Principal Internships in Indiana: A Promising or Perilous Experience?

Even after decades of use, designing and implementing worthwhile educational administrative internships remains a work in progress. What appears to be a logical conclusion that this experience would enhance the training of aspiring building leaders defies the gathering of definitive empirical evidence. The quest to validate what constitutes a successful internship experience intensified in the 1980s when research affirmed the positive relationship between effective school leadership and school performance. The research results contained in this study attempt to provide information that will lead to the improvement of internship experiences for aspiring school administrators. In order to accomplish this purpose, current building principals in Indiana were surveyed regarding their internship experiences in the areas of program structure, components of the internship, time requirements, and recommendations for improvement. This research is a replication of a 2009 study, Improving Administrative Internship Programs: Perceptions of Illinois Principals, authored by Thomas Kersten, Margaret Trybus, and Daniel White. The differences and similarities found in the comparison studies are discussed in the Summary and Conclusions.

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INTRODUCTION

The value of an internship in the training of school administrators to prepare them for the challenges of authentic school improvement has been the subject of a robust and ongoing debate. This deliberation has persisted for at least five decades since Griffiths (1959) questioned the effectiveness of university training programs. Concerns about the internship intensified during the 1980s as effective schools research identified the building principal as an important catalyst in the school improvement formula (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Murphy & Hallinger, 1987; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Milstein, Bobroff, & Restine, 1991, Duke, Grogan, Tucker, & Heinecke, 2003).

As the reform movement evolved, researchers in the field published similar findings. Leathwood, Seashore, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) reported that, "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students

learn at school" (p. 2). Other studies on educational reform have highlighted the role of school principals in improving student achievement (Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Tucker, Henig, & Salamonowicz, 2005). The challenge is to better prepare the next generation of administrators to lead school improvement and find solutions to complex, real-world problems.

As school reformers searched for ways to improve principal preparation programs the use of internships in administrator training increased. Murphy (1992) reported that studies indicated 65% of administrative training programs required some form of field study. By the early 1990s the administrative internship had become a foundational component of leadership preparation programs (Wylie & Clark, 1994). Jean and Evans (1995) reported that due to the need for administrators to improve skills and abilities required to confront the challenges of school reform, university programs expanded internship experiences to facilitate the application of classroom learning. In 2002, the National Policy Board For Educational Administration published the *Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership.* Standard seven is focused exclusively on the internship. The standard proposes a six month internship experience during which principal candidates apply and refine their knowledge in real-world settings.

In the 1990s, reform efforts served as a catalyst to improve internship experiences (Foster & Ward, 1998). There is some evidence of success. Darling-Hammond, et al. (2007) found that on average, interns graduating from programs using highly effective practices and noteworthy professional growth were better prepared for the principalship. Conclusions drawn from research on leadership preparation reflected broad consensus about the importance of field-based learning (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). According to Cunningham (2007) a key component of the reform movement was an increased emphasis on providing opportunities for students to work on real-world problems in authentic settings. "As candidates do the real work of improving learning results for students, they learn about and engage naturally in all aspects of school leadership, seeing them as interrelated rather than discrete actions performed out of context" (Perez, et al., 2010, p. 218). Well-planned intern experiences greatly improve the preparation of future educational leaders and lead to a "stronger pipeline of effective school administrators" (Pounders & Crow, 2005, p. 57). The Southern Regional Education Board's report, *Good Principals are the Key to Successful Schools* (2007), argued that field-based experiences must be a high priority and a central focus of principal preparation programs. Orr and Orphanos (2011) pointed out that leadership development had a stronger positive relationship with school improvement when an internship supplemented the preparation program.

Others questioned the value of the administrative internship. There are generally two sources of criticism. The first concern is related to the procedural elements most commonly associated with the internship experience. Valesky, Carter, and Huene-Johnson (2007) stated that internship programs often lack key elements such as purpose, structure, and rigor that are critical to the development of school leadership. Wilmore (2004) advocated for standards-based training programs with measurable expectations. Researchers have found that the majority of an intern's experiences are related to meeting attendance, completing office work, or supervising students with only limited participation in authentic leadership functions (McKerrow, 1998; Creighton, 2002; Edmondson, 2003; Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2005; Murphy, 2002.). Questions also exist regarding the quality of field sites, university support,

and access to mentors who will model beneficial traits (McKerrow, 1998; Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2005; Crocker & Harris, 2002).

