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ABSTRACT

The Meadows Model for preservice preparation was designed to speed the process of preparing educational leaders in Texas. Previous programs allowed teachers seeking administrative licensure to complete the program at their own pace. The Meadows Model shortens this process to 15 months. This model incorporates a number of specific features, which have had a significant impact on the process of preparing administrators: (1) selection for the program on a competitive basis; (2) internship as a significant and early part of the program; (3) inclusion in a cohort group at the start of the program; (4) focused initial study on the principalship and related skills; (5) specialized study in communications and intergroup dynamics; (6) an introduction to the culture of the principalship; and (7) participation in staff development activities with practicing principals. This paper lists several initiatives to look at the impact of the Meadows Model over the years of operation. These include a case study approach, annual evaluation, postprogram design, and open-ended responses on questionnaires. Conclusions drawn from the studies and recommendations for the future of the program are presented. (Contains 10 references.) (DFR)

The Meadows Principal Improvement Program: A Preservice Field Based Model for the Preparation of Principals

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The Meadows Principal Improvement Program: A Preservice Field Based Model for the Preparation of Principals

The Meadows Principal Improvement Program was initiated in 1984 at East Texas State University in an effort to respond to the challenges which were being experienced in public education. These challenges were a result of the perceived dissatisfaction on the part of the public with the state of the educational system. Many responses to this dissatisfaction were encountered, both at the national and state level. These responses focused on students' performance, teachers' effectiveness, and administrators' leadership competency over the next few years. The Meadows Principal Improvement Program has continued to operate since 1984 with a preservice program in an attempt to initiate an emphasis on instructional leadership for new principals and an inservice or staff development program for principals already practicing their profession as building leaders. As such, it is perhaps one of the few programs which has had a sustained existence over a ten year period with a continued focus on the improving the principalship from a developmental standpoint. One hundred and fifty educators have completed the program as of August 1996; a cohort of 15 additional individuals have now experienced the eleventh year of this continuing cycle.

The unique aspects of this program have been made possible by a grant from The Meadows Foundation of Texas. The Foundation has, as its primary emphasis, the fields of arts, education, health and civic initiatives. As such the Foundation has been an active investor in the future of Texas and in this case the preparation and continuing education program of the leadership of Texas schools. Since the program's initiation, several Texas alternative administrator preparation programs have adopted aspects of this program as important features in their delivery methodology.

The Meadows Model--Program Description

The Meadows Model for preservice preparation was designed to speed the process of preparing educational leaders in Texas. Preparation programs in Texas typically were designed to allow a teacher desiring administrative licensure to be completed at their own pace. These programs often accommodated individuals in stretching their academic work and internship for 5 or more years. In many cases these programs were completed in approximately three years. The Meadows Model, on the other hand, compressed this period into fifteen months, beginning the program in June with an intense summer school experience, continuing through the next academic year with additional coursework and an internship, and culminating with a second summer school of ten weeks duration. The intensity of the program focused the student's efforts on achieving the necessary requirements for a Texas administrative certificate and, if not already held, a masters degree. This focus of efforts precluded the distraction of special additional assignments by individuals in their work such as coaching, counseling, and outside work.

The Meadows Model was developed parallel to, but separate from, the regular administrative preparation program offered at East Texas State University. This is an important factor to understand as it provided an opportunity to observe a somewhat different route to certification as compared with the regular program. ETSU typically recommends for administrative certification between 150 to 200 individuals annually for mid-management (principal) certification by the state. Approximately ten percent of these recommended candidates were completing the program with the Meadows Model.

The Meadows Model incorporates a number of specific features, which have had a significant impact on the process of preparing administrators. These features include:

1. **Selection for the program on a competitive basis.** Candidates for the program are nominated by their sponsoring school districts and compete for the available positions by considering academic achievement records, interview results, writing ability, and past professional performance. Districts are encouraged to nominate superior classroom teachers who are felt to have potential as outstanding instructional leaders. In some cases districts have solicited nominees from principals and conducted screenings to identify nominees. Where this has been done, the nominees have proved to be outstanding performers.

This process is in direct contrast to the regular program where candidates are self nominated and admission is based largely on a satisfactory GPA on previous undergraduate or graduate coursework and a letter of recommendation from an administrator.

2. **Internship is a significant and early part of the program.** The timing of the internship for the Meadows Model has been moved ahead to an earlier part of the program. Beginning in August, three months after the student starts the program, the internship begins under the mentorship of a principal identified by the school district as a superior instructional leader. The internship is a full-year experience and is normally done as a full-time assignment without classroom instructional responsibilities.

This experience, contrasted with the traditional program, offers several advantages. Traditionally the internship has consisted of approximately 140 hours of experience, which has usually been obtained while teaching, counseling, or occasionally coaching has been the primary job focus of the individual. Meadows program participants usually had 1440 or more hours of internship contact. Significantly important is also the timing of the internship. The early internship experience allows application of much of the coursework while the student is studying rather than the application portion of the experience following, in some cases by several years, the courses which have explored the theoretical basis of the applications.

