

## **Special Issue**

# **Creating a New System for Principal Preparation: Reflections on Efforts to Transcend Tradition and Create New Cultures**

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*When selected as a pilot redesign site, we decided to both refocus the underlying assumptions guiding our program and to engage in processes allowing us to model best practices while creating a new program. This article summarizes key aspects of our redesign work and offers reflections on the processes used and challenges faced. Murphy's (2006) guiding principles for "fostering the reculturing of preparation programs" serves as our point of reference for conducting this programmatic critique, examining where we were, where we are now, and where we are headed.*

"Two major hypotheses for the change in the way leadership is conceptualized are that the context in which leadership takes place has changed and that new perspectives and ideas about leadership have been introduced from scholars and practitioners. These two forces are interdependent and are hard to separate—as our views change, we enact a different world and as we enact a different world, our views change." (Kezar & Carducci, 2007, p. 4)

We live in rapidly changing times that challenge us to keep up with exploding volumes of information, instantaneously evolving technology, and increasingly diverse community demographics. The context in which we live and work is likely to continue changing at rapidly increasing rates (Friedman, 2005). As our operational paradigms change, scholars studying leadership continue to present models of leadership such as an ecological theory of leadership (Allen, Stelzner & Wielkiewicz, 1998) and constructivist

leadership (Lambert, et al., 2002) that reflect these ongoing paradigmatic shifts. In the field of educational leadership preparation, our views have generally changed faster than our programs have been able to keep up. Educational leadership programs have primarily been changing on the margins (Murphy, 2006).

As university faculty members piloting a state initiated redesign effort for principal preparation programs, we have had the opportunity to engage in the collaborative creation of a new way

of preparing principals at our university. We purposefully created new foundational assumptions guiding our program, formalized partnerships with seven diverse school districts located in our region, and co-created what we believe is an innovative, purposefully designed program that draws upon best practices research, district needs, faculty strengths, and state and accrediting agency standards. We were determined to create an exemplary program, rather than merely adhere to the basic benchmarks in the state's new standards for instructional leaders (Alabama Standards for Instructional Leadership, n.d.).

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of our collaborative ventures, our curriculum and its delivery, and our expectations for self and students. Following the overview of our program, we reflect on key aspects of our redesign work using Murphy's (2006) six design principles for transforming educational leadership programs, considering where we were before the redesign, where we are now, and where we are headed. Our goals for this article are to offer a reflective critique of the processes we used, describe challenges faced, and offer examples of how this work continues to transform our relationships internally and externally.

### ***Background***

In 2005, the State of Alabama issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to the thirteen universities and colleges in the state offering principal preparation programs, encouraging submission of innovative, partnership-driven

redesigns. Our college submitted a proposal in collaboration with seven diverse school district partners. We were one of four universities selected to pilot redesign efforts for our principal preparation program. When selected as a pilot redesign site for the state, we made a conscious decision to align the foundational assumptions guiding our work with those underlying best practice. Our foundational assumptions included issues such as the importance of employing adult learning theories, grounding theory in authentic practice in all courses, embracing collaborative partnerships as a means of improving our work by utilizing our collective wisdom and experience, and focusing the combined energies of students, faculty, and K-12 partners on resolution of barriers that impede effective student achievement. We engaged processes that challenged us to model best practices while creating what we hoped would be a model program.

For two years we disbanded admissions while working to create a new organizational structure for leadership preparation and a supportive system for program planning and delivery. Our new program was collaboratively designed with our school-based partners, and they continue to be involved in all aspects of our program: curriculum planning, admissions decisions, teaching, field-based experiences and internships, student grading, and on-going assessment and program evaluation. For example, we now have innovative structures such as a week-long summer institute providing a forum for our students, district-based partners, and

our faculty to learn together. We designed the summer institute to enhance the practice of current school leaders and our faculty while simultaneously providing high quality learning opportunities for our students. Foundational to the design of the institute was our belief that as we learn together we are able to change our views about each others' roles and responsibilities, creating a new level of respect and appreciation and increasing our opportunities for productive collaboration.

*Design Principles: Reflecting on Our Past, Examining Our Present, and Looking to Our Future*

Murphy (2006) argued that without redesigning, rebuilding, and reculturing educational leadership programs, substantial improvement would remain elusive. He presented six design principles for guiding the efforts of transforming educational leadership preparation programs. An intended outcome for these design principles was to take us out of the realm of tinkering with our programs and into the realm of creating educational leadership programs anew. Although we did not purposefully redesign our program based on Murphy's six principles, his framework provides a sound structure for reflecting on where we began, the progress we have made, and the future we wish to create. Our aim is to engage the reader in a reflective process that may spark ideas of possibility for transforming educational leadership programs in their own universities.