The second concern centers on a lack of empirical evidence to document a correlation between participation in internships and success in school leadership. In 2011, Anast-May, Buckner, & Geer wrote, "Despite a growing increase in the number of internship programs in educational administration, there is little empirical data as to the type of experiences and activities future administrators should have during their internship" (p.3). Critics argue that increased research efforts have had negligible impact on school leader skill development in part because reform efforts have focused on the wrong thing (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Fry, O'Neill, & Bottoms, 2006). This inability to make observable progress led to increased criticism from groups outside the school administration community (Hess, 2003; Levine, 2005). Murphy and Vriesenga (2004) concluded there exists little evidence that research conducted to date has had any noticeable impact on administrative practice. Geismar, Morris, & Lieberman (2000) suggested internships placed greater emphasis on efficiency and expediency rather than demonstrated effectiveness. Levine (2005) stated that little empirical evidence exists regarding the value added to educators who complete graduate programs.

THE RESEARCH STUDY

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to compile a more extensive knowledge base about building level internships and share the results to improve internship experiences for aspiring building leaders in Indiana. Specifically, this study was designed to:

- Develop a profile of the administrative internship in Indiana;
- Document which duties were most often completed by administrative interns;
- Determine what skills or experiences are needed to improve administrator preparation;
- Replicate selected elements of a previous research study.

Context

During the 2010-2011 school year, the public schools in Indiana served 1,047,890 students in 2256 schools. Schools are located in rural, suburban, and urban settings and are classified by the Indiana Department of Education according to grade configuration. Elementary schools contain grade six or lower. There are 1427 elementary schools throughout the state. Middle or junior high schools house grades seven or eight. Statewide there are 442 schools designated as middle or junior high schools. High schools enroll grade ten or above. Within the state there are 387 high schools. There are smaller numbers of other grade configurations such as schools which span grades seven through twelve or kindergarten through eight. For the purpose of this study, responses from schools with grade configurations other than the state's designation of elementary, middle or junior high school, and high school, were placed in the category which included the majority of the grades.

Participants

Study participants were Indiana public school principals. Subjects were recruited through a direct mailing which included a cover letter and a survey form. A follow-up email was sent to all principals selected to participate in the survey.

The number of participants was determined through the use of a sample size determination table. (Bartlett, Lotrik, & Higgins, 2001). A sample size was derived for each category of school: elementary, middle/junior high, and high school. Schools in all categories were assigned a number and through the use of a Microsoft Excel random number table, the study sample was established. Six hundred ninety-four surveys were placed in the mail. One hundred seventy usable responses were received. The collective response rate was 25%. Response rates for each category were: elementary, 22%; middle/junior high, 26%; and high school, 28%.

METHODOLOGY

A three-part survey was utilized in this study. The majority of the questions were modeled after the replication study and shared with education administration faculty for feedback. The survey was reviewed and approved by the university's institutional review board.

Part I of the survey requested routine demographic information from the participant. Part II of the survey solicited responses to questions about the structure of the principal's internship experience, the components of the internship experience, and the requirements of the internship experience. Survey items in Part II required a forced choice response although respondents were permitted to list and or describe responses that did not fit within the survey categories. In Part III, principals were asked to respond to the two following open-ended questions:

• What experiences should be included in an administrative internship program to adequately prepare administrative interns for their first administrative position?
• From your personal internship or from supervising an intern, what advice would you offer training institutions to strengthen the internship experience?

With one exception, results for Parts I and II of the survey are reported as percentages. In Part II, respondents were permitted to select multiple responses. One question in Part II, asks respondents to rank their level of involvement in administrative tasks during the internship on a scale of zero to four. Mean scores were calculated for each of six administrative tasks. A higher mean score represents a greater frequency of task involvement. All noticeable data outliers are reported in the narrative under Findings.
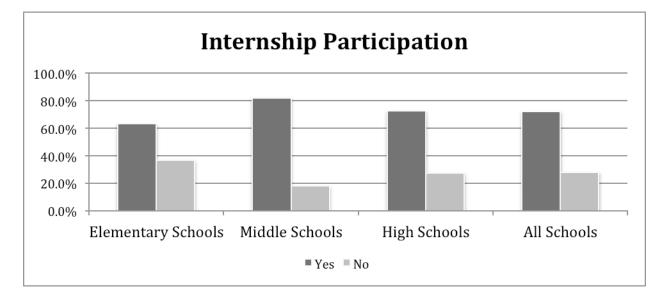
Qualitative responses to open-ended questions were analyzed for content by the researcher and two colleagues. This process involved the simultaneous coding of raw data and the construction of categories that capture the relevant characteristics of the document's content (Merriam, 1988). The strategy required each reviewer to independently engage in data reduction and the placement of like responses in appropriate categories. This method of analysis allowed for all frequent responses to emerge from the study (Altheide, 1987). This study replicates selected elements of a prior study. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that this study may or may not yield similar results. For the purposes of this study reliability
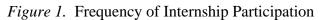
should be thought of in terms of results derived from the data that can be audited and verified (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

