish grade levels
5. In the School Law course, include a thorough understanding of the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Amendments, the Justice System and the Courts in light of Multiculturalism, the Entitlement processes, and teacher evaluation

6. A course in Communications designed for democratic interchange through the use of the Internet, with special emphasis upon mastery of Internet and its applications to the classroom, particularly video-conferencing, web-sites, and LAN networking
7. A Personnel course that emphasizes an expanded role for teachers in the personnel process
8. A course on School Board roles in policy making, decision making, and administration with emphasis on how superintendents can work democratically with their boards in a multi-cultural environment
9. The Politics of Education course should be formulated to include more emphatically how democracy is the heart of American educational politics
10. Three courses not mentioned or included or well-represented in the rank-ordering are a) Research and Scholarly Studies, b) Ethics, and c) the Administrative Internship
 - a) A course in Research and Scholarly Studies of educational administration [all programs include a research requirement. The difference is that the research and scholarly studies will emphasize democratic administration as the focus]
 - b) A course in the Ethics of Educational Administration [Many programs already include such a course. The difference is that with growing multi-cultural values and ethnic diversity, the moral and ethical choices for administrators is changing rapidly. Therefore, the emphasis will be on the new environmental factors limiting administrative decisions] The pragmatic option is the most viable option.
 - c) A course on the Administrative Internship with emphasis upon placements with administrators favoring a democratic approach to administration and leadership [such a course should include an accompanying campus seminar in which democratic problems of administration are discussed]

Concluding Remarks

I proposed to provide my own model of the democratic paradigm for consideration by theoreticians and practitioners of educational administration. I attempted to explain 1) what kinds of thinking would be required of professors interested in forging ahead with the creation of the democratic paradigm of school administration, 2) what principles and curriculum theories are involved, 3) how things would work according to the theory, and 4) how it relates to the new NCATE requirements. I stated that I believe this new paradigm would dramatically change how professors prepare potential candidates for administrative positions in the schools as they, not us, are thrown into the gears of the 21st Century. I remain steadfast in my beliefs.

Here is why. Although great changes are occurring in public education, we have become a profession within the eye of a storm. Everything seems to be calm and quiet, even tranquil. In statistical terms, we are lukewarm to democratic administration while a movement is building among teachers in the public schools like a hurricane, largely because of site-based management, vouchers, magnet schools, multiculturalism, expanded school services, countless innovations and growing lists of exemptions to state education statutes, and all that these and many more phenomena imply. Apparently, we don't think much about all

this and don't have many plans for doing anything about them for our own survival as a profession.

Personally, I think we can change. As I have said, my survey revealed a slight trend toward democratic administration. Seventy-five years ago, our profession was controlled by a hand-full of school superintendents from our major cities, such as New York, St. Louis, Chicago, and Los Angles. Had those superintendents taken my survey, they would have been appalled at the gall of the surveyor. To think that teachers had a brain or that somebody thought democratic administration was a better way was hearesy and treasonable.

Then, 30 years ago, the tables seemed to turn. I can remember a time when teachers thought principals were kind of silly and didn't have a brain for the classroom because their thinking had become political. During that period, there were many published articles questioning whether principals belonged to the teaching profession because it seemed they had become part of the administration. Over the past decade articles have been appearing questioning whether schools even need principals. Today school boards seem to be treating superintendents as though they were expendable since their contracts are becoming so legalized and politically based.

I believe the undercurrents of resistance to these movements are tied to an apparently intractable approach to changing our views of what curriculum philosophy ought to be

as revealed in new advances that reflect societal and technological changes. Currently, our state organizations still have not exerted political pressures in ways that they could regarding state education departments and legislatures. We have to start somewhere in the process of curriculum re-designing our curriculum to meet new requirements that include computer planning, computer applications, media technology, instructional leadership, and all the other kinds of courses I have previously discussed.

While I believe we will either change our ways or we will be dumped onto a reject pile of fossils. But as important as these changes in our requirements are, the one problem I see that would greatly facilitate our willingness to change our adamant attitudes about leadership theories and practices, is our acceptance of the democratic model of administration.

The foundation of democracy is faith in human capacities, in human intelligence, and in the pooled powers of knowledge that brings cooperative social experience. A submerged public may not be very wise or educated, but they do know more about their troubles and needs than anyone else. Every authoritarian scheme of social action rests on the premise there exists a small cadre of leaders with superior natural gifts which give them the right to controls which give them the right to lay down rules to be carried out and obeyed without question. As efficient as autocratic

methods of leadership can be, the democratic scheme of organization is vastly superior because teachers know the problems of the classroom and thus are in a superior position to offer policy solutions in ways no one else can. And we should be around to help them and their administrators take on the preparation challenge.

The Bill of Rights and the U. S. Constitution are documents recognized as among the greatest forms of human thinking ever found on earth. Behind the U.S Constitution and the Bill of Rights lies their soul and spirit--democracy. And democracy represents the freedom of belief, conscience, opinion, assembly, press and the media, all which we ought to be thinking about when we prepare our students to become leaders in the schools because our work ought to parallel what our country is now and in the future.

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