Murphy's (2006) six guiding principles (foundation-based programs,

values-based admissions, zero-based curriculum development, practice-based learning experiences, community-grounded culture, and outcome-based accountability) for transforming leadership preparation programs are presented and described in the following sections. For each of these principles we present a brief overview followed by illustrative examples of our programming efforts in the past, present, and future.

*Foundation-based programs.* The principle, foundation-based programs, calls for educational leadership programs to articulate clearly "what the program stands for" (Murphy 2006, p. 2). Program faculty must be clear about their mission and vision and design programs so that they align with what they espouse. As faculty, we strive to be aware of and close the gaps between what we say and do in our program.

*Where we were.* As we began the process of program redesign we were surprised by the arbitrary nature of our former coursework and the sequencing of those course offerings. Our program was well regarded by students, based on their programmatic reviews, and by administrators throughout the state who were pleased to hire our graduates. In our former program, we provided students with a listing of courses, which they could take in any order that fit their own and the university's schedule. Courses were based on state standards, but our underlying beliefs and mission were not clearly articulated and did not necessarily drive a cohesive, purposeful program of study. Individualism over shared vision permeated the design and offering of the coursework.

In addition to formal master's degrees in educational administration, our state allowed (and we offered) another avenue for administrative certification—the add-on certificate. The add-on certificate allowed students to take 5 required courses and participate in 6 semester hours of an internship experience, the equivalence of 300 clock hours engaged in clinical experiences. The internship experience often involved shadowing school leaders and writing reflections on what they observed. At times students were allowed to participate alongside their cooperating administrator, but there were few, if any, opportunities to lead meaningful, authentic, learning-centered projects in either the program curriculum or the internship experience.

*Where we are.* We had the unique privilege of taking two years to focus on the creation of a new program and delivery plan for our principal preparation program, allowing us time to thoroughly consider best practices research, conduct research with our school partners about their needs and perceptions of the skills needed to be a successful school leader in their district, and to more fully explore our faculty's strengths and areas of interest. After receiving notification that we were selected as a pilot redesign program, we formed an advisory council comprised of administrators in our seven partner school districts, a representative from the state department of education, business and community leaders, current graduate students, and college faculty and administrators. At two initial meetings, a consultant guided advisory council members through

deliberative discussions regarding our core beliefs on education and educational leaders, how to develop ground rules for working together, and through an exploration of current literature and best practices related to preparation of instructional leaders. We felt it was important to involve a consultant initially in order to symbolically illustrate the level playing field for the advisory council's work. Through the use of work teams, we studied the state standards, agreed that we viewed them as minimum competencies, and resolved to incorporate the standards without being limited by them as we designed our curriculum and program processes. We developed a set of common beliefs and assumptions to guide our work as well as a mission and vision for the program. One important early decision was that students would operate as a cohort throughout the program, allowing careful sequencing of coursework and creating a network of leaders in training.

We had four working committees within the advisory council addressing specific issues. These committees addressed issues related to enhancing and sustaining our partnerships, creating a new admissions process, designing curriculum, and developing assessment/evaluation strategies. Ideas for consideration and recommendations were brought back to the advisory council for approval. Purposeful efforts were made to ensure alignment between what we claimed was important and the structures and processes we created for our new program.

*Where we need to go.* It remains important for us to continually revisit

our common beliefs and assumptions to assure program implementation is congruent with our espoused purposes and values. As a relatively new team of faculty members, we began work to establish a set of norms for collaboration, decision making, and addressing conflict. This is difficult work that requires difficult conversations and high levels of trust. There are times that we make progress in these areas, and other times when we regress. Finding time to address our differing interpretations and adjusting the norms, as necessary has been problematic.

*Values-based admissions.* The principle, values-based admissions, highlights the dramatic gap that can exist between typical educational leadership admissions criteria like grade point averages (GPAs) or test scores and the core values for the graduate program. Murphy (2006) called for educational leadership programs to align their admissions processes, expectations, and decisions with “what the program stands for.” Given the limited predictive validity of many of the typical quantitative measures for admission to graduate educational leadership programs (Young, 2008), there is an urgency to ensure we are admitting the students who will be most likely to engage with their educational leadership programs on a deeper, values-based level, and thus, be more likely to translate their learning into practice. Strong principal candidates support the transformative work needed in K-12 educational settings (Southern Regional Education Board [SREB], 2006, 2007).