FINDINGS

Structural Elements of the Internship Experience

Participation in an administrative internship is a common requirement among principals in Indiana at all levels. Overall, 72.1% of the principals responding to the survey reported having to complete an administrative internship experience (See Figure 1). The range was from a high of 82.0% for middle school principals to a low of 63.3% for elementary principals. The internship requirement is not a new training strategy for educational leaders. Over 50% of the principals with more than 15 years of experience reported completing an administrative internship. However, there is a notable increase among principals with less than five years of experience and those with greater than fifteen years of experience with regard to completing an administrative internship (See Figure 2). There is an overall internship participation rate increase from 52.9% of principals with greater than 15 years of experience to 92.9% for principals with less than five years in the role of a principal. This inverse relationship of greater internship participation with fewer years of experience occurs in all grade configurations. The greatest difference is at the elementary level.

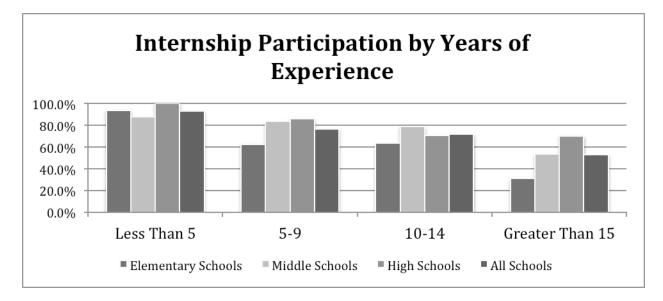*Figure 1.* Frequency of Internship Participation

Figure 2. Internship Participation by Years of Experience

Survey respondents were asked to describe their internship experiences in terms of length and structure (See Figure 3). The most frequently reported length of the internship was two semesters. The synthesis of data from all schools depicts 48% as having participated in two semester internships and 32% as having participated in one semester internships. Twenty percent of the interns studied in programs in which field experiences were integrated into coursework. The prevalence of the two semester experience existed in all grade configurations except middle schools where 40% of the interns reported having a one semester experience. Interns were also asked whether their internships were full-time or part-time. Ninety-three percent of the respondents indicated their internships were on a part-time basis.
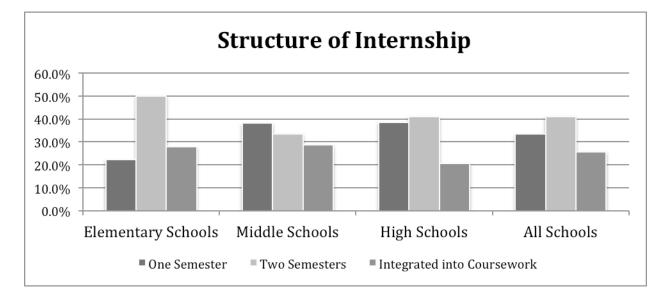
Figure 3. Structure of Internship

The number of hours to meet university internship requirements for an individual semester reported by the survey respondents varied greatly. Some programs required four times as many hours as others (See Figure 4). In the summary of all schools, 8.99% of the interns were able to meet course requirements by committing 50 hours or less to internship tasks. In contrast, slightly over one-fifth, 20.22%, spent more than 200 hours engaged in internship activities. The most frequently reported time allotment for all grade configurations was between 51 and 100 hours per semester. The highest percentage of respondents reporting this time commitment was middle school principals at 50%. Interns serving in elementary schools were second at 42% with high school interns reporting the lowest percentage in the category at 37%. This wide range of required hours reported suggests that some internships are, from a time commitment perspective, far more demanding than others or have a more extensive array of project requirements.
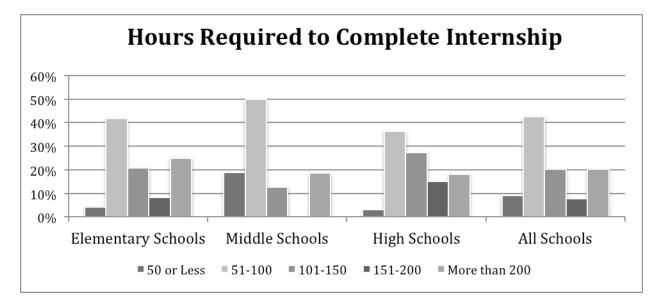
Figure 4. Hours Required to Complete Internship