3. **Inclusion in a cohort group at the start of the program.** The Meadows Model has,

from its introduction, utilized the cohort group as the basic unit of instruction. During the initial three months of study, the cohort group studied and attended class together as a separate unit. Beginning with the fall internship, the group integrated with other traditional students in classes that were offered. In many cases the cohort group continued to attend class together; in every case the cohort group provided support of an intellectual, emotional, and personal nature. Experience has shown that this group continues as an informal support group as the student completes his/her program and takes on a more permanent administrative role. Thus, the new administrator has a network of colleagues that can provide a sounding board for ideas and sharing solutions to problems encountered. Following program completion, many cohort groups have scheduled meetings on their own with no involvement by the program directors.

The significance of the cohort group can hardly be overemphasized. This feature has been discussed in recent literature in a number of programs such as the Danforth program and other Texas alternative administrator preparation programs such as Leadership for the 21st Century at Tarleton State University. Still, the true nature and importance of this phenomenon is not normally understood by professors of educational administration or principals in the field, until they have had close contact with its utilization in a professional setting.

In the traditional program, students select their course sequence based on advice from an advisor with their own personal schedule needs in mind. Although individuals often develop friendships and mutual support in this process, the numbers are limited and seldom are there any extensive or long lived support groups developed.

4. **Focused initial study on the principalship and related skills.** The initial instruction is offered with the knowledge that the cohort group members will begin filling internship roles shortly. The knowledge base, which is important at this point, is different than the traditional program, which focuses on core courses emphasizing structure, governance, law and policy matters. In the internship, students are closely involved with students, parents, and teachers in daily matters and the knowledge base, which becomes important, is different from the knowledge base of traditional focus.

5. **Specialized study in communications and intergroup dynamics.** This offering has been unique to the Meadows Model at ETSU and has not been a part of the traditional program. The sequence of study emphasizes listening, meaning, reflection, decision-making, group processes, and management of differences. This course and the principalship study culminate with a retreat that involves an experiential learning activity: the ROPES challenge course, which focuses on leadership and communication and requires the application of skills developed during the first summer (Vornberg and Harris, 1981).

6. **An introduction to the culture of the principalship.** Through participation in the state and national principals' organizations, and by attending state and national

conferences/workshops, the Meadows Model has enabled the participant to understand the culture of the principalship as well as the issues and problems facing principals across the state and nation. This exposure to the greater community of the principal helps the participant to relate to the principal's role and observe in a professional setting the discussion of many of these issues by future colleagues. The cohort group has attended the state principals' workshop within two weeks of the program beginning and has attended either the NASSP or NAESP conference as a group. The travel experience benefits the cohesiveness of the group and helps jell the sense of mission and purpose among cohort members. The national perspective of this experience helps to widen the participants' horizons for professional involvement and ideas beyond the Texas borders.

7. **Participation in staff development activities with practicing principals.** Each year the Principals Center conducts between five to eight staff development programs of one to two days' duration to assist practicing principals in growing professionally. The Meadows Preservice Model incorporates the preservice students in participating in these activities. The majority of these developmental programs have a close relationship to the instructional role of the principal. Examples of topics include:

learning styles
teacher observation and conferencing
improving staff climate
improving classroom management and discipline
alternative assessment strategies
situation management
effective schools' movement
curriculum development and alignment
facilitator practices for teamwork
school safety/security
strategic planning
site based management
teaming for effective instruction
school restructuring
exemplary school programs.

Results of Program Evaluation Efforts

Several initiatives were developed to look at the impact of the Meadows Model over the years of operation.

Case Study Approach

Ted Gillum (1987) accomplished the first effort with a series of nine case studies focused on the initial cohort of Meadows participants. Each of the participants completed and submitted a log of their activities during the internship every two weeks. The log was re-examined at the conclusion of the internships by themselves and used to assign a value to

each of the activities and determine its importance. The researcher also interviewed each of the participants in the field at the mid-point and at the conclusion of the fifteen-month program to collect data about personal and situational circumstances during the program. Although much of the interview was unstructured, the final interview included questions about the specific course work and opportunities for placement. The researcher then developed nine case studies from which was developed a narrative description of activities and program considerations. A determination of important and recurring variables was made related to improvement of internship programs.

Activities identified by the interns having much importance were heavily loaded in these areas: student personnel (23.33%); curriculum planning and supervision (20.12%); school-community relations (17.11%); and personnel (15.11%). Activities which were identified in the area with no importance were heavily loaded in the Other (general paperwork) (56.95%) category. (see table 1 for these ratings).

Table 1-Initial Cohort: Analysis of internship activities

Activity Category	Value to Internship Experience				Total (%)
	Much	Some	Little	None	Experiences
Organization & Administration	10.09	13.79	13.50	6.51	11.37
Finance	.06	3.54	.00	.66	1.23
Personnel	15.11	8.01	3.52	.77	7.55
Building Maintenance	.20	.72	.56	2.32	.84
School-Community Communications	17.11	12.63	9.35	6.95	12.01
Curriculum Planning & Supervision	20.12	15.45	12.38	9.93	14.97
Transportation & Aux. Services	.33	.79	.84	.77	.67
Educ Agencies and Prof. Organizations	.94	.70	.55	.92	.92
Student personnel	18.12	21.24	10.82	19.17	19.17
Research & Professional Study	5.41	4.40	2.46	3.75	4.40
Other (general office paperwork)	6.75	21.59	35.44	56.95	27.22

Other programmatic considerations surfaced through the interpretation of the data:

1. Regularly scheduled meetings between the intern and their cooperating administrators were a scheduling problem.
2. Travel time for interns to attend classes during the internship was a problem.
3. Day-to-day job experiences were identified as the most beneficial aspect of the internship.
4. University program requirements established at the beginning of the program was very important to the participants.
5. Cooperating school districts job expectations delineated at the beginning very important.
6. Tuition and travel costs during the program were a problem for participants.
7. Development of friendships and collegial relationships between these participants was considered very important.
8. Opportunities afforded the participants to attend workshops, seminars, and conventions were considered very valuable by participants.

