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Perspectives on Distance Technology in Leadership Education: Transfer, Meaning, and Change

Whitney H. Sherman
Virginia Commonwealth University

Karen S. Crum
Old Dominion University

Danna M. Beaty
Tarleton State University

While the use of distance technology has been touted as having the potential to reform leadership preparation, there is little to no research on students' experiences or outcomes in educational leadership. The authors sought to understand, through a descriptive survey design, whether or not distance technology is a viable competitor to face-to-face instruction. The purpose of the study was to gain perspectives from students in leadership preparation programs as consumers of instructional distance technology and to understand perceptions of the impact of distance technology on transfer of knowledge to practice. Findings provide readers with insider knowledge from consumers who utilize distance technology and indicate that while students feel online course experiences have been equally successful as compared to face-to-face instruction, they do not find that online courses have an advantage over face-to-face instruction.

By fall 2006, the enrollment of online learners in the United States grew to about 3.5 million (Allen & Seaman, 2007). Market-driven demands and increasing access to the Internet has resulted in competition between universities to increase enrollment by reaching out to traditionally underserved populations (Milligan & Buckenmeyer, 2008). In a study of University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) institutions, though the majority of universities indicated that they relied most heavily on face-to-face instruction at all program levels (M.Ed., Ed.S., Ed.D., Ph.D.), many indicated an interest in experimenting with a hybrid format of course delivery that combines face-to-face instruction with distance technology (Sherman & Beaty, 2007). According to Sherman and Beaty, there are pedagogical and theoretical issues inherent to the use of distance technology, such as understanding how distance technology changes teaching

and learning. Our intent for the purpose of this study was to gain perspectives from students in leadership preparation programs as consumers of instructional distance technology and to understand perceptions of the impact of distance technology on transfer of knowledge to practice.

Tracking Distance Technology in Higher Education

As universities have found themselves in increasingly competitive times (Timmons, 2002), distance technology has become a hot trend (Wagschal, 1998) embraced by most institutions of higher education, including traditional universities. Distance technology has increased the ways in which knowledge can be delivered through worldwide connectivity and accessibility (Kemelgor, Johnston, & Srinivasan, 2000). According to O'Sullivan (2000),

> Educators can use the ways in which technology can affect interaction and information processing to reshape the educational process. These changes can improve, or undermine educational goals. The technology's characteristics are important considerations, but the applications that educators develop will ultimately determine whether the uses are beneficial or not. (p. 57)

In short, while technology is a tool which humans can use to transform their environments (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990), it must be understood in the context of human social constructions and behaviors (O'Sullivan).

Positive Growth

As the enrollment of online learners in the United States has continued to grow, trends and patterns have been established in regard to what fields utilize online instruction the most, which degree programs are deemed more suitable for online instruction, and what populations of people take advantage of online courses. In the health professions, for every 100 classroom courses, there are 59 online courses. Education ranks second in online doctoral courses, with 39 of every 100 courses being offered online (Ghezzi, 2007).

Increased Access. Reports indicate that single-parent, low-income, and minority women have become the largest group among adult learners in the last decade (Peter & Horn, 2005). Women outnumber men in online courses (Kramarae, 2003) and report the flexible schedule more conducive to balancing work, school, and family (Cooper, 2008).

Further, according to Grenzky and Maitland (2001), online degrees allow people in rural areas, working professionals, and military personnel in distant locations to access education. On a global level, distance technology is furthering the idea of international higher education, once described as what takes place when students cross their own national borders, to "…encompass a wider range of activities, including distance learning,

offshore and onshore courses, and the establishment of overseas campuses" (Dixon, 2006, p. 319).