In order to acquire a perspective on the level of university engagement in intern preparation, interns were asked to identify the number of times university supervisors visited them on-site (See Figure 5). This measure does not rule out the possibility of emails or telephone conversations, but the notion of university supervisors having the opportunity to learn more about the context in which interns are functioning, provide one-to-one mentoring, and demonstrate active engagement in the process, would seem to be a reasonable expectation. Overall, during the course of the internship, 18% of the interns did not meet with their university supervisors. Thirty-six percent reported meeting twice each semester which was the most common response from all participants. University supervisors met twice with 41% of the high school interns, which was more than other grade configuration although the variation among school visits was less than 7%. It is plausible that interns reporting four or more visits were those whose internships were integrated into coursework.
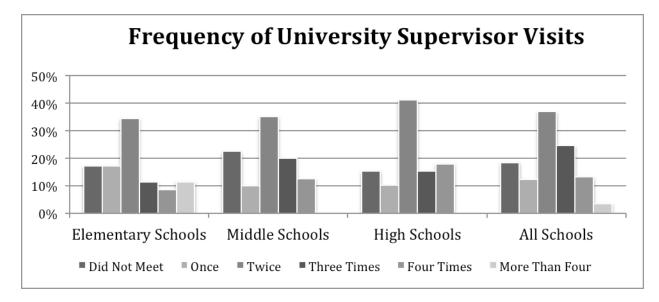
Figure 5. Frequency of University Supervisor Visits

Tasks Associated With The Administrative Internship

For the purpose of collecting data that distinguished internship field activities from coursework, survey responses were divided into two categories; those directly related to coursework and those completed exclusively during the field experience. This categorical placement is not meant to suggest there is no relationship between these requirements. For example, writing a reflective essay as a culminating project activity clearly binds the two together. However, separating the tasks for the purpose of inquiry allowed for a more detailed analysis of internship activities.

Coursework activities will be described first. Participants were asked to select one or more options from a list of typical internship requirements. The items on the list represented activities associated with project planning, documenting participation, presenting results, assembling artifacts, and reflecting on administrative duties. Survey respondents were permitted to select more than one requirement; therefore, items with higher percentages were selected more frequently (See Figure 6).

Three activities, writing project proposals, keeping activity journals, and drafting reflective essays were identified by over 70% of the respondents as required elements. From the combined results, 78% of the interns were required to maintain a journal of administrative duties, 76% were required to compose reflective essays, and 71% maintained a time log to document participation. At all levels, presentations were made in class 42% of the time. Portfolios were compiled by 54% of the interns. This pattern held for all grade configurations except in middle schools where the requirement for reflective essays exceeded journaling by nearly 2.5%.
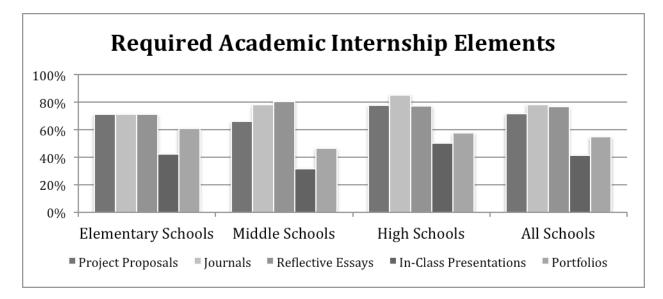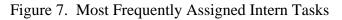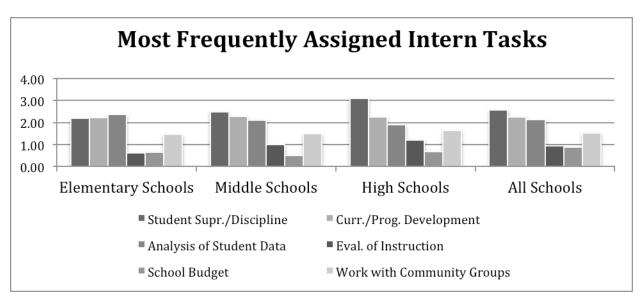
Figure 6. Required Academic Internship Elements