Some other conclusions made by the researcher are significant:

1. Internship activities were limited for those who were expected to function as full-time administrators (i.e. assistant principals), as opposed to student interns.
2. The majority of internship activities in the areas of student personnel, curriculum planning and supervision, school-community relations, and organization and administration were considered to be the most important in their growth as public school administrators.
3. The program was very beneficial to the participants in their achievement of certification and degree requirements (4 were well on their way to achievement of doctorates, which have since been completed).

4. The program was beneficial to individuals professionally. Eight of nine participants were placed in administrative roles immediately and the ninth was placed one year after completion.

Annual Evaluation

The second of these efforts was an annual data collection made for the purposes of evaluating the program's effect. Different individuals directed these studies: Frank Lutz during the years 1986 to 1991; Jerry Horn during the years 1992 and 1993; and Joseph Paul during the years 1994 and 1995. For the purposes of comparison, data was often gathered from regular mid-management program participants at ETSU completing their internship requirements. This provided a comparison group of individuals that were completing a program similar in content, but often different in process and structure.

During evaluation efforts in the earlier years, Lutz (1991) developed a design incorporating several instruments related to the preservice program: (1) the Instructional Leadership Activities, Beliefs, and Characteristics of Principals of Effective Secondary School questionnaire (ILES); a revised Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ); and (3) a modified Work Environment Scale (WES).

The ILES (developed by Koger, 1987) was designed to investigate specific instructional leadership activities concerning how frequently the principals are engaged in the activities, and how important the respondents felt the activities were in providing instructional leadership. The survey focuses on seven major areas or functions of work involvement of effective principals: (1) establish clear goals; (2) involvement of self with instructional improvement; (3) monitor teachers; (4) evaluate student progress; (5) coordinate instructional programs; (6) provide an orderly school environment ; and (7) hold high expectations for staff and student achievement. The data collected were used to compare the Meadows Program Fellows with the department's regular intern program.

Both regular interns and Meadows participants expressed similar attitudes regarding the importance of six of the seven functions. In general, their attitudes reveals that all seven functions are important and that more should be done in each of the seven activities—indicating that more time and other resources ought to be allocated to concentrate on all seven activities. Although both groups thought all functions important, the Meadows participants attached significantly greater importance to the sixth function, "providing orderly school environment," than did the regular interns.

Behavioral differences were reported in three of the seven functions. Meadows participants' involvement in functions: (2) involvement in instructional program, and (6) providing an orderly school environment were empirically higher when compared to involvement of regular program interns. In all functions, except the third, (3) monitors teachers, the Meadows participants mean score was empirically higher , indicating more involvement than the regular interns were.

Perceptions regarding leadership behavior were gathered using a revised leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) (Fleishman, 1960) measuring the two classic dimensions of leadership: i.e., consideration for subordinates and initiating structure. Data were gathered on both Meadows and regular interns. Significant differences between the two groups were found for two leadership qualities. The Meadows participants expressed a higher perception of adapting to new ideas and involving subordinates in decision making, when compared to the regular interns. No significant differences were found on the other leadership qualities as measured by the LBDQ.

The academic environment of the Meadows internship program and its effects as felt by the Fellows was assessed with a modified Work Environment Scale (WES) (Moos, 1981). The analysis indicated the Meadows participants' perception of the program was exceedingly high. The results, when compared to a theoretical mean, but using the indicated group mean and standard deviation, indicate their perception of the program. The WES examines nine areas: (1) *involvement* is characterized by the individual's personal perception of their involvement in the program. Based on the data the Meadows participants were highly involved (i.e. the upper 2% of the theoretically possible scores); (2) *peer cohesion* is a measure of the group's personal interest in one another, an area which was very high (i.e. the top 2%, and 4 standard deviations for the usual group); (3) *supervisor support*, i.e. "giving credit," "not talking down," "accepting criticism," was indicated to be high (top 15% but with a narrow range); (4) *autonomy* measures ability to make one's own decisions and to accept important responsibilities (again in the top 2%, but with wider variation); (5) *task orientation* suggests that attention to task is maintained and time not wasted (i.e. scores in top 2% or 4 standard deviations for the theoretical mean); (6) *work pressure* is high, but falls about the middle of the theoretical population of the program; (7) *clarity* is characterized by high organization, clear rules, and responsibilities, (necessary in a program) this area was 1 s.d. above the theoretical mean; (8) *control* (too much control could be undesirable) was 1 s.d. above the theoretical mean and 3 s.d. below the highest possible; (9) *innovation*, or the ability to try out new ideas, did not score as high as would be expected (1 s.d. above the theoretical mean) falling about center of a normally distributed population.