Pedagogy Transformation. According to Adams and Gareth (2007), second generation e-learning requires a paradigm shift when thinking about online learning. Whereas first generation e-learning focused on developing technical skills, second generation e-learning is driven by pedagogical stances:

> It is argued that more attention needs to be devoted to the requirements of learning impact and the ability to create true value for learners, especially in just-in-time learning contexts where work and job demands drive the learning and the value that is ultimately created. This requires that more emphasis be placed on underlying pedagogies and technological designs that support these pedagogies appropriately, rather than continuing along the present path where a technology mindset appears to be driving the research and practice of e-learning. (p. 158)

While distance technology focuses on distance in terms of course delivery, it does not have to be equated with lack of connection to students (Sherman & Beaty, 2007). Instead, second generation e-learning allows students to seek multiple paths to learning and is context-based, requiring the learner to bring the context to the learning (Adams & Gareth, p. 167). Conceicao (2006) found that the design of online courses was learner centered and forced instructors to learn how to connect with students in alternative ways due to the lack of physical presence. According to Kitchenham (2006), instructors experience pedagogical transformations as they learn to adapt to using distance technology. Online instruction spreads pedagogical responsibilities across instructors and students and influences both the community of practice for instructors and communities of learning for students (Correia & Davis, 2008).

Online Learner Satisfaction. Learner satisfaction in the online environment is a key element in determining the success of a distance learning course (Sener & Humbert, 2003). There are a variety of factors that have been attributed to facilitating student success in online degree programs, including engagement in a learning community, schedule convenience, personal growth, peer support, feeling challenged, and faculty support (Muller, 2008). Success and student satisfaction are often paired together in the literature (Lim, Morros, & Kupritz, 2006; Richardson & Swan, 2003; Swan, 2002). Menchaca and Bekele (2008) found in an analysis of existent literature that "success factors were linked to the systematic use of human and non-human resources available to learning" (p. 236).

According to MacFarland (1999) and Sikora (2002), students indicate that they are equally pleased with online courses in comparison to traditional courses. Social presence in the online environment is a critical component contributing to students' satisfaction of the distance learning course (Richardson

& Swan, 2003). This can be accomplished through the development of a "learning community" in which the course design is created in a consistent, organized, and clear manner; In this learning community, the instructor provides feedback to the students, direct instruction, and lively discussions that are meaningful to the learning objectives (Swan, 2002; Shea, Li, Swan, & Pickett, 2006).

Hurdles to Jump

Courses that utilize distance technology in any format should not look like traditional courses in sheep's clothing, which serve to underutilize technology (Sherman & Beaty, 2007). According to Carr-Chellman and Duchastel (2000), "…in some cases, more attention has been paid to promotion and advertising than to quality assurance in some online degree programs" (p. 233). The absence of sufficient scaffolding for students working from home needed for successful online experiences (Foshay & Bergeron, 2000), the over-reliance on adjuncts, the lack of full-time faculty interest and professional development (Myers, Bennett, Brown, & Henderson, 2004), and inadequate access to technology in general (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000) also serve as factors that inhibit quality online course and program delivery.

Learner Factors. According to Carr (2000) and Jensen (2001), while online course and program participation has grown, there is a struggle with retention; online courses and programs have higher dropout rates. The characteristics of e-learning make it different from face-to-face instruction, and they need to be taken into account when preparing students for this kind of learning environment (Milligan & Buckenmeyer, 2008). According to Moore (1986), online students are typically required to possess a high amount of self-direction in order to be independently motivated to learn and work alone, to be skillful in time management, and to be able to communicate well (Maddux, 2004). Whereas Muller (2008) found that students indicate the following barriers to online success: multiple and competing responsibilities between work, home, and school, disappointment in faculty, a general preference for face-to-face instruction, feelings of anxiety, lack of technology support, and feeling overwhelmed.

Distance Technology's Impact on Leadership Education

According to Sherman and Beaty (2007), the use of distance technology has the potential to reform leadership preparation and reach a more inclusive population of aspiring leaders. Furthermore, "The emergence of e-learning also poses a potential source of market competition for traditional leadership programs if these learning options are captured first by more aggressive for-profit enterprises" (Glasman, Cibulka, & Ashby, 2002, p. 259). We need to first consider effective uses of distance technology, then envision what successful distance technology looks like and, finally, understand how it might transform leadership nationally and globally (Sherman & Beaty).