Required Academic Internship Elements

Legend: Project Proposals · Journals · Reflective Essays · In-Class Presentations · Portfolios

In an attempt to determine what duties were assigned to interns while they engaged in on-the-job training, they were asked to rank their level of participation in six tasks commonly associated with building administration (See Figure 7). Participation was ranked from zero to four. A rating of zero indicated no involvement. A rating of four indicated frequent involvement. From the responses a mean score was calculated. A higher mean score indicates a greater frequency of task involvement. A lower score represents lesser involvement.

Figure 7. Most Frequently Assigned Intern Tasks

Most Frequently Assigned Intern Tasks

Legend: Student Supr./Discipline · Curr./Prog. Development · Analysis of Student Data · Eval. of Instruction · School Budget · Work with Community Groups

In the summary of schools, a scale score of 2.57 indicated that interns reported having the greatest involvement in student supervision and discipline. In what seems like a logical progression, interns at high schools had the highest student supervision and discipline scale score of 3.10 while elementary school interns were the least involved in student supervision and discipline indicated by a scale score of 2.18. Middle schools and high schools displayed similar trends when comparing the frequency of assigned duties. Interns at both levels most often participated in student supervision and discipline followed in order of decreasing involvement by curriculum and program development, analysis of student data, working with community groups, evaluation of instruction, and school budgets. The profile for elementary schools ranks analysis of student data first followed by curriculum and program development then student supervision.

Constructed Responses

All survey respondents were practicing school administrators with varying years of experience in different grade configurations. Part III of the survey asked administrators to reflect on their careers and answer the following question: What experiences should be included in an administrative internship program to adequately prepare administrative interns for their first administrative position? The purpose of the question was to compile information that could be used to tailor internship requirements that would best meet the needs of interns as they strive to become successful building leaders prepared to lead change and improve student achievement.

In response to the question asking principals to list experiences most likely to adequately prepare an administrative intern for their first administrative position, two skills were mentioned decidedly more often than others. The most frequently cited need was for interns to gain experience in curriculum development and the use of student data to guide program development. Twenty percent of the survey participants stated that interns should become proficient at writing and evaluating curriculum and should be able to use student data to evaluate effective teaching and implement programs (See Figure 8).

Being proficient at student discipline was the second most often cited experience at 19%. Responses served to broaden the traditional definition of disciplinarian. Skills suggested as requirements for success in this role included understanding due process and being adept at conflict resolution.

The third most frequently noted experience was improvement of instruction and teacher evaluation. Within this category the evaluation of instruction was the dominant theme. There were, however, other noteworthy skills mentioned. Having knowledge of research-based instructional practices and understanding effective lesson design were also frequently mentioned suggestions.

Leadership was designated as the fourth most often listed skill set. Recommendations were frequently task specific. Interns should learn to develop a vision for learning, nurture an effective building culture, and be capable at leading a group to consensus. It is natural to think of leadership being aligned with professional development, the fifth highest ranked skill set, but the context of the responses highlighted the need for the prospective principals to continue to grow professionally themselves rather than lead the professional development of others. Participation in professional organizations, reflecting on practice, and accessing

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information from government resources were given as examples of personal professional growth.
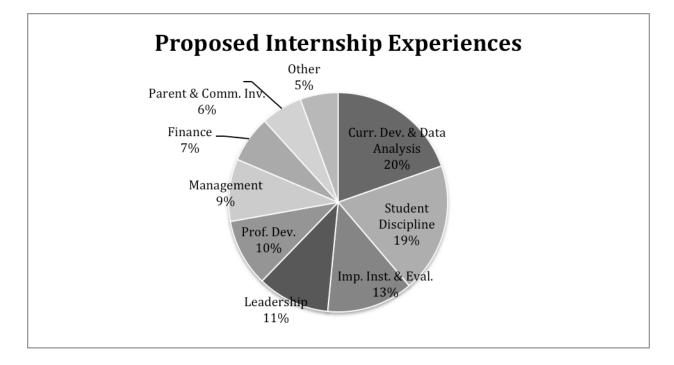
Figure 8. Proposed Internship Experiences