*Where we were.* Our educational leadership candidates, along with all other students in our department, submitted standard applications consisting of Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, grade point averages (GPAs) from undergraduate and graduate coursework, a written statement explaining why they wanted to enroll in our graduate program, and three letters of recommendation. We did not consider applications until candidates paid their registration fee to the graduate school and submitted a medical release form indicating that they were healthy enough to pursue a degree. A departmental admissions committee met each month to review master’s level admissions applications for educational leadership and other departmental programs, including higher education administration, adult education, educational psychology, and library media/technology. A faculty representative from each program served on this committee. Admissions decisions were largely based on a candidate’s ranking using a formulaic model and whether or not a faculty member was willing to serve as an advisor for the student. Faculty members paid little attention to whether or not the students’ values and aspirations were aligned with the programs’ stated vision and values.

*Where we are.* The admissions committee members, as part of the work with the advisory council, collaboratively created admissions standards and processes that were purposefully aligned with our program’s stated mission and vision. As part of the admissions committee work,

current administrators in our partner districts were surveyed about the qualities, skills, and dispositions needed to be a successful school leader. These data, along with a review of research-based literature on best practices for principal preparation program admissions, informed the development of our current approach to candidate recruitment and selection. We purposefully recruit candidates within our partner districts while also considering students from other districts.

Potential candidates develop a portfolio highlighting evidence of their leadership competencies and detailing what they believe are their potential strengths that would support their growth as strong instructional leaders. As part of their portfolio, they include a written philosophy statement, letters of recommendation, a copy of their current teaching certification and employment history, and other relevant artifacts. Candidates participate in an on-site writing exercise and interview and engage in a small group problem solving project. The portfolio, writing sample, interview, and problem solving project are all assessed by a team of district partners and college faculty using a rubric. After each member of this inclusive admissions committee scores all of the candidates, we discuss our ratings and identify the top candidates for our cohort.

*Where we need to go.* As we continue to collect data about our program, we assess progress and purpose at regular intervals, especially in terms of whether or not we are developing the kinds of leaders we

originally set out to educate. We consider the success of our current students and graduates as an indicator of whether or not we may need to reconsider the criteria and processes we use to select our students. As only one cohort has graduated from the new program and few have moved into administrative positions, we have limited information about their performance as administrators. However, we are establishing annual evaluation strategies for collecting and learning from this information as it comes available. In future admissions decisions, program alumni may also be invited to participate in the review process and selection of prospective candidates.

*Zero-based curriculum development.* The principle, zero-based curriculum development, calls for a radical approach to developing the educational leadership curriculum, essentially suggesting that a faculty must start building it from scratch. Curriculum is the enactment of the program's values; it is the core of what the students are encouraged to learn (Murphy, 2006). We believe it is important to ensure there are no gaps between knowing and doing when it comes to the program's curriculum.

*Where we were.* In our former program, most of the class content was based on state mandated standards for school leaders. Students followed a standard plan of study and registered for classes that fit their schedules. There was no strategic sequencing of classes, cohort format, or culminating experience other than the required 300 clock hour internship. Courses covered

essential aspects of the principalship, including supervision and personnel management, curriculum leadership, school law, finance, organizational management, and leadership theories from fairly traditional perspectives.

*Where we are.* As we began the preparation program redesign process, we quickly determined that we wanted to have a fresh start and decided to create a new curriculum and delivery system (see Reames, this issue). The curriculum committee members, along with additional faculty members, collaboratively developed the curriculum themes using a qualitative research-based approach, which included soliciting input from partners, identifying best practices from around the country, and reviewing multiple sets of standards. All of these data were entered into a database and analyzed using a qualitative software package, MaxQDA. After identifying themes and content strands, these were illustrated using Visio software to better highlight the various curricular elements. Once themes were identified and highlighted, collaborative teams wrote all syllabi, being sure to include state standards as a minimum base and incorporating the research-based input we collected. Care was taken to create a sequentially appropriate, comprehensive series of courses integrating curricular themes throughout the program while providing meaningful, authentic, and field-based learning activities for each class.

The first semester of classes, students take courses focused on the principalship and learn how to create and sustain learning communities. In

their second semester they learn how to design and conduct action research. They continue working on their action research project throughout their next two semesters. The focus of the action research projects is on improving student learning opportunities in our partner school districts. Research findings are presented at a capstone event during the last semester.