In sum, the Meadows participants tended to perceive their internship setting as better than the regular program when viewed through the WES. The Meadows participants perceived more involvement, peer cohesion, supervisory support, autonomy, and task orientation. They perceive about the same pressure and clarity, less control, and somewhat more opportunity to innovate.

During the 1992-93 academic year, Jerry Horn supervised the evaluation effort. That effort included the administration of the Work Performance Inventory to the supervisors of the former Meadows Participants. It included 17 items relating to job performance activities and reflected effectiveness and desirable outcomes, which the Meadows program, was aimed toward achieving. All 17 items were indicated as very positive in

achievement; those which were rated highest by their supervisors were:

The individual strives to improve the educational program
The individual provides teachers with current research on curriculum and instruction matters.
The individual works toward the establishment of positive school environment.
The individual works well with various pluralistic, ethnic and social groups.
The individual has effective communication skills.

A written interview (questionnaire) was developed to determine differences in internship programs between the Meadows and regular interns, by examining the interns' opinions of significant features. The Meadow participants scored significantly better than the regular program participants did on these items: difficulty in internship; opportunity in meeting other interns; value of internship experience, and importance of internship. No difference was found on three other items: difficulty in performing tasks, difficulty in activities involvement; and support from on-sight supervisors. Unlike many other years, no significant differences were found on the ILES and the WES. Regular interns scored significantly higher on the structure scale of the LBDQ. An important comment in the concluding narrative by Horn speculated that the development and maturation of the Meadows program at ETSU caused the regular internship program to incorporate the positive aspects.

In 1994 and 1995, Joseph S. Paul directed the efforts for the annual evaluation of the program.

In viewing the results in 1994 of the Work Environment Scale, Meadows participants were significantly more positive than regular interns in the area of supervisor support (i.e. giving support, not talking down to). Other areas of the WES showed no significant differences.

The results of the ILES administration that same year indicated that Meadows participants held higher importance on a number of functions: establishing clear goals, monitoring teachers, evaluating student progress, providing an orderly environment, and holding high expectations for staff and student achievement. Regarding involvement, there were no significant differences between the Meadows and regular program interns. No differences were significant on the LBDQ scales. The opportunity in meeting other interns was much better for Meadows interns than that of regular program interns.

The results of all data collection instruments in the 1994-95 year showed no significant differences between the Meadows participants and the regular interns except for the opportunity to meet other interns during the program.

General conclusions by Paul indicated that the program was achieving the effectiveness desired and that the regular program had also improved as time ensued. He noted the difficulty in achieving significant differences with statistical techniques, due to the small

sample of Meadows interns, the power of the assessment instruments, and the homogeneity of the subjects, despite the fact that Meadows participants mean scores are often more positive than the regular participants' mean scores. He highlighted several reasons for better results with the Meadows program: the year-long aspect of the internship as opposed to the semester length regular program and the fact that the Meadows participants meet together and share regularly their ideas and experiences due to the cohort development supported by the program. He also focused on the mentorship provided by the professors in the Meadows program, which was seen as extremely positive by the Meadows interns.

Post-Program Design

The third of these initiatives was the study by James Davis completed in 1997. This study examined the first ten cohort groups and collected data which was compared to similarly collected data from a cross section of graduates of traditional university preparation programs across Texas. The data for the investigation were collected using a modified version of the instrument developed by Jerry Horn and designed by Joseph Paul, utilizing elements published in the document *Principals for Our Changing Schools: The Knowledge and Skill Base* by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1993. The data obtained from this process were analyzed to test the research questions included in this study:

1. Were there differences in the proficiencies obtained in the Meadows Principal Improvement Program as compared to traditional principal preparation programs?
2. Did the Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates perceive the importance of proficiencies differently than do graduates of traditional principal preparation programs?
3. Did Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates differ from traditional principal preparation graduates in areas which they perceive a need for additional growth and development?

The data examines proficiencies obtained by graduates from the Meadows Principal Improvement Program when compared to graduates from the traditional principal preparation programs and is addressed in Table 2. In Table 2, the mean proficiency scores for the Meadows Principal Improvement graduates are identified for each of the National Policy Board 21 domains on the questionnaire. The highest proficiency mean score (3.65) for Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates was for domain 8--instruction and the learning environment. The lowest proficiency mean score (2.88) for Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates for the 21 domains was for domain 13--resource allocation. Respondents' mean scores of 3.50 or higher were considered to be high. Respondents' mean scores of 2.50 or lower were considered to be low. Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates had high (>3.50) proficiency mean scores on four domain: Instruction and the learning environment (3.65), leadership (3.60), motivating others (3.55), and sensitivity (3.52). Meadows Principal Improvement

Program graduates had no low (<2.50) proficiency mean scores. Of the 21 domains on the questionnaire, Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates had proficiency mean scores lower than 3.00 on six of the 21 domains: delegation (2.99), written expression (2.94), measurement and evaluation (2.90), student guidance (2.90), curriculum design (2.89), and resource allocation (2.88). While these were the lowest mean scores for the Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates, mean scores were not considered low (<2.50) scores as defined in this study.