Proposed Internship Experiences

Curr. Dev. & Data Analysis 20%
Student Discipline 19%
Imp. Inst. & Eval. 13%
Leadership 11%
Prof. Dev. 10%
Management 9%
Finance 7%
Parent & Comm. Inv. 6%
Other 5%

Improving financial expertise focused on building level procedures. The management classification included a wide array of routine, but important skills. Completing reports, addressing safety issues, and managing time effectively were listed under this heading. The parent and community involvement category contained the typical involvement in parent-teacher organizations but focused more on the proactive nature of the experience such as the need to engage community partners and develop a positive public relations program.

The responses to the question eliciting suggestions for improving internship training programs yielded a dominate theme. Forty-six percent of the participants stated that internships should be structured to permit the intern to experience administration first-hand (See Figure 9). There were numerous suggestions to accomplish this mandate. Examples such as those that follow were often included in survey responses. "Job shadowing, it is important to see the real work." "Spend more time actively engaged versus hours preparing a portfolio." "Ensure a wide variety of activities for interns." "Interns need far more than merely handling discipline and occasionally looking at programming." "Offer a full-time experience." Overall, the term "hands-on" was by far the most frequently used term to describe how to improve the experiences of administrative interns.

There were three underlying themes in the category of Greater Mentor and University Support. They are: guidance, mentor/intern relationship, and time for reflection. Participants mentioned the advantages of forging a strong partnership between the on-site supervisors, the university supervisor and the intern. Visits to the intern's school, accessibility through email and telephone, developing projects collaboratively, and providing useful feedback were

mentioned as critical attributes of this partnership. The mentor/intern experience is a key factor for an aspiring administrator. The building mentor must not only make time for the intern, but the practicing administrator must have a desire to serve as a role model. This service is one of sharing expertise, assigning the intern to meaningful duties, and permitting, to the degree possible, access to the administrator's world. Frequently responses included suggestions to provide time for the intern to meet with the mentor to discuss progress, current issues, or to reflect on situations that had occurred. Interns require this time to build leadership capacity. This category of responses can be summed up by this quote from a survey participant, "Supervising interns is a professional responsibility and should be treated as such. Anything less is demeaning to the profession."
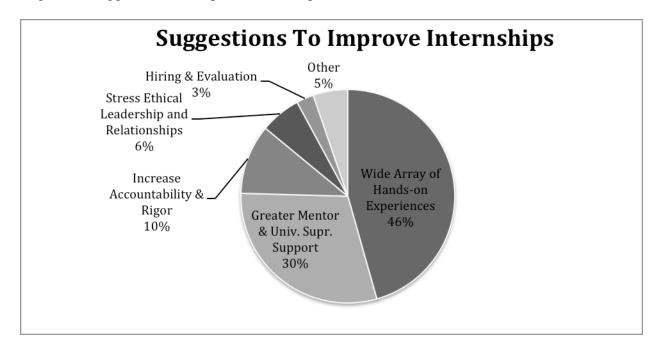
Figure 9. Suggestions To Improve Internships

The remaining four categories combined did not equal the second most mentioned category, but that does not diminish the relative importance of the responses. Under the heading of Increase Accountability and Rigor, remarks from principals focused on the need for interns to complete rigorous, meaningful, and standards-based tasks. The need to keep program entry requirements high was noted along with making certain interns were committed to becoming successful building leaders. Participants stressed the need to emphasize character development and ethical decision-making. Others noted that interns must learn to value people first and programs second. There was no prevailing theme in the category of Other. The most frequently suggested practices in this category were improving interns understanding of school law and increasing proficiency in teacher evaluation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Because this research is a general replication of an earlier study, any conclusions drawn from the data must begin with a comparison of results. In Table 1, the comparative results are illustrated by listing the most frequently reported responses as a percentage of all responses. There is general agreement among the five items reported in Table 1. The only differences of note were found under the heading of the most common internship academic requirements. It is suggested that some distinctions may be due to terminology. For example, a contract and a project outline are most likely similar documents both serving as a guide and commitment for the intern to complete required tasks. If this is an accurate assumption, the only discernible difference derived from the results is the portfolio requirement. Participants in the Kersten, Trybus & White study compiled portfolios considerably more frequently than those in this study. The comparison of responses to the first open-ended question yielded some differences. Kersten, Trybus, and White (2009) divided responses to this question into management and leadership experiences. Within this framework, 50% of the respondents cited teacher observation as the most important internship leadership activity followed by curriculum and instructional planning duties then assessment and data analysis. Under the heading of management, the most frequent response, over one-third, advised that interns should have more experience in financial management. The authors stated that a substantial number of responses indicated that interns should have more extensive experience in human resources. Other suggestions included student discipline and supervision, working with parents, and the development of student schedules.