Though some indicate that there are hundreds of studies that examine whether outcomes of online programs match those of traditional programs, there is little to no research on outcomes in educational leadership. Due to purported beliefs that the use of distance technology and online learning has the potential to transform leadership pedagogy, we challenged ourselves to design a study to gain knowledge on whether or not distance technology is a viable competitor to face-to-face instructional preparation.

Methodology

We designed an exploratory study to gain perspective on how meaningful technology is toward impacting change and growth in individual students and the field of educational leadership in general. Research questions included (a) How do students experience distance technology as a conduit for instructional delivery? and (b) How does distance technology impact transfer of knowledge, meaning-making, and change?

As university professors with experience in the delivery of instructional distance technology, we sought feedback from students in our programs who have taken at least one online graduate course in educational leadership. We created a descriptive survey (see appendix), using a series of questions grounded in the literature on the use of distance technology in higher education, and posted it on Survey Monkey. The descriptive survey design was selected based on its ability to provide a numeric description of the trends, attitudes, and demographics of the population (Creswell, 2003). We took care to ensure that the items on the survey had content validity by creating a table of specifications and linking survey items to the literature. Our goal was to identify the perspectives of our students as consumers of online course delivery rather than to identify significant differences between large populations of students.

We sent the survey link out to 88 students enrolled in the departments of educational leadership at two of our universities and received a 41% response rate. Sixty-eight percent of the students are female and 32% are male (2 opted not to respond); 89% are White, 3% are Asian, 3% are Hispanic, and 5% are African American (one person opted not to respond), and the majority of participants were 31 to 50 years old (70%) at the time of the study. Forty-four of the participants were in a master's program in educational leadership, 39% were in a doctoral program, and the rest either in an educational specialist or post-master's program.

All data were analyzed for patterns of development and personal/professional growth in addition to perspectives on social and technical aspects of an online course environment. Berge's (1995) four roles for facilitators of online courses (pedagogical, social, managerial, and technical) were utilized as a framework for making meaning of survey responses.

Students' Perspectives

As we created a mental map of our table of specifications linked to pre-existing literature when designing the survey, we found that questions fell into two categories: students' experiences with distance technology and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of online courses. Categories that emerged from the student data included themes such as level of ease with distance technology, social climate/community, the transfer of knowledge, and increased self-direction/responsibility for learning. No significant differences according to gender or race were identified in our analysis of the data and, thus, findings are reported in aggregate. We report findings here and discuss them in light of Berge's (1995) roles at the conclusion of the paper.

Experiences with Distance Technology. While the majority of respondents had participated in two to three online courses (44%) at the time of the survey, a significant number indicated they had participated in a greater number (25% had participated in four to five courses and 19% had taken six or more online courses). If given the choice for method of course delivery, respondents indicated that they preferred hybrid courses that combine distance technology with face-to-face instruction (56%), followed by a preference for traditional face-to-face instruction only (22.%). Participants dispelled existing notions that online courses take more of their time than face-to-face courses (33% disagreed that online courses take more time, and 28% felt neutral about the question). Most indicated a preference to participate in asynchronous online courses during the early evening (53%) or late evening (35%) rather than during the morning or afternoon due to conflicts with work, and specified that their involvement was executed from home (75%) rather than other locations such as the university campus or the work setting. Survey respondents indicated that they participated in online courses due to work obligations (31%), cost of travel to the university campus (25%), family obligations (21.9%), or because they preferred the online format (21.9%).

Students' responses were based on experiences with the following delivery methods and instructional techniques: Blackboard (91.9%),; individual projects (78.4%), case studies (73%), online lectures (67.6%), research oriented tasks (67.6%), group projects (62.2%), problem based learning (45.9%), video-audio streams (43.2%), practical application tasks (43.2%), podcasts (10.8%), and wiki/blog participation (8.1%). Results indicate that while Blackboard and online lectures were frequently experienced, podcasts, wikis, and blogs were not as typical.

