

Emerging Trends in International Leadership Education

By Bruce G. Barnett

One of the most influential experiences in my development as an educational leadership professor has been the opportunity to work with educators outside the United States. During the past decade, I have collaborated with Australian Principal Centre (APC) staff in Melbourne, Australia as well as with faculty at several university-based graduate programs in the United Kingdom and Canada. Besides lecturing and delivering workshops on reflective practice, strategic leadership, and team development, I have been part of the team that created the SAGE Mentoring Program, an APC-sponsored initiative for mentors who support new Australian principals entering the field (Barnett & O'Mahony, 2005).

These international experiences have caused me to observe distinct and subtle differences between leadership education in the United States and other countries. The most striking difference is the tendency for American universities to provide preservice preparation (e.g., master's degrees, licensure and certification programs), whereas professional associations and school districts are responsible for the ongoing professional development and support for educational leaders. This demarcation is not as evident in other countries because formal university pre-accreditation (preservice) coursework often is not required to become school administrators. Other trends in international leadership education I have observed include: (a) funding programs centrally, (b) implementing programs for aspiring leaders, (c) supporting novice leaders, (d) encouraging international experiences, and (e) delivering programs for school leadership teams.

Government-funded programs. Due to education being a state responsibility and the strong influence of local control of education, a decentralized education leadership system has developed in the United States. In other countries, however, government-funded leadership education programs tend to prevail. In England, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) has been funded by the British government. The NCSL has created a national model for supporting educational leaders, offering a menu of programs for emergent leaders (teacher leaders), novice leaders (first-time headteachers), and experienced leaders (National College for School Leadership, 2005). Similarly, the Department of Education and Training (DE&T) in Victoria, Australia has established seven flagship strategies supporting the Blueprint for Government Schools (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2005). Three of these strategies focus on building the skills of the education workforce by: (a) building leadership

capacity, (b) creating and supporting a performance and development culture, and (c) supporting teacher professional development. When seeking resources from DE&T to implement leadership education programs, providers must demonstrate how their programs address one or more of the flagship strategies.

Development of aspirant leaders. Across the world, educators are hesitant to become headteachers and principals (Fenwick, 2000; Lacey, 2002). Therefore, more attention is being directed at providing developmental pre-accreditation experiences for aspiring school leaders. For example, the British government established the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), requiring educators to complete an accredited leadership development program prior to applying for positions as deputies and headteachers in schools. Accredited programs are being offered by the 10 regional NCSL centers with input from universities and Local Education Authorities (LEA) across the country. In addition, the new Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP) supports the implementation of programs for emergent leaders using coaching and mentoring. This federally-funded initiative is complemented by regional state programs, such as Journey into Leadership, a professional development program to develop future leaders that combines workshops with on site-experiences, including shadowing, school visitations, and mentoring by principals and assistant principals. Finally, the University of Victoria (British Columbia, Canada) is piloting the Professional Specialization Certificate in School Management and Leadership (CSML) Program. This year-long certification program combines graduate-level courses and workplace learning supported by mentor principals (University of Victoria, 2005). The first student cohort will complete the program in May 2006; three new cohorts will be launched in July 2006.

Support for novice leaders. A recent international study indicates a growing number of principal induction programs are being implemented to support novice administrators as they enter the profession (Weindling, 2004). These programs focus on instructional leadership, school improvement, change management, and skill development, encouraging professional reflection through self-assessment and on-the-job support with the assistance of a mentor or coach (Weindling, 2004). Recent examples of government-sponsored induction programs include the:

- SAGE Mentoring Program - Australian Principals Centre (Victoria, Australia)
- Headteacher Induction Programme, New Visions Programme, and Leadership Pathways Programme - National College for School Leadership (England)

- Professional Headship Induction Programme - National Headship Development Programme (Wales)
- First-Time Principals Programme - University of Auckland (New Zealand)

International experiences. To expand the perspectives of school leaders, some international leadership education programs mandate or encourage participants to visit educational systems in other countries. For example, faculty from the International Institute for Education Leadership at Lincoln University (England) have arranged for their graduate students to attend classes at the University of San Diego and the University of Northern Colorado as well as visit schools near these universities. Australian school leaders can receive High Performing Principals' Grants, which fund travel to visit school systems around the world. As a result of my visits to Australia, personal arrangements have been made for groups of Australian school administrators to visit American universities and school systems. Recently, a group of 14 school administrators was hosted by faculty at the University of Texas at San Antonio. They shared information about Australian education in graduate classes and toured local gathering information about their interests, including how to improve teacher performance, develop professional learning communities, and prepare and support new principals.

School leadership team development. The norm in the United States is for individual teachers and administrators to attend professional development sessions. In Australia and England, professional development for teams appears to be gaining momentum. Because many Australian and British schools rely on school leadership teams (comprised of the principal, assistant principal, and leading teachers) to manage the school, often team members collectively participate in professional development activities. For instance, I have delivered workshops for Australian school leadership teams aimed at improving school culture and developing productive work teams. In England, the NCSL has recently introduced the "Working Together for Success" Programme for senior leadership team members from primary, middle, secondary, and special schools.

Based on my interactions with educators in other countries, I sense a growing interest in preparing future school leaders and providing meaningful support as they enter the profession. Therefore, whenever the chance arises, I believe American educators should visit other educational systems to work with colleagues as they conceptualize, deliver, and evaluate leadership education programs. Because the *Journal of Research on Leadership Education* is

committed to publishing ideas from authors around the world, I am confident this new journal not only will expand our understanding of cultural factors influencing leadership education, but also encourage policymakers, university faculty, and staff developers to consider other ways to prepare, support, and develop school leaders.

References

- Barnett, B., & O'Mahony, G. (2005). Sage mentors. *Teacher*, 164, 46-51.
- Fenwick, L. T. (2000). *The principal shortage: Who will lead?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Principals' Center.
- Lacey, K. (2002). Avoiding the principalship. *Principal Matters*, 53, 25-29.
- National College for School Leadership (2005). *Programmes within the LDF*. Retrieved February 5, 2006 from: <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/programmes/programmes-ldf.cfm>
- University of Victoria (2005). *Certificate in school management and leadership*. Retrieved February 10, 2006 from: <http://www.educ.uvic.ca/csml/index.html>
- Victorian Department of Education and Training (2005). Annual report 2004-05. Retrieved February 2, 2006 from:
<http://www.det.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/govrel/reports/05DET-rpt.pdf>
- Weindling, D. (2004). *Innovation in headteacher induction*. Retrieved February 4, 2006 from: <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media/F7B/95/randd-innov-case-studies.pdf>

Bruce G. Barnett is a Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio, USA.