Table 1. Comparative Findings Summary/Frequency of Reported Responses

FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES		
Description of Item	Kersten, Trybus, & White	Lehman
Percentage Reporting Internship Required	73.8%	72.1%
Structure of Internship	One Semester/39.0%	Two Semester/ 48.0%
Required Internship Hours	51-100 hours/38.0%	51-100 hours/42.7%
Number of Visits by University Supervisor	2 visits/32.2%	2 visits/36%
Five Most Common Academic Internship Tasks	Time Log/90.6% Reflection Paper/81.1% Portfolio/72.6% Contract/54.1% In-Class Presentation/41.0%	Journals/78.0% Reflective Essays/76.0% Project Outlines/71.0% Portfolio/54.0% In-Class Presentations/42.0%

Unlike Kersten, Trybus, and White (2009), this author's results did not reveal a clear delineation between leadership and management experiences. The experience cited as being the most critical for interns to become proficient at was curriculum development and data analysis. Student discipline was a close second. Third on the list of important skills to acquire was improvement of instruction and teacher evaluation. Becoming more adept at financial management was mentioned by only 7% of the respondents and only a nominal amount expressed a need to acquire an increased knowledge of human resource practices.

The responses to the second open-ended question in both studies are closely aligned. Principals responding to both surveys called for interns to have more hands-on experiences and to receive more support from their university supervisors. Even the distant third factor of increased accountability and rigor was expressed with the same relative frequency in both studies.

It is easy to conclude from this analysis that the author's investigation provides overall support for results found in the original study by Kersten, Trybus, and White (2009). The pervasiveness of the internship, the structure, and requirements were similar in both studies. A uniform need for interns to be immersed more deeply in curriculum development, data analysis, and teacher evaluation was expressed in both studies. A strong demand for more hands-on experiences and greater support from training institutions was also clearly evident in both surveys.

Does the agreement of the findings reported by these studies suggest they can be generalized to a broader population of interns? In the baseline study, Kersten, Trybus, and White (2010) cautioned against generalizations choosing instead to call for replication of their research. Reasons cited for their viewpoint included: a state specific survey, small response rate, and the potential for inconsistent interpretation of qualitative responses. This replication study contains the same statistical limitations, yet the findings closely approximate those of the baseline study thereby complimenting its reliability. There are arguments beyond this regional comparison that support the inference that the utilization of administrative internships as an integral training component has fallen short of their potential in the preparation of the next generation of school leaders. Three of these arguments are noted in the following paragraphs: the preponderance of consistent research findings, standards-based training, and the influence of similar contextual variables.

In general, the results of both studies combine to reinforce the criticisms expressed by researchers cited earlier including, but not limited to: Creighton, 2002; Edmondson, 2003; and Bottoms & O'Neill, 2005. More specifically, the findings of these studies are consistent with those published by McKerrow (1998) in which it was determined that over 45% of an intern's time was spent attending meetings and supervising students. McKerrow's summation is profound, "Overall, the data suggest that the internships were not experiences that exposed the students to the actual work of the administrator, at least not the important work" (p. 181).

Are there common, universal factors that should contribute to a uniform internship experience? Standards-based training is one. In an attempt to provide guidance for program design, various professional organizations collaborated in the development of a common set of standards. "The purpose of these standards is to improve principal preparation programs and to serve as a framework for current administrators' professional development (Wilmore, E.L., 2004, p. 6). The standards were adopted for use a decade ago and revised in 2011.

Today, there are 670 NCATE accredited institutions nationwide committed to compliance with the ELCC Building Level Educational Leadership Standards. This commitment requires principal training programs to provide significant field experiences and clinical internship practice in a concentrated format guided by a qualified on-site mentor (NCATE, 2012). Meeting this obligation increases the likelihood of comparable internship program parameters regardless of location.

When generalizing results a researcher must compare the likenesses and disparities of the sample to the broader population. While reviewing the findings of this study, one might discount the universality of the results by proposing that the administrators surveyed in

Indiana were leading atypical schools. The hypothesis offered for consideration here is that prospective building leaders in equivalent surroundings facing similar challenges will have some common experiences.

It is understood there can be vast differences between schools. However, based on a review of data from the Digest of Educational Statistics (2011) of selected school descriptors there are few notable differences between national averages and Indiana schools represented by the random survey sample. These comparisons are illustrated in Table 2. The greatest disparities are in the categories of minority and ethnic enrollment and the services provided to students with disabilities. Schools in Indiana are not nearly as diverse as the national average but they do serve a greater percentage of students with disabilities. Overall the figures in this table suggest that interns may face similar challenges in dissimilar locations.

Table 2. Comparison of Select Public School Descriptors

SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOL DESCRIPTORS					
Descriptor	Indiana	U.S.	Percent Difference	Range	
				High	Low
Pct. Students Served Under IDEA (2009-2010)	16.4	13.1	25.2	18.1	9.2
Pct. Distribution of race/ethnic enrollment (2009)	22.2	45.9	106.7	74.5	6.5
Pct. Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (2009-2010)	45.3	47.5	5.1	70.7	32.3
Pct. Averaged Freshmen High School Graduates (2005)	73.5	75.0	2.0	87.6	61.2
Pct. 8th Grade at or Above Proficiency in Mathematics (2011)	78	75	4.0	84	65
Pct. 8th Grade at or Above Proficiency in Reading (2011)	77	72	6.9	86	60
Per Pupil Expenditure (2008-2009)	9,343	10,694	14.5	17,918	7,187

There is little doubt that additional replication studies would increase the reliability of these reports. It could also be important to expand the original study to assess the forces that influence a selected subset of internship experiences. Regardless, from what is now known, there appears to be little evidence that the use of building level internships has led to improved leadership experiences.

The fact that congruence exists among these studies only serves to amplify the real problem. This survey asked respondents what tasks they most often completed during their internship. Student discipline and supervision topped the list, curriculum and program development and analysis of student data were a close second and third. Practice in the evaluation of instruction was a disappointing fourth (See Figure 7).

The second, and most unsettling, conclusion from these findings is that there is evidence from both studies that interns are not being sufficiently exposed to tasks that research has identified as being required for effective school leadership. This must change. Over a decade ago, Bottoms and O'Neill (2001) outlined what the new breed of school leaders should be prepared to do. Comparable lists of required leadership proficiencies can be found in numerous publications (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Southern Regional Education Board, 2007; Whitaker, 2012). Compounding this issue is the fact that when asked to list

experiences most likely to adequately prepare an administrative intern for the first administrative position, respondents to the survey routinely listed skills not aligned with that research has found to be needed for effective school leadership and improvement (See Figure 8).

"Graduates of principal preparation programs consistently report that their most significant learning occurred during the internship experience" (Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2005. p.1). If this statement is accepted as fact, school leader preparation programs must do everything within their power to make certain that interns are learning the skills needed to make measurable differences in schools. "To prepare candidates for the principalship, opportunities are needed to replicate the true conditions under which the principal must work" (Lovely, 2004, p. 4). The goal is to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Greenlee, Bruner, & Hill, 2009). The following statement from Cunningham and Sherman (2008) rings true:

> In the past, internships have been centered on tasks such as scheduling; budgeting; student discipline; faculty meetings; home-school communications; laws, policies, and procedures; developing reports; school plant concerns; testing; facilitating school-community relations; arranging substitutes; and monitoring extracurricular activities. Though all are crucial for a principal intern, they support instruction only indirectly. In an age of accountability, these tasks are no longer enough. An emphasis must be placed on tasks that facilitate instructional leadership, school improvement, and student achievement-historically overlooked or nonexistent aspects of the internship. (p. 310)

Quality internship experiences can make a difference (Orr & Orphanos, 2011). The designers of internship training programs must lead this change. Requirements must reflect reality and the need for empirical evidence of success. Standards must not only be followed, but those which contribute most to student success must be emphasized during the internship experience. Designers of internship experiences have no choice but to strive to develop leaders who understand what school and classroom practices contribute to student achievement, know how to work with teachers to foster continuous school improvement, and how to provide support for teachers to achieve these goals (Bottoms & O'Neil, 2001).

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