When asked to think about the enjoyment of participating in an online course, respondents felt overwhelmingly positive in reflection (81% strongly agreed or agreed that their online experiences were enjoyable) and indicated future plans to participate in additional online courses because of this (75% strongly agreed or agreed) (see Table 1). Additionally, students felt that online courses required them to be more responsible for their own learning

(81% strongly agreed or agreed) and that online experiences mirrored the rigor of face-to-face courses (81% strongly agreed or agreed).

Table 1:

Enjoyment of and Future Plans for Online Courses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Enjoyed Online Learning	25%	55.6%	8.3%	5.6%	5.6%
Online Experiences as Rigorous as Face-to-Face	25%	55.6%	8.3%	5.6%	5.6%
Online Courses Required More Independence	25%	55.6%	16.7%	2.8%	0%
Plan to Enroll in Future Online Courses	36.1%	38.9%	16.7%	5.6%	2.8%

As students were asked to reflect on the amount of technology support they encountered from instructors and institutions, data revealed that not only did they think institutional support was sufficient (86% strongly agreed or agreed), but professor knowledge of the technology was sufficient (83% strongly agreed or agreed) and the actual technology itself was easily negotiated (86% strongly agreed or agreed) as well (see Table 2).

Table 2:

Technology Support

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Sufficient Technology Support	33.3%	52.8%	11.1%	2.8%	0%
Professors Knowledgeable About Technology	36.1%	47.2%	11.1%	5.6%	0%
Online Courses Were User-Friendly	34.3%	51.4%	8.6%	5.7%	0%

One of the most widely debated issues surrounding distance technology is whether or not student community can be experienced in an online setting without the benefit of face-to-face meetings. Overwhelmingly, students dispelled any perceptions that online courses made them feel disconnected (see Table 3). In fact, 80% indicated (strongly agreed or agreed) that they felt connected to their professors and experienced a high level of interaction, 78% indicated (strongly agreed or agreed) that they felt connected to their fellow students and experienced a high level of interaction, and 75% indicated that they felt like they had been a part of a learning community in their online course(s).

Table 3:

Personal Connections and Creating Community

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Felt Connected to Professors and High Level of Interaction	31.4%	48.6%	5.7%	5.7%	8.6%
Felt Connected to Students and High Level of Interaction	25%	52.8%	2.8%	8.3%	11.1%
Felt a Part of a Learning Community	25%	50%	8.3%	11.1%	5.6%

Another highly debated topic in regard to online courses and the use of distance technology is whether or not meaningful discussions can occur outside of a face-to-face environment. While survey participants dispelled preconceived notions about the lack of opportunities for online discussions to contribute to learning (75% strongly agreed or agreed that online discussions contribute to learning), responses were more mixed in this area (see Table 4). For instance, 51% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they felt more comfortable discussing controversial topics in an online environment compared to face-to-face, and 42% disagreed or strongly disagreed (33% were neutral) that they felt more engaged in an online discussion format in comparison to a face-to-face format. Furthermore, 46% of respondents (49% were neutral) indicated that they did not gain a greater understanding of classmates' philosophies of education from online discussions.

Table 4:

Meaningful Discussions

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Online Discussions Contribute to Learning	30.6%	44.4%	8.3%	11.1%	5.6%
More Comfortable with Controversial Topics in an Online Discussion	5.7%	14.3%	28.6%	37.1%	14.3%
More engaged in Discussion in an Online Format	5.6%	19.4%	33.3%	33.3%	8.3%
Greater Understanding of Classmates' Philosophies from Online Discussions	2.9%	2.9%	48.6%	34.3%	11.4%

Perceptions of Online Course Effectiveness. When creating the survey, we wanted not only to gain information about students' experiences with distance technology and online courses, but also to glean information about their appraisal of its effectiveness. The majority of respondents indicated that while their online experiences had been positive, they were only as good as, or as effective as, their face-to-face courses (56%). Only eight percent of participants felt that their online course experiences were outstanding and more effective that face-to-face courses. So, while students had tremendously positive reports about their experience, they were not at all convinced that online courses are advantageous to face-to-face courses when conceiving of comparisons between the two delivery methods.