*Where we need to go.* We continue to assess and refine the curriculum based on alumni, partner, and faculty feedback. Class projects and outcomes are aligned with our program mission, vision, and beliefs, and adjustments are made to the curriculum as appropriate. For example, after the first cohort completed the program, we found that it was more beneficial to teach the action research class during the second semester (fall) rather than during a shorter first semester in the summer. It was clear to us, based on student and partner feedback, that students needed a full semester to fully prepare their research proposals and begin engaging in their action research projects.

At least once each year we review our program, paying close attention to the effectiveness of field-based and internship experiences as perceived by students, district partners, and our faculty. To keep up with the rapidly changing times and understandings of best leadership practices, our faculty engage in on-going learning and offer our collective expertise when revising and improving our curriculum and coursework.

*Practice-based learning experience.* The principle, practice-based

learning experiences, points to the critical role of experience in developing effective school leaders. Where once a bridge metaphor seemed appropriate for illustrating the connection between theory and practice, Murphy (2006) suggests we consider a strand of DNA as a more appropriate metaphor. In living systems, a strand of DNA contains the information that codes for an individual organism. However, without the processes that allow the DNA code to become an organism, the strand alone would simply be a conglomeration of molecules. In leadership preparation, the theory related to leading schools is of little value if it is separate from practice.

*Where we were.* Our former program generally offered a curriculum based on integrated theory and practice and frequently used simulations and case studies. The depth of theory-practice integration was dependent on who was teaching the class and the instructor's prior experience in schools. Generally, there were few opportunities for actual field-based learning to occur except for the experiences occurring as part of the 300-hour internship, and those relied primarily on observation.

*Where we are.* We now have a strong and purposeful focus on integrated theory and practice in every course offered, with frequent opportunities to apply learning in authentic settings. Each of the nine courses in the program includes contributions towards a think tank activity, which is a group research and problem solving activity addressing a partner district's authentic need. The think tank sessions are developed in

collaboration with school district administrators. Internship experiences, offered every semester, are purposefully aligned with that semester's course content (see Havard & Morgan, this issue). Our field-based coaches, district administrators who work closely with our students as they engage in internship experiences, receive training to ensure high-quality learning experiences. Students participate in either five or ten consecutive days of internship experiences every semester. At least one of these experiences must be in a district other than the student's own district. Each semester's internship experience offers opportunities to observe, participate, and lead (SREB, 2007).

*Where we need to go.* As our program progresses, there continues to be a need for increased emphasis on ensuring think tank activities are conducted in all partner school districts so that the needs of all districts are addressed and our students are exposed to the range of issues represented within our diverse group of partner districts. We work hard to ensure that there is consistent and purposeful integration of internship experiences and course content every semester, along with adequate opportunities for interns to not only observe but to also learn through active participation and authentic leadership. Budget issues have made it more difficult to provide incentives to field-based coaches, but these types of challenges provide further reason for us to carefully review partner and alumni feedback on the effectiveness of our field-based learning experiences, engage in collaborative decision making about



potential program changes, and adjust offerings as warranted.

*Community-grounded culture.* In higher education, “individualism, autonomy, and separation reign supreme” (Murphy, 2006, p. 3). The principle, community-grounded culture, addresses the need for the faculty members of educational leadership programs to break down the walls among them and take on the work of actually becoming a healthy and sustainable learning community. As Murphy pointed out, the school improvement literature has repeatedly demonstrated that “the culture of isolation is toxic to the critical work of organizational improvement” (p. 3). If the fundamental need is for program improvement, we will not realize our aspirations if we continue to work in isolation from each other.

*Where we were.* Throughout the duration of our previous program, we regularly held team meetings focused on functional aspects of the program. We considered issues such as who would teach what course on which day of the week. There was a culture based on individualism, autonomy, and a prevalence of isolation. There were rarely discussions about the content being taught or how learning was assessed in one another’s classrooms. Faculty members were often reluctant to have peers review their teaching or even their course syllabi. When there were tasks to be performed pertaining to the program, it was common for select individuals to do them for the other team members rather than for the team to collectively address or even substantially discuss how to respond to

tasks such as completing annual assessments of the program. This individualistic culture and lack of collaboration was partially due to the configuration of the program faculty, which included both K-12 leadership and higher education administration faculty. Each of these groups had different philosophies about what were important purposes and considerations when working with our students and local school systems. Further, we had experienced high turnover on our faculty and there had not been frequent efforts to build trust or establish team-based processes for working together.