Table 2 also identifies the mean proficiency scores for traditional graduates. The lowest mean score (2.78) was for two domains. Domains 10--student guidance and development--and 12--measurement and evaluation--received equal mean scores. Traditional principal preparation program graduates proficiency mean scores were not high (>3.50). However, mean proficiency scores were higher for traditional principal preparation program graduates than Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates on four domains. Domain 18, philosophical and cultural values (3.31), domain 5, organizational oversight (3.10), domain 7, delegation (3.00), and domain 9, curriculum design proficiency mean scores were higher than proficiency mean scores for Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates on the same domains. There were no low (<2.50) proficiency mean scores for traditional principal preparation program graduates.

Also included in Table 2 are results for individual domains of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances and t-tests for Equality of Means. T-tests for Equality of Means established statistical significance for domain 1, leadership, domain 15, sensitivity, and domain 16, oral and nonverbal communication. To validate the statistical significance of these three domains, a Bonferroni test for multiple comparisons was used. As a result of the Bonferroni test, domain 1, leadership, and domain 15, sensitivity, remained significant. Leadership in domain 1 was defined as providing purpose and direction; shaping school culture and values; facilitating the development shared strategic vision for the school. Domain 15, sensitivity was defined as perceiving the needs and concerns of others; dealing tactfully with others; working with others in emotionally stressful situations or in conflict; obtaining feedback; recognizing multicultural differences.

Table 2
Proficiency of Meadows and Traditional Graduates on 21 Domains

Variables		Meadows M	Std D.	N	Traditional M	StdD	N	*
Domain 1	Leadership	3.60	.54	82	3.35	.61	60	*
Domain 2	Information Collection	3.15	.73	81	2.95	.85	60	
Domain 3	Problem Analysis	3.23	.73	81	3.21	.93	61	
Domain 4	Judgment	3.35	.71	81	3.32	75	60	

Domain 5	Organizational Oversight	3.05	.86	82	3.10	.90	60
Domain 6	Implementation	3.36	.69	81	3.22	.72	60
Domain 7	Delegation	2.99	.75	82	3.00	.82	60
Domain 8	Instruction/Learning Env.	3.65	.57	82	3.45	.72	60
Domain 9	Curriculum Design	2.89	.81	81	2.95	.99	59
Domain 10	Student Guidance	2.90	.86	82	2.78	.83	60
Domain 11	Staff Development	3.28	.74	82	3.03	.90	60
Domain 12	Measurement/Evaluation	2.90	.87	81	2.78	.83	60
Domain 13	Resource Allocation	2.88	.84	81	2.81	.78	59
Domain 14	Motivating Others	3.55	.65	82	3.41	.72	59
Domain 15	Sensitivity	3.52	.71	82	3.10	.94	59 *
Domain 16	Communication	3.32	.77	82	3.05	.81	60
Domain 17	Written Expression	2.94	.89	82	3.10	.99	60
Domain 18	Cultural Values	3.26	.81	82	3.31	.62	59
Domain 19	Legal Applications	3.49	.65	82	3.44	.74	61
Domain 20	Policy/Political Influences	3.21	.72	81	3.16	.80	61
Domain 21	Public/Media Relations	3.00	.82	82	2.97	.91	61

*Significant differences between Meadows and traditional graduates when subjected to Leverne's Test for equity of Variances and verified by the Bonferoni.

Data addressing the second research question concerning differences in perception of the importance of proficiencies acquired in principal preparation programs by Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates and traditional principal preparation graduates are listed in Table 3. In Table 3, the importance mean scores for the Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates and the traditional graduates are identified for each of the 21 domains on the questionnaire.

The highest importance mean score (3.90) for Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates was domain 1--essentials of leadership. Essentials of leadership was defined as providing purpose and direction; shaping school culture and values; facilitating the development of shared strategic vision for the school. The lowest importance mean score (3.24) for Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates for the 21 domains was for domain 10--student guidance and development. Student guidance and development was defined as understanding and accommodating student growth and development; providing for student guidance, counseling, and auxiliary services. Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates had high (>3.50) importance mean scores on 13 domains. There were no low (<2.50) importance mean scores for the Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates.

In Table 3, the mean importance scores for the traditional principal preparation program graduates are identified for each of the 21 domains on the questionnaire. The highest importance mean score (3.84) for traditional principal preparation program graduates was domain 1--leadership. The lowest importance mean score (3.20) for traditional principal preparation graduates for the 21 domains was for domain 20--policy and political influence. Policy and political influence was defined as developing common perceptions

about school issues; interacting with internal and external publics; understanding and responding skillfully to the electronic and printed news media; initiating and reporting news through appropriate channels; managing school reputation. Again, respondents mean scores of 3.50 or higher are considered to be high. Respondents' mean scores of 2.50 or lower are considered to be low. Traditional principal preparation program graduates had high (>3.50) importance mean scores on 12 domains. Domain 1 (3.84), domain 3 (3.82), domain 19 (3.77), domain 8 (3.75), domain 4 (3.74), domain 14 (3.71), domain 15 (3.65), domain 6 (3.65), domain 5 (3.57), domain 11 (3.57), domain 2 (3.53), and domain 17 (3.53). Traditional principal preparation program graduates had no low (<2.50) importance mean scores.