Wanting to expand on student perceptions of online effectiveness, we asked them to consider where online courses allowed connections between leadership theory and practice, demonstration of knowledge and practice, preparation to serve as leaders, and helped them learn how to implement change. Results were vastly positive on three of the four questions.

Seventy percent of participants felt (strongly agreed or agreed) that their online courses allowed them to make connections between leadership theory and practice. Eighty-three percent felt that online courses allowed for their demonstration of both leadership knowledge and practice (another hotly debated issue surrounding leadership education in general), and 72% indicated the belief that their online courses prepared them to serve as educational leaders. Though over half of the students (58% strongly agreed or agreed) believed online courses prepared them to implement change in schools, more were ambiguous in their responses (31% were neutral), indicating that they felt less sure about whether online courses prepared them to lead change.

Table 5:

Perceptions of Online Course Effectiveness

	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Online Courses Allowed me to Make Connections between Theory and Practice	16.7%	52.8%	25%	5.6%	0%
Online Courses Allowed Demonstration of Leadership Knowledge and Practice	25%	58.3%	11.1%	5.6%	0%
Online Courses Prepared me to Serve as an Educational Leader	25%	47.2%	16.7%	8.3%	2.8%
Online Courses Prepared me to Implement Change in Schools	25%	33.3%	30.6%	11.1%	0%

The survey data revealed a high level of student satisfaction with their distance technology courses. Students reported positive experiences with their courses and the majority indicated plans to take additional online classes. Few students had concerns about technical aspects of their online courses or instructor ability to utilize technology in course delivery. While several factors contributed to student desire to enroll in online courses, convenience of online courses was most influential rather than preference for the online learning format. A large majority of the survey participants felt online courses were as rigorous as face-to-face courses and that the courses enabled them to make connections between theory and practice, but students were more ambiguous about their perceptions in the ability of online courses to aid them in implementing change in schools. Data revealed that students felt connected to both instructors and classmates, contributing to a sense of a "learning community" in the online environment.

Discussion and Implications

All data were analyzed for patterns of development and growth in addition to perspectives on social and technical aspects of an online course environment. Berge's (1995) four roles for facilitators of online courses: pedagogical; social; managerial; and technical, were utilized as a framework for organizing and making meaning of student survey data and to answer the research questions posed.

Students indicated that they enjoyed pedagogies that were embraced through distance technology (81%) and believed technology required them to be more independent as learners and become responsible for their own learning (81%). Furthermore, they dispelled notions that discussions could not contribute to learning and overwhelmingly indicated that connections between leadership theory and practice were made (70%) and that the pedagogies utilized by their instructors with distance technology allowed them to demonstrate knowledge of theory and practice (83%). However, while students found the use of distance technology to be effective, they did not find it more effective than face-to-face strategies, indicating that courses driven by pedagogies that embrace the combination of online and face-to-face techniques to be the most desirable and effective.

Another area that emerged from the data that needs to be addressed is the fact that a significant amount of respondents felt ambiguous about whether their online experiences prepared them to implement change. In the field of leadership education, the preparation for implementation of change in schools and districts is crucial for success. And, if the online environment promotes a level of intimacy between students and instructors and between students and their fellow students, as indicated by the findings in this study, then the online environment has the potential to serve as a powerful space within which to encourage future leaders to reflect on how they can impact change and have long lasting effects on learning communities. According to Roberston

and Webber (2000), online learning environments should rely on establishing relevance between public teaching and learning because the professional activities of school leaders are public. Furthermore, online learning should be founded on the merit of peer guidance, the value of personal knowledge and learning networks, and the strength of online learning communities.