*Where we are.* As part of the redesign work, we decided it was essential to separate the K-12 leadership and higher education administration programs and their faculty in order to create a more cohesive focus for preparing school principals. Once the programs separated, we began the work of hiring five additional K-12 leadership faculty members, including one clinical/associate professor who is responsible for educating field-based coaches, supervising internship experiences, and developing think tank activities, among other duties. We now make intentional efforts to create a community of professional practice by including discussions about group operating norms. Last year we held supportive weekly research team meetings for those interested in receiving feedback and encouragement on their research projects, but due to the loss of two faculty members and a hiring freeze necessitating that remaining faculty members take on additional responsibilities, the research

teams have been temporarily disbanded.

We do still have regular team meetings and other on-going sessions regarding programming issues. We try to regularly discuss what we are doing in each of our classes and review student products from various classes. In addition to our internal community-grounded culture, we also continue to develop the relationships we have with our school-based partners (see Brooks, Havard, & Patrick, this issue). For example, the Summer Institute provides an opportunity for faculty and school-based partners to learn together and interact in non-formal ways in break out discussion sessions. Each semester our advisory council reconvenes to review data collected on the program, discuss perceptions of program effectiveness, and identify areas for improvement. We are careful to emphasize the collaborative nature of our relationships and the expertise and valuable contributions everyone brings to the table at these meetings and throughout the year. We are working hard to break down the walls of isolation while continuing to learn how to work as an effective team.

*Where we need to go.* We are continuing efforts to further develop our community of professional practice and to more regularly involve our district partners and program alumni. As part of this process we are trying to identify additional opportunities to utilize feedback loops (Senge et. al, 2001) and regularly engage in non-formal interactions and social functions as faculty and with our district-based partners and other advisory council

members. Our level of collaborative work still has room for improvement. In both higher education and K-12 settings, there is little time for collaboration built into the current institutional structures and expectations, but we continue our efforts to create these spaces and places for collaboration and deliberative dialogue. As we move forward, we expect to experience greater collaboration, identify new solutions to the time-based structural challenges, and thus, create new opportunities for even more effective collaboration. A very real risk is that if we do not learn how to work differently and do not find new approaches for structuring our time, we will revert back to relatively low levels of collaborative work.

*Outcome-based accountability.* The principle, outcome-based accountability, suggests we need to invest more energy in assessing the success of our programs rather than only examining the inner workings of the programs themselves (Murphy, 2006). Focusing efforts on meaningful outcomes-based accountability provides a critical opportunity to assess the congruence between what we claim as values and how we operate. We can consider questions such as, Are we actually facilitating the development of effective school leaders? Are we sending off the leaders that we say our schools most need? How do we know? It is imperative that we invest our energy in answering these questions while holding ourselves accountable to answers and what they reveal.

*Where we were.* Accountability measures were generally addressed in response to college, university, state,

and accreditation agency criteria. There was little use of data for formative program improvement. Partially, at least, this was due to the combined program area structure used in the department. Without a specific program emphasis, there were few opportunities available for careful contemplation of value-practice alignment and whether or not our teaching was meeting the needs of area school districts.

*Where we are.* Accountability issues were jointly defined and addressed by advisory council members in the beginning phases of our redesign process. External criteria, such as standards, were also drivers of change in terms of an increased focus on accountability. We view accountability in broad terms and include the need to be responsible for various aspects of our program and how we interact with and treat each other. Data are regularly collected and used to modify our program as needed to ensure alignment with our core beliefs, mission, and intended outcomes. Our program evaluation is beginning to reflect the complexity of our leadership preparation program purposes, processes, and outcomes/expectations (see Ross, this issue). The public nature of our students' action research presentations encourage greater outcomes-based accountability as each student must demonstrate how they influenced student learning or learning conditions in a positive way in order to successfully fulfill program requirements. Additionally, our students must pass the Praxis II examination, a state requirement for certification, in order to graduate from

our program.

*Where we need to go.* We intend to make our program outcomes more transparent and regularly consider ways to engage in public reporting of aggregated alumni successes as well as areas for programmatic growth. We consider whether our alumni are hired, although the difficult economic climate has proved challenging for the present use of hiring as an indicator of program success. We are receiving successful reviews by senior school-based leaders and we look at the increase of student learning opportunities and perceptions about improvement in school-based organizational cultures as additional indicators of program effectiveness.

### *Conclusions and Lessons Learned*

As we reflect on where we are now as a redesigned program, we can clearly see evidence of a paradigm shift in progress. Although our program has fostered new ways of interacting with our K-12 partners and within our faculty team, our program is still situated within a traditional university system. At times our creative efforts conflict with traditional view points and expectations. It is important for us to continually reflect on expectations, structures, and processes in use and their potential impact on faculty, student, and K-12 partner needs. This is especially important for pre-tenured faculty who might be penalized by university reward systems even though they have operated in ways that are consistent with our program's values and goals (LaMagdeleine, Maxcy, Pounder, & Reed, 2009).

Consideration of organizational

development theories may offer further insight into the types of progress being made regarding the ways our educational leadership program has facilitated dramatic changes in our operational approaches. Taylor's scientific management approach clearly illustrated the application of mechanical design principles to the work of human systems. Using his model, leaders or designers scientifically analyzed work to be done and then directed workers to perform their duties in just the right way, the scientifically efficient way (Taylor, 2001). Distinct boundaries existed between the designers and leaders of organizations and the people who did the work of the organization. In some ways, our previous program was designed and implemented using a similar approach. Faculty designed courses based on state mandated standards. Faculty and college administrators determined what courses would be taught and when they would be offered. School system partners had little if any input into the content or delivery of programming. Students could either take the program as it was or go elsewhere.

Scientific discoveries in physics, chemistry, and biology have provided insights into how we might think differently about organizations, our place within organizations, and our approach to change (Wheatley, 1999). We believe these "new views" have influenced our redesign work in the educational leadership program.

We are shifting away from the view that positional leaders at the state and university level should design the program for the students towards a

more whole system approach of co-creating the program with our partners and students. We left behind many mechanical based assumptions as we move toward more organic assumptions about leadership, learning, and program development. We, as professors in the program, genuinely seek to co-create the cohort experience with our students, to openly reflect on the successes in course content, schedule, and processes, as well as on the deeper learning opportunities provided by the cohort experience (see Cabezas, Killingsworth, Kensler, and Brooks, this issue) However, the shift is not complete and continues to be a work in progress. During times of economic distress and loss of faculty, the tendency to regress into former ways of operating may be strong, although we try to redirect our energies when we see that happening.

As we reflect on our progress, we note that the current state of our program is beginning to reflect the principles that we espouse, including the need for flexibility and on-going, multi-directional communication. Theoretically, this shift toward congruence between espoused beliefs and practice should also encourage an increased capacity to evolve and change more readily. As Capra (2002) posited,

To resolve the problem of organizational change, we first need to understand the natural change processes that are embedded in all living systems. Once we have that understanding, we can begin to design the processes of organizational change

accordingly and to create human organizations that mirror life's adaptability, diversity, and creativity. (p. 100)

Our redesigned program is founded on partnerships with the state, area school districts, and other stakeholders. The advisory council is comprised of representatives from all the major stakeholder groups and they have guiding influence in our program. We have tightened and expanded the networks of involvement for developing, evaluating, and modifying our program. Meaningful information is more readily and consistently shared among all stakeholders through regularly scheduled meetings and communications. Cycles of continuous feedback exist now that were not in place with our earlier program structures. Our formative evaluation program demands far greater involvement in data collection and analysis than ever before. Our new program includes more diverse learning and assessment opportunities for students as well as our continuing effort to develop a diverse cadre of leaders. Our students leave our program better prepared for leading schools and honoring the range of diversity and learner needs. As we move forward, we will need to continue attending to the emerging and dynamic balance among the differing elements of our program. If we do not, it will be too easy to slip back into prior ways of preparing school principals.

### *Implications and Educational Significance*

We found Murphy's (2006) six principles to be a useful way to reflect on the continuum of change we are experiencing as part of our principal preparation redesign work. Careful reflection on where we were, where we are now, and where we need to go offered important insights and reminders of the value we must continue to place on our collaborative efforts to create a new culture for ourselves and our students. We are encouraged by the newly earned respect we have gained from policy makers, school leaders, and students. This reflective process has strengthened our appreciation of each other's talents and the importance of purposefully engaging in our new ways of doing leadership preparation.

Many states are engaging in systematic overhauls of principal preparation programs (SREB, 2007), and these reforms are impacting numerous university-based programs as faculty and stakeholders work to design meaningful and relevant programs while responding to the need for a new type of school leader focused on learners, collaborative leadership, democratic practices, and action (Kochan & Reed, 2005). Throughout our redesign and implementation work we have learned a great deal about how to create a new system for preparing educational leaders. We hope this article will be useful to others considering, currently engaged in, or about to embark on their own efforts to redesign pre-service leadership programs.

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