Table 3
Meadows Graduates and Traditional Graduates - Perceived Importance of Skills

Variables		Meadows M	Meadows Std D	Meadows N	Traditional M	Traditional Std D	Traditional N	Rank Order
Domain 1	Leadership	3.90	.34	82	3.84	.45	61	1
Domain 2	Information Collection	3.49	.65	81	3.53	.54	60	9
Domain 3	Problem Analysis	3.72	.48	81	3.82	.43	60	3
Domain 4	Judgment	3.83	.38	82	3.74	.60	61	2
Domain 5	Organizational Oversight	3.52	.57	82	3.57	.62	60	7
Domain 6	Implementation	3.76	.46	83	3.65	.52	60	4
Domain 7	Delegation	3.49	.61	82	3.45	.67	60	11
Domain 8	Instruction/Learning Env.	3.76	.46	83	3.75	.47	61	3
Domain 9	Curriculum Design	3.54	.61	82	3.50	.65	60	8
Domain 10	Student Guidance	3.24	.75	82	3.37	.68	62	15
Domain 11	Staff Development	3.67	.52	82	3.57	.69	61	6
Domain 12	Measurement/Evaluation	3.44	.69	82	3.34	.69	61	13
Domain 13	Resource Allocation	3.39	.73	82	3.45	.67	62	12
Domain 14	Motivating Others	3.79	.41	82	3.71	.55	62	3
Domain 15	Sensitivity	3.72	.50	82	3.65	.58	62	5
Domain 16	Communication	3.56	.65	80	3.44	.67	61	9
Domain 17	Written Expression	3.48	.63	82	3.53	.60	60	10
Domain 18	Cultural Values	3.32	.78	82	3.31	.70	61	14
Domain 19	Legal Applications	3.67	.55	82	3.77	.50	60	4
Domain 20	Policy/Political Influences	3.34	.69	80	3.20	.73	60	16
Domain 21	Public/Media Relations	3.55	.65	82	3.45	.75	60	9

Rank Order represents the ranking of mean of skills when data from both groups are combined

Importance rank order of the 21 skill domains for Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates and traditional principal preparation program graduates when combined to make one group are identified in Table 3. The lowest importance mean score

(3.28) for Meadows Principal Improvement Program and traditional principal preparation program graduates when combined to make one group was for domain 20--policy and political influences. Policy and political influences was defined as understanding schools as political systems; identifying relationships between public policy and education; recognizing policy issues. An importance mean score (3.87) on domain 1--leadership--was the highest for Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates and traditional principal preparation program graduates when scores were combined in one group.

There were 13 high (>3.50) importance mean scores when Meadows Principal Improvement Program and traditional principal preparation program graduates were combined in one group. Domain 1 (3.87), domain 4 (3.79), domain 3 (3.76), domain 8 (3.76), domain 14 (3.76), domain 6 (3.71), domain 19 (3.71), domain 15 (3.69), domain 11 (3.63), domain 9 (3.52), domain 2 (3.51), domain 16 (3.51), and domain 21 (3.51) all had high mean scores for importance. No domains received low (<2.50) mean scores for importance when Meadows Principal Improvement Program and traditional principal preparation program graduates were combined in one group. There was no significant difference between the mean score of Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates and the traditional principal preparation program graduates in the overall scores of importance revealed from t-tests for Equality of Means.

The final research question dealt with areas in which Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates and traditional principal preparation program graduates perceived a need for additional growth and development. Data related to this question are presented in Table 4. This table depicts the growth and development mean scores for the Meadows Principal Improvement Program and tradition graduates for each of the 21 domains on the questionnaire. The higher mean scores indicated that the respondents felt they needed more growth and development in this domain. The highest growth and development mean score (3.15) for Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates was implementation. Implementation was defined as making things happen; putting programs and change efforts into action. The lowest growth and development mean score (2.56) for Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates for the 21 domains was for domain 18. Domain 18 was legal and regulatory applications. Legal and regulatory applications were defined as acting in accordance with Federal and State Constitutional provisions, statutory standards, and regulatory applications, recognizing standards of care involving civil and criminal liability for negligence, and intentional torts. Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates had no high (>3.50) growth and development mean scores on any of the 21 domains. There were no low (<2.50) growth and development mean scores on any of the 21 domains for Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates.

Table 4
Meadows and Traditional Graduates—Growth and Development on 21 Domains

Variable		Meadows Mean	Std Dev	N	Traditional Mean	Std Dev	N	*
Domain 1	Leadership	3.14	.92	81	3.34	.90	59	
Domain 2	Information Collection	2.86	.85	80	3.00	.89	59	
Domain 3	Problem Analysis	3.05	.88	80	3.31	.90	59	
Domain 4	Judgment	3.06	.92	80	3.37	.79	59	
Domain 5	Organizational Oversight	2.95	.88	81	3.28	.76	60	*
Domain 6	Implementation	3.15	.92	81	3.23	.89	60	
Domain 7	Delegation	2.91	.79	81	3.13	.98	60	
Domain 8	Instruction/Learning Env.	3.05	.93	81	3.25	1.01	59	
Domain 9	Curriculum Design	3.11	.86	83	3.18	.95	60	
Domain 10	Student Guidance	2.78	.88	81	3.34	.66	58	*
Domain 11	Staff Development	3.09	.87	81	3.45	.82	58	*
Domain 12	Measurement/Evaluation	2.96	.89	81	3.10	.88	59	
Domain 13	Resource Allocation	3.01	.84	82	3.07	.88	58	
Domain 14	Motivating Others	3.00	1.04	81	3.28	.91	58	
Domain 15	Sensitivity	2.88	1.12	81	3.38	.88	58	*
Domain 16	Communication	3.01	.94	81	3.09	.94	58	
Domain 17	Written Expression	2.78	.99	80	3.00	1.16	59	
Domain 18	Cultural Values	2.56	1.07	81	2.95	1.00	58	
Domain 19	Legal Applications	2.88	1.09	81	3.36	.97	58	
Domain 20	Policy/Political Influences	2.73	1.01	81	2.91	.96	58	
Domain 21	Public/Media Relations	2.99	.97	81	3.09	.98	58	

*Significant differences between Meadows and traditional graduates when subjected to Leverne's Test for equity of Variances and verified by the Bonferoni.

In Table 4, the growth and development mean scores for the traditional principal preparation program graduates are also identified for each of the 21 domains from the questionnaire responses. The higher mean scores indicated that the respondents felt they needed more growth and development in this domain. The highest growth and development mean score (3.45) for traditional preparation program graduates was domain 11--staff development. Staff development was defined as working with faculty and staff to identify professional needs; planning, organizing, and facilitating programs that improve faculty and staff effectiveness and are consistent with instructional goals and needs. The lowest growth and development mean score (2.91) for traditional principal preparation program graduates was on domain 20--policy and political influences. Policy and political influences was defined as understanding schools as political systems; identifying relationships between public and education; recognizing policy issues. Traditional

principal preparation program graduates had no high (>3.50) growth and development mean scores on any of the 21 domains. In addition to having no high scores on any of the 21 domains, the traditional principal preparation program graduates had no low (<2.50) mean scores for growth and development.

Open-ended Responses

In addition to the 21 structured items on the questionnaire, respondents were asked to answer two open-ended questions. Responses to open-ended questions from both groups were analyzed together for commonalties and compiled into two lists, one for Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates, and one for traditional principal preparation graduates. Responses were grouped under one of four categories. Categories of responses were coursework, internship, special programs, and general comments. The general comments category lists comments which did not contain any common characteristics that allowed for categorization. In addition to the four categories, the Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates required one additional category for cohort groups.

The first question, "What was the most beneficial aspect of your educational administration preparation program?", yielded a total of 62 responses from Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates and 43 responses from traditional principal preparation program graduates. The Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates (20) responded that the cohort experience portion of the educational administration preparation program was the most beneficial aspect of principal preparation. As one Meadows graduate responded, "The cohort concept was the most beneficial part of the program to me. I was in a mixed group of age and experience. We learned from one another. The specific units that we studied during my first summer session in Cohort meetings were the most useful in preparing me for the leadership position." None of the traditional principal preparation program graduates mentioned the cohort experience as the most beneficial aspect of the preparation program.

The second largest number (11) of responses to the first question from participants in the Meadows Principal Improvement Program was in the category of internship. According to a Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduate, "The greatest benefit was the opportunity to work full-time as an intern while attending classes. I was able, daily, to use what I learned and able to have a question answered each week in class that made my education so relevant. You tend to forget so much that you hear and can't use fairly soon. I was able to put it into use instantly and have been able to remember more since it was so practical." Nine respondents from the Meadows Principal Improvement Program mentioned Coursework as the most beneficial aspect of educational administration preparation. Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates (6) stated that special programs were the most beneficial aspects of the principal preparation program. Special programs for the Meadows Principal Improvement Program participants included

attending professional educational conferences and an inservice phase that included nationally recognized leaders in the field of education.

Coursework received the most responses (19) from graduates of the traditional principal preparation program to the first question. Comments regarding coursework (11), pertained mainly to school law. One traditional principal preparation program graduate responded, "The public school law class helped me to better understand why and how our school systems work in order to comply with the law. I also had a professor for several classes who had recently come from public education who gave great insight into relating to and working with personnel, other administrators, parents, and the public." There were five traditional preparation program graduates that felt the internship was the most beneficial aspect of the principal preparation program. Traditional principal preparation graduates (3) listed special programs as the most beneficial aspect of their educational administration program.

The second question, "In what area(s) do you think your educational administration preparation program could have better prepared you for the principalship?", yielded a total of 34 responses from the Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates and 44 responses from traditional principal preparation program graduates. Graduates from traditional principal preparation program (9) felt better preparation in coursework would have prepared them for the role of principal. Eleven comments from Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates mentioned coursework as an area for improved preparation.

The largest number of responses to the second question from traditional principal preparation program graduates (12) indicated preparation received through the internship could have better prepared graduates for the principalship. The internship phase could have better prepared graduates for the principalship, according to one traditional principal preparation program graduate, if it had been able to "...provide a way for future school administrators to receive 'on the job training' before they are hired as administrators. For example, a program similar to (university) where they have a field-based program which gives the future administrator this opportunity." Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates (7) felt the internship was the area where better preparation could have taken place. Neither group listed special programs as an area where better preparation was needed.

Conclusions

The findings and subsequent discussion lead to several conclusions by Davis regarding the results of this study. First, the graduates of the Meadows Principal Improvement Program and traditional principal preparation program indicated proficiency upon assuming the role of principal. This finding supports the results of Mertz and McNeely (1989) which indicated the majority of participants had positive perceptions of their principal preparation programs. Although both the Meadows Principal Improvement Program and

traditional principal preparation program graduates perceived to have obtained the necessary proficiencies through their principal preparation programs, Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates indicated a higher level of leadership and sensitivity upon assuming the role of principal. These strengths for the Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates demonstrate a significance for inclusion of the interpersonal skills and the leadership development components for principal preparation programs.

While both Meadows Principal Improvement Program and traditional principal preparation program graduates clearly saw importance in each of the 21 domains, leadership was seen as the most important of all skills. Murphy (1988) supported the importance of leadership and the need for major revisions in administrator training in instructional leadership. The emphasis by both groups on the importance of leadership skills raises questions concerning the emphasis principal preparation programs currently place on the development of this skill.

Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates indicated less of a need for additional growth and development than did graduates from traditional principal preparation programs. This would indicate a difference in the depth of preparation perceived by the Meadows Principal Improvement Program participants as compared to the traditional preparation program's ability to prepare graduates for the work encountered upon assuming the principalship.

While the internship was perceived as a valuable part of the Meadows Principal Improvement Program, the internship for traditional principal preparation program graduates was an area perceived as needing improvement. The absence of an internship of sufficient time contributed to traditional principal preparation program graduates perception of principal preparation as a series of courses, unlike Meadows Principal Improvement Program graduates who perceived principal preparation as a program.

Davis made recommendations, as a result of this study to both higher education programs and to school districts. The following recommendations were made to institutions of higher learning:

1. A process to establish cohort groups will enable graduates to gain support not only while completing preparation program requirements, but allow for support from a network of professionals upon assuming the role of instructional leader.
2. Effective principal preparation programs should include additional focus on the development of generic leadership skills. Future administrators must be given a firm knowledge base of leadership, exposure to effective leadership, and ample opportunities to develop leadership abilities.
3. Effective principal preparation programs should include a period of not less than one school year, with daily exposure in an internship, that will enable students to gain the necessary skills for successful instructional leadership.

4. Effective inservice programs for principals should include focus on leadership. Practicing principals must be continually exposed to effective leadership practices in order to continue personal development of leadership skills.

The following recommendations were made to school districts:

1. Effective inservice programs for principals should include focus on leadership. Practicing principals must be continually exposed to effective leadership practices in order to continue personal development of leadership skills.

2. School districts, in partnership with universities, should intensify efforts to take an active mentorship role in the internship. Districts should recognize their needed commitment to developing entry level administrators.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As a result of looking back on the twelve year process of this program's development and maturation and from the evaluation efforts made by other researchers/evaluators some important conclusions emerge. These will hopefully give some thoughts and considerations to others developing programs designed to impact the preparation of administrators in general and principals in particular.

Perhaps the most important conclusion is that which deals with the culture of the program which emerged from this effort. A special culture developed around the participants and the professors who participated in the Meadows Program, which for them was very positive and demanding. It developed a set of beliefs and values that the principal could make a difference in the programs which would be set up in his or her school. This belief structure came to impact the preparation program and set a certain standard for the participants themselves. The students demanded a very high performance from themselves throughout their participation which required them to rely on their families and friends to support their efforts at become instructionally oriented principals. During this fifteen-month period they put many personal goals on hold while they concentrated their effort on this professional goal. Their fellow students, their families, and their professional mentors supported them. Their dedication to this effort was, of course, impacted by a large number of other aspects of the program, both formal and informal, such as the cohort group structure.

The cohort group development was perhaps the single most important attribute of the program structure which provided the synergy to this program. When the program was first launched in the summer of 1986, the professors and other staff did not anticipate the impact that the cohort group would have on the energy of everyone involved. By the end of 5 weeks it was obvious what the cohort group was doing to maintain the high level of support for the participants and the professors involved. The group became a team of

individuals who helped each other through all of their personal as well as academic challenges encountered. That support continued not only through the summer but also into and through the internship and the following summer's course work. Some of these cohorts continue to gather annually and many of the participants maintain their close personal and professional relationships which has grown into a large network due to the number of participants over the 11 years.

Another feature, which has developed as an important contributor to the professional application of knowledge, is the role the internship plays in the program. Meadows participants start the internship three months after commencing the program. This provides the impetus to the participants to glean all insights from classwork and conferences for use on the job. It makes the other class and conference experiences very meaningful as participants know they will be able to use their knowledge on the job immediately; this provides the reinforcement needed to remember the concepts studied and encountered as well as to provide practical application and practice of the knowledge and skills acquired.

Directly related to the previous conclusion is the importance of a year-long internship experience. Meadows participants had a greater in-depth experience as the result of the year's internship and due to the full-time nature of that experience were not distracted with teaching duties. In a few cases, Meadows interns had been assigned specific positions duties as assistant principal and on several occasions were principals (usually acting or interim position). This specific position assignment is not usually in the best interests of the internship experience, as indicated in the research cited. It is recommended that internships be specifically that—rather than be permanently assigned assistant principal duties. One excellent experience resulted when the principal made the intern the acting principal for most of the year and the principal assumed the assistant principal duties for the ensuing period. However, individuals assigned as assistant principals often have a limited range of experiences.

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