Social factors have been particularly scrutinized in distance courses and programs. Students had much to say in regard to this. Students believed distance technology allowed them to connect with other students. In fact, students indicated that they felt connected to both professors and fellow students for the establishment of learning communities, dispelling traditional beliefs that the nature of student participation and discussion is greater and more honest than in face-to-face courses. For instance, 51% disagreed that they felt more comfortable discussing controversial topics in an online environment compared to face-to-face, and 42% disagreed that they felt more engaged in an online discussion format in comparison to a face-to-face format. Furthermore, 94% of respondents either disagreed with or felt neutral about whether they gained a greater understanding of classmates' philosophies of education from online discussions.

While social factors seem less questionable than some critics indicate, much room is left for work in facilitating students' understanding of one another. And, again, while responses were positive in regard to technology and the allowance for social interaction, students did not confirm that distance technology had an advantage over face-to-face instruction. One theme that might be further studied and developed is the association of emotion with leadership preparation. If students are encouraged to act as learning communities in online environments, they undertake a significant amount of risk as they work together to develop confidence and commitment to change. This inner leadership work, reflection, and encouragement to find a voice may serve to facilitate personal change and prove key to addressing resistance to change.

Previous studies on the use of distance technology in higher education have highlighted the need for seamless managerial relationships between instructors, students, computers, and all other technical support systems. Students largely believed institutional support to be sufficient (86%), professor technical expertise to be sufficient (85%), and the technology itself to be user-friendly (85%). These data suggest that as university infrastructures improve, so does student satisfaction of their experiences in online and hybrid courses.

Characteristics of distance technology and online learning make it different from the face-to-face environment. According to Milligan and Buckenmeyer (2008), these differences need to be taken into account when universities and instructors prepare students to enter this kind of learning environment. Developers of online courses and programs should advocate

for designing preassessment and support strategies that will help students make choices about what is appropriate for them. Preassessment strategies include things such as technical skills and study skills. Support strategies include advertisement of programs and courses as fully online or hybrid, explicit language about the need for technology skills for success, requiring potential students to interview with technical advisors and online instructors, requiring face-to-face orientations, and providing a technology support hotline for students that would be available at all times (Milligan & Buckenmeyer). Several of these ideas should be extended to instructors as well. Those faculty with little to no expertise in and understanding of technology are not best suited to instruction in an online delivery method.

In regard to gender equity when considering distance technology, women in higher education outnumber men (Peter & Horn, 2005), and in the U.S., more women than men take online courses (Kramarae, 2003). However, the misperception exists that women who are homebound because of children have time for online courses (von Prummer, 2000). However, this fails to take into account that women are still the primary caretakers due to societal expectations. Thus, gender expectations continue to require great efforts at balancing home and work regardless of the online environment.

Though the project reported here is limited in scope as the survey population was small and spanned across only two universities and three instructors and relied on self-reports, it provides useful information for universities, programs, and instructors engaged in the use of distance technology, most specifically for those involved with leadership education and the preparation of future school and district leaders. The findings dispel notions that meaningful pedagogy and learning cannot be accomplished through the use of distance technology. Our students, as consumers of distance technology, essentially viewed their experiences as positive. However, while online courses are seen as viable competitors to face-to-face courses, students stopped short of deeming them as more effective and their responses raised important themes worthy of further study including their preparedness through technology to implement change. This cannot be measured through survey and self-report data and requires study at greater depth.

According to Sherman and Beaty (2007), the use of distance technology has the potential to reform leadership preparation. Data reported here do, indeed, suggest that involvement of distance technology in the reform of leadership education is real. We do not know, however, whether the integration of technology into course delivery and programs is, through empirical evidence, impacting student achievement or whether online delivery is more effective than face-to-face delivery. While many programs and instructors of educational leadership have begun to consider effective uses of distance technology and to engage in the visioning process of what successful

distance technology looks like, they have not yet fully understood how it might transform leadership and leadership education nationally and globally (Sherman & Beaty).

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Appendix

Survey of Experiences with and Perceptions of Online Courses

A. Demographic Information

1. Gender
    - Male
    - Female
2. Ethnicity
    - American Indian or Alaska Native
    - Asian
    - Black or African American
    - Hispanic or Latino
    - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    - White
    - Multiracial
3. Age
    - 20-30
    - 31-40
    - 41-50
    - 51-60
    - 60+
4. Current Program
    - Master's
    - Educational Specialist
    - Post Master's Licensure
    - Doctoral Program
5. What is your current position?
    - Teacher
    - Assistant Principal
    - Principal
    - District Central Office Administrator (assistant superintendent, director)
    - District Superintendent
    - Other
6. At what campus level do you currently serve?
    - Elementary
    - Middle School
    - High School
    - District Central Office
    - K-12 campus
    - K-8 campus

7. When you have completed your overall program, what position do you ultimately hope to achieve?
   K-12 Administrator (principal, assistant principal)
   District Superintendent
   District Central Office Administrator (assistant superintendent, director)
   University Professor
   Other

B. Experiences With Distance Technology

1. How many online courses have you taken (including current courses)?
   2-3
   4-5
   6 or more
2. If given the choice of course delivery, I would choose
   Asynchronous distance technology (no synchronous/real-time meetings)
   Synchronous distance technology (some synchronous/real-time meetings via the web)
   Face-to-face
   Hybrid (both distance technology and face-to-face instruction)
3. I have enjoyed my online learning experiences.
   Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
4. My online learning experiences are as rigorous as face-to-face courses.
   Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
5. I had sufficient technical support from the university for my online courses.
   Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
7. My professors were knowledgeable regarding distance technology.
   Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
8. The online/distance technologies were user-friendly.
   Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
9. I felt connected to my professors/I had a high level of interaction.
   Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
10. I felt connected to my classmates/I had a high level of interaction.
   Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
11. I feel a part of a learning community in my online coursework.
   Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
12. I feel online discussions contribute to my learning.
   Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
13. I am more comfortable expressing my thoughts on controversial topics in an on-line discussion than I am in a face-to-face discussion.
   Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
14. I am more engaged in class discussions that occur in an online format.
   Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

15. I spend more time reading and discussing course content for an on-line class than for a face-to-face class.
    Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
16. I have a greater understanding of fellow classmates' educational philosophies from on-line discussions than from face-to-face discussions.
    Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
17. It is easy to coordinate collaborative efforts between classmates in an on-line format.
    Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
18. My online coursework included the following: (check all that apply)
    - Blackboard
    - Online lectures
    - Problem-based learning
    - Case studies
    - Group projects with other students
    - Individual projects
    - Podcasts
    - Video/audio streams
    - Wiki/blog participation
    - Research-oriented tasks
    - Practical application tasks
19. I participate in discussion and actual online activities:
    - Early morning
    - During the hours of 8am-4pm
    - Early evening
    - Late evening
20. I participate in discussion and actual online activities:
    - From my home
    - From my place of work
    - From the university campus
    - Other
21. I feel that my online course(s) required me to be more independent as a student and participate more in my own learning.
    Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
22. I participate in on-line courses because:
    - I prefer the format
    - Family obligations
    - Work obligations
    - Cost of travel

C. Perceptions of Online Course Effectiveness

1. In my opinion, the greatest strengths of online courses/learning are:
2. In my opinion, the greatest weaknesses of online courses/learning are:

3. Compared to face-to-face course experiences in educational leadership preparation, my online/distance course(s) was?
   Ineffective and disappointing
   Disappointing, but as effective as face-to-face
   Neutral
   Good, but only as effective as face-to-face
   Outstanding, more effective than face-to-face
4. Based on your experience, are certain school leadership courses more suitable to an online format of instruction?
   Yes
   No
   Don't Know
5. If you answered yes to the above question, what courses are more suitable?
6. My online/distance course(s) allowed me to make connections between leadership theory and practice.

1. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. My online/distance course(s) required me to demonstrate leadership knowledge and practice (i.e. I was required to transfer knowledge gained in a practical sense).

2. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I feel my online course(s) successfully prepared me to serve as an educational leader.

3. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. I feel my online course(s) prepared me to implement change in schools.

4. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree