Southern Journal of Educational Administration

The Journal of the Southern Regional Council on Education Administration

Volume 4, Issue 1&2
2014/2015
# Table of Contents

Leadership and Research in Practice:
Fall/Winter Issue for 2014 and 2015 .................................................................................. Paul Watkins 1

Working for Student Success: A Case Study of
School Counseling and Principal Relationships .......... Mary H. Jackson, & Arline Edwards-Joseph 3

Webinar as a Course Delivery Method
at the Graduate Student Level ......................................................Lisa A. Bertrand, & Floyd Lockhart 23

Scaling of Educational Leadership Candidates
Commitment to the ISLLC Standards: Dorothy C. Rea, Thomas C. Valesky
The ELCBS Scale............................................................................... Cecil F. Carter, & Judy Wilkerson 37
The Fall/Winter _Southern Journal of Education Administration_ explores a variety of research. Two of the three articles focus on higher education and one on the value of collaboration in a small southern rural high school. All three in their own way point to higher standards in the classroom.

Dr. Mallory and her colleagues use a case study analysis to engage readers in a story of collaboration and trust. They look at building relations between administrators and counselors. The challenges their relationship bridged from their leadership styles to the imbalance of power.

Dorthy Rea and her research team take on the difficult issues of assessing candidate dispositions. Accreditation organizations require that preparation programs continually monitor candidates and their affective domains for school leadership. Rea’s study validates a leadership dispositional tool aligned with the Education Leadership Policy Standards.

Dr. Stader, Dr. Bertrand and Mr. Lohart question the strength of webinar as a viable delivery tool for graduate courses. The value they find with webinars is the virtual replication of face-to-face interactions between students and instructor. These researchers gathered comprehensive data based on student learning outcomes. From this data, they found that webinar delivery had little negative impact on student learning and seemed to provide a valid alternative to in-classroom instruction.
Working for Student Success: A Case Study of School Counselor and Principal Relationships

Lisa L. Schulz
University of North Texas

Barbara J. Mallory
High Point University

Mary H. Jackson
Georgia Southern University

Arline Edwards-Joseph
Georgia Southern University

Abstract
This study utilized a single case study approach to explore the experience of relationship building among a high school principal, a professional school counselor, and a graduation coach in a rural school focused on improvement. The focus was on understanding how principals and counselors build relationships and define roles, especially roles of leadership in school settings. Data were collected through interviewing, observation, and archival search. Three key themes emerged as descriptors of the relationships between the three participants: relationship building (subthemes include interdependence and role definition), communication styles (subthemes include principal leadership style and collaboration), and challenges (subthemes include power imbalance and systemic barriers). Themes were analyzed both among and between participants and are presented within the context of current school counseling and educational leadership literature.

Never before has the adage “as fast as we can, but as slow as we must” been so relevant to the school improvement process in 21st century schools. The urgent need for results-oriented schools collides with the wisdom of having patience enough to build relationships that engage others in the process to improve student academic performance. The trifecta of improving student achievement, doing it now, and collaborating along the way, impacts not only the work of educators, but also their relationships. The principal cannot impact school success alone, and the school counselor-as-leader has great potential for partnership in leadership of the school. The purpose of this paper is to explore principal-counselor relationships in this results-oriented environment.

The role of school counselors, not traditionally associated with academic achievement of students (Wingfield, Reese, & West-Olatunji, 2010), has been reframed to have a more active role in student achievement gains (Dahir & Stone, 2003; Fitch & Marshall, 2004). With a national focus on school accountability and academic gains of students, counselors recently have been described by Kwok-Sze Wong, Executive Director of the American School Counselor Association, as educators whose primary focus is academic achievement. Principals, too, have been under scrutiny to produce results and influence student
achievement, shifting the principal’s role to that of major instructional leader (Hallinger, 2005).

The principal’s focus on achievement gains of students does not mean he/she is expected to lead alone. Leading a school is complex, and, in a 21st century conceptualization of the principalship, leadership involves distributing leadership and building capacity for leadership to be distributed (Spillane, 2006). In a recent study of the rural and small school principal candidates, rural superintendents placed great value on the ability of principals to fit into the political and social context of the local community (Cruzeiro & Boone, 2009), desiring principals who were visible as “the leader” of the school. However, visibility is also critical for teacher leaders, counselors, and others who lead learning improvement. It would be natural for counselors to be recognized as leaders to whom leadership is distributed, as they are trained to be visible advocates for emotional, social and academic growth of children. The purpose of this paper is to report findings concerning the experiences of relationship building and leadership among a high school principal, a professional school counselor, and a graduation coach in a rural school setting.

Background of the Study

In an era where student outcomes are critical in defining an effective school, all of the personnel in the school must contribute to improved student achievement, even those who do not directly implement the instructional program. Principals and counselors hold allocated positions in most schools in the United States, and the professionals who fill these positions are expected to impact student achievement through their roles and responsibilities outside of the classroom. According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), principals carry the ultimate responsibility for implementing reform and renewal that leads to high academic achievement for all students within the school. School counselors, on the other hand, provide leadership and skills to support teaching and learning by helping teachers, students, and families of students navigate high expectations, academic challenges, and systemic barriers presented in 21st century schools. Through a major study conducted by the College Board, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) (2009), the charge was issued to principals and counselors to examine their relationship in order to influence positive student success in schools.

Leadership in Schools

Although there is no empirical consensus about effectiveness of leadership approaches in context of school counseling, there is consensus that principals are essential to creating effective schools (Bennikmeyer & Spillane, 2008; Graczewski, Knudson, & Holtzman, 2009; Hallinger, 2003; 2005; Kurtz, 2009). A principal may be by definition a positional leader, and, by dispositions and behaviors, a transformational leader, and by practice, a distributive leader. In 21st century schools, there is much promise for the school counselor to be one of the key partners in leadership of schools.
The counselor-as-leader concept has gained much traction in the beginning of the 21st century, as the school counseling profession has also been involved in a paradigm shift from subsidiary service provider to full partner in the educational process (Wingfield et al., 2010). The profession had been criticized for lacking clarity regarding the role and function of the school counselor (Bardhoshi & Duncan, 2009), and this ambiguity had been the fodder for many stakeholders to wonder and speculate what it is that school counselors do (Schwallie-Giddis, ter Maat, & Pak, 2003; Wingfield et al., 2010). School counselors had been considered professionals who were in subordinate roles without educational expertise (Amatea & Clark, 2005), and it was not uncommon for school counselors to act in the capacity defined by administrators. Moreover, some schools described the school counselor’s major role as being a member of the administrative team who was expected to fulfill clerical types of duties (Martin & Robinson, 2011).

However, the ushering in of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model legitimized a leadership role of the counselor, as ASCA School Counselor Competencies identify explicitly the counselor’s knowledge of and demonstration of leadership, including using “leadership skills to facilitate vision and positive change for the comprehensive school counseling program” (ASCA, 2012). The ASCA standards began to solidify a national movement to define school counselor roles and demonstrate the positive impact a comprehensive counseling program could have on student achievement, a focus and concern of all educational leaders.

ASCA National Model

The ASCA National Model has become the primary resource for defining the school counselor role (Bardhoshi & Duncan, 2009). This standardized definition helps to alleviate the need for school counselors to continuously define their role to stakeholders (Schwallie-Giddis, ter Maat, & Pak, 2003). Moreover, the Model is intended to support the school’s overall mission through the promotion of student academic success, career planning, and social and emotional development (ASCA, 2012). ASCA and each state school counseling association have suggested that practitioners develop comprehensive programs with the intent of aligning the program’s goals with the primary mission of the school. To this end, school counselors provide specific services to stakeholders in four components: Foundation, Management, Delivery, and Accountability. Additionally, the Model emphasizes four crucial themes: leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change. By emphasizing the role of counseling in student success through collaboration of the counselor and other stakeholders in the school, the standards co-opted counselors into becoming collaborators in the teaching and the learning process for students (Dahir, 2001). Subsequently, the National Standards, now in the Third Edition, serves as the foundation for ASCA’s National Model of School Counseling Programs.

According to the Model (ASCA, 2012), school counselors lead system-wide change efforts to ensure student success; school counselors advocate with and on behalf of students to proactively alleviate barriers to learning; school counselors work collaboratively...
to build effective teams among stakeholders to achieve equity, access, and academic success of all students; school counselors act as change agents to identify areas of needed improvement leading to empowering systemic policies and procedures. These efforts combine to create an environment that promotes student achievement in both academic and humanistic terms.

Relationships of Principals and Counselors

In the national survey of over two-thousand principals and counselors, experts at the College Board, ASCA, and NASSP (2009) identified several characteristics of effective principal-counselor relationships. First, they advocate for open communication that provides multiple opportunities for input to decision making. In the College Board, ASCA, and NASSP study (2009), both principals and counselors considered communication to be very important; however, “principals tended to focus on high-quality communication, while counselors tended to focus on the frequency of communication” (p. 4). Along with open communication, two additional characteristics involve focusing on opportunities to share ideas on teaching and learning and, secondly, to engage in school-wide educational initiatives to address needs within the school and the community. From the study, ASCA and NASSP identified three themes that emerged as critical for an effective principal-counselor relationship, which included mutual trust and respect, principal-counselor communication, and shared vision and decision making. In reviewing the list of characteristics, one may see that counselors and principals are expected to assume roles of both communicator and collaborator to create an effective relationship.

The Case Study

This study utilized a humanistic approach with an illustrative case study design. The authors chose a qualitative inquiry because, according to Maxwell (2004), it generally focuses on context and how participants understand their experiences. Within the qualitative research paradigm, a single-case design refers to the investigation of a single phenomenon as experienced by multiple participants (Yin, 2009). A single-case design encourages adherence to the process of exploring and understanding the phenomenon under study rather than attempting to identify and account for differences between cases (Maxwell, 2004). The authors were interested to learn how each participant experienced and managed the events, situations, circumstances, or conditions that each deemed important. The major focus was on the unfolding developmental process of the relationship between the participants, one principal and two school counselors, based on their communication styles and understanding of their perceived roles in a high school setting in a rural school.

An opportunity to present thick descriptions from each participant in the natural setting in which the relationships were constructed and fostered led the authors to identify descriptive case study as the design most apt to capture the phenomenon. Descriptive, embedded case study follows the sequence of interpersonal events over time, describes the subcultures within the larger case, and potentially discovers key phenomena of such a case.
School Counselor and Principal Relationships

(Yin, 2009). Therefore, in an effort to illuminate the nature of the working relationship between a principal and a two person counseling staff, a case study research design was implemented. The design selection was also predicated on the desire to convey a real-life situation from a balanced, multidimensional representation. One objective of utilizing this framework and design was to extract meaning from the participants based on the socio-political-cultural context of this particular school within this particular community.

Setting

The setting of the study was a single, bounded, rural public school system in a southeastern state. The rural county school system is comprised of five schools: one elementary, one intermediate, one middle school, one learning center academy (credit recovery), and the site of this study specifically, is one rural, four-year high school. The high school student enrollment is approximately 450 students. During the academic year of data collection, 53% of students identified as Caucasian, 34% as African-American, 11% as Hispanic, and 2% as Other. The long-standing graduation rate through academic year 2009 had been between 57–65%. The superintendent of schools encouraged the principal to improve the school’s academic program.

The population of the rural county where the school is located is 10,988, and the density of that population is 45.3 persons per square mile. There are two, small incorporated towns in the county, and the nearest urban area is over an hour’s drive from the county seat. There is no major industry within the district, with the school district being one of the county’s largest employers. The cost of living index is 80.4, well below the US average of 100.

Of particular note, this high school had just experienced a highly publicized power struggle between the prior high school principal and the school board, resulting in the dismissal of the former principal. In this district, located in a rural county, most everyone took sides, supporting the previous principal or supporting the decision to hire a new principal. The talk was evident in the small café on the main street, that the new principal was going to make it or not, fueling the stereotype of the principal as an isolated leader. The newly appointed principal is the principal participant of this study. He began his administrative position without the full support of key community stakeholders and some teachers, and yet the full support of the superintendent. The power struggle left the faculty, staff, and students both polarized and lacking trust and motivation, resulting in an unhealthy school climate. Various other employees voluntarily left their employment, including the school’s one counselor. The uniqueness of the setting is that the school began an academic year with a newly hired principal, and a school counselor and graduation coach. [Note: A graduation coach is a position created specifically to identify students at-risk of non-completion and apply effort to help them recover credit in order to raise graduation rates. Graduation coaches are not required to be certified school counselors; however, this participant was certified and had prior work experience. Together the school counselor and
the graduation coach formed the school’s counseling program.] This investigation took place during the second academic year the team worked together.

**Participants**

An extraordinary event had taken place, as a former assistant principal with four years of experience had been hired as principal, a professional school counselor with two years prior experience had been hired by said principal as the positional school counselor, and a professional school counselor with 10 years’ experience at the middle school level had been hired as graduation coach. Three new individuals arrived at a high school still deeply immersed in mistrust and miscommunication. All three were aware, to varying degrees, of the history of the school, its faltering academic achievement, the public dismissal of the former principal, and the need for renewed commitment of faculty and staff. For the authors, this situation presented a unique opportunity to explore how the working relationship between these individuals could form and potentially impact school culture, student achievement, and graduation/retention rates.

**The principal.** Mr. T. was a 38-year-old, White male serving in his first position as high school principal. He had been identified specifically by the Superintendent of Schools to come into the politically-charged and emotionally-raw circumstance. Mr. T. identified as a native of the south and a proponent of a distributed model of educational leadership. Mr. T. presented as interested, willing, yet cautious regarding the proposed study. He expressed concern regarding the maintenance of confidentiality and specifically wanted to understand how data from the study would be used, pending his approval to participate. He knew he had been entrusted to turn the school around, and that much was riding on superintendent’s trust in him. He appeared afraid to cross any boundary, as he had internalized the huge responsibility.

**The counselor.** Ms. V. was a 29-year-old, White female two years removed from her Master’s in Counseling program. She had worked for two years in a neighboring school system before her hire in the school under study. Ms. V was a native of the county and a graduate of the high school in which she was now working. Ms. V. was a very willing participant in this study, and provided access and opportunity to all required and requested information. During the process of the study she became pregnant and the work load and description began to evolve pending her maternity leave.

**The graduation coach.** Ms. B. was a 42-year-old, African-American female with 10 years of experience as a school counselor at a middle school within the same southern state. She openly admitted in the beginning an insecurity working in a high school setting, and in a new position which required a focus on data-driven decision making and student academic outcomes. Ms. B.’s husband had also been hired at the high school that same year as a teacher and coach. She projected a confidence in her ability to adapt to the new circumstance and set about to cultivate alliances among the faculty and staff to protect her grant-funded position.
Data Collection and Analysis

Approval from the superintendent was sought and granted in order to conduct this study. Three counselor educators and one educational leader were the investigators of this study. Each of the investigators (all female, three White, one Afro-Caribbean) had experience working in public school systems as either counselor or principal. Three individual, semi-structured interviews, the first in the fall, the second during the winter season, and the third just after graduation, were the main source of data gathered for this study. For the first round of interviews, participants were asked to provide background information regarding their decision to pursue employment at this high school, and then to describe the experiences of their first year in the system to include role definition, communication efforts, and perception of one another as colleagues. The line of questioning for the second and third interviews was based on the emergent information from the previous interview(s), and consistently focused on description of the working alliance between the three participants and the subsystems within the group (i.e., principal and counselor, principal and graduation coach, counselor and graduation coach) as they evolved over the two year period under investigation. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The second and third interviews helped to clarify participant perceptions and strengthen the trustworthiness of the results (Glesne, 2006).

Other data collection methods included non-structured procedures ranging from investigator observation and field notes, teacher self-reports, and student data to include attendance data and test scores. Non-interview data were used to generate a profile of the school in which the participants worked. Throughout the data collection process, the authors analyzed transcripts for emergent themes and areas of convergence through inductive analysis. Inductive analysis allows for concepts and relationships among ideas to emerge throughout the analysis process (Glesne, 2006). Themes were generated given their association to the research questions and corroborated by the investigators via consensus. Reflective analysis allowed the authors the opportunity to rely on intuition as experienced educators, administrators, and counselors, and sort data in a way that corresponded to the research questions. Given data analysis coincided with data collection, member checking was additionally utilized to verify and affirm the emergent themes.

According to Morrow (2005, p. 252), “credibility can be achieved by prolonged engagement with participants; persistent observation in the field; … researcher reflexivity; and participant checks, validation, or co-analysis.” Substantiation of multiple data sources (investigator field notes, teacher self-reports, and student data) allowed for further clarification and validation of themes. Once coding was complete, all coded data was reread for relevance and authenticity to verify that the themes reflected the participants’ perspectives alone.

Results

On the basis of the data analysis method, three key themes emerged as descriptors of the relationships between the three participants: relationship building (subthemes include
interdependence and role definition), communication styles (subthemes include principal leadership style and collaboration), and challenges (subthemes include power imbalance and systemic barriers). Relationship building describes the process of forming the relationships between and among the participants. Communication styles describe the methods and manner by which communication occurred and resulted. Challenges describe the obstacles to relationship building experienced by the participants. The exploration of these three themes allowed the researchers to clarify and develop insight into the nature of the principal-counselor-graduation coach relationship and its potential impact on student success.

Relationship Building

The principal, counselor, and graduation coach recognized the mission to improve the school as they began their tenure in the school, newly hired and focused on the effort to implement a cultural shift intended to increase graduation rates and develop trust and augment efficacy among administration, staff, and students. The three participants appreciated that they would need to build a mutually supportive relationship. For example, participants spoke of how the previous school culture had been described by some as toxic and an atmosphere of mistrust and animosity remained palpable the first year of their experience:

- Not having anybody, and [names] and I developed a relationship and it felt, like it was [names] and I versus the world.
- I think [name] truly trusts us and he doesn’t trust a lot of people because there has been so much backstabbing. [W]e kind of held hands is what we called it while we were going through a lot of things. The first summer it was just us here and there were a lot of people who worked against us that first summer, and I mean essentially they pushed us together because we were newbies and we were the enemy all in one package.

Each participant described a process by which he or she depended on one another for support and as buffer against the, often, overt disdain by some staff and community members. Trust and respect are prevalent elements in the description of interdependence (College Board, 2009). All described insecurity in knowing specifically how they were to proceed in their respective positions in order to effect the changes expected of them; the fact that they started the same year and were each new to the school facilitated their interdependence.

The beginning of their relationship, though based on mutual support and solace, was fortified by the desire to be effective in their respective positions. Even though each of the counselors knew how she wanted to function in her respective position, the dependency on the principal to define the roles of counselor and graduation coach was evident.

Since role definition was identified by the principal as the responsibility of the principal, developing relationships based on respect and trust were impacted by the tasks the
principal identified for each the counselor and graduation coach. Both positions were to evolve differently, yet the expectation was that they work conjointly and at the behest of the principal. A certain level of ambiguity impacted how each responded to the ongoing role clarification and development of the relationships:

- [Name] is very supportive of what we do; sometimes I’m not sure what direction I’m supposed to go as far as how do I approach this or where my boundaries are in doing the things that I’m supposed to do, but he’s supportive.
- I think they’re being defined by the job itself, like [name] is not defining it necessarily. Well, I guess he is in some ways because he’ll tell us what we need to get done. He typically wants me in charge of anything that he, over anybody, he wants me in charge of anything that he is really worried about as far as getting done. I think I am a security blanket.

The principal described having support and mentorship available to him from the district level, but he was aware that the two counselors did not have that same outlet. He hoped to encourage their dependence on one another for support in both a social and a performance sense, but did not identify their development as a function of his role. Some insecurity emerged with regard to boundaries in their respective roles. Both were counselors by training; one, however, had been hired as graduation coach and struggled to understand the parameters of that position relative to that of school counselor. The graduation coach role was delimited by job description to reduce dropout rate, whereas the counselor role was vaguer, yet focused on student advocacy. The counselor and graduation coach described a relationship that began as enmeshed, became more strained due to confusion regarding job descriptions and boundaries with students, and then ultimately evolved into a state of ‘separate, yet connected’:

- [Name] and I tend to be on the same page and we have become allies and to some extent before anything happens we have to plan it out together. We have in a sense become our own enforcers. Last year, we were so merged, I mean we were so enmeshed, but this year I keep telling her “I miss you so much,” and I do miss working with her like we did almost every day we were doing something together.

The participants described a growing independence as their roles became more clearly delineated, but also less of a team. At first, they had developed an enmeshment to support their transition into a new role in a new school, but by midpoint of the second year, their ability to act with autonomy influenced how they responded to one another:

- We have worked together and we have trusted each other and we know that each of us is going to take care of the other and take care of students. We are not as
Lisa L. Schultz, Barbara J. Mallory, Mary H. Jackson & Arline Edwards-Joseph

tight as we were and that is not because we don’t like each other, but because our job descriptions have become more and more defined. We had to hold onto each other and make our way; now we’ve made our way and we are stronger people.

Participants described still relying on one another for support and could freely ask for help and clarification when needed. They felt more confident in their ability to carry out their duties and define themselves through their role rather than their inexperience, and the principal interacted with them based on their roles, rather than a team.

Relationships had evolved to include a mutual respect, trust, loyalty, and support within the boundaries of their professional roles. Earlier in the process, participants described the need to check in on every detail of their performance for clarification, approval, or validation. As the relationships developed and roles were delineated, participants described their relationships as more satisfying, as they felt they could now more readily support the new mission and vision of the school. Having been so immersed in trying to define themselves with respect to the others, less energy was available to address the larger issues in the school. Their emergence as a three-pronged team was described in this way:

- So here we were where jobs that none of us had ever really done, because she is in charge of all grades, not just one, and he is figuring out, “Gee wiz, I (the principal) was just the assistant and now I’m in charge of all of it,” and me just coming in just straight ignorant. Now I feel like it’s trust that I’m (the principal) gonna let you do this and then if I don’t like it, I’ll call you in and figure out how to do this. Just realizing that the decision ultimately is his, but he does trust us enough to say “Go do your work.”

Rather than shared leadership, the principal employed a distributive leadership approach, and because they all believed in the mission and trusted that each other had the mission guiding their decisions, they developed mutual trust. However, the mutual regard that developed among and between the three participants was not easy or without conflict. Descriptions of incidents that rocked the boat were readily offered and the relationships suffered due to jealousies associated with ego and boundary setting. The principal expressed confidence in their capacity to lead and recognized he could not “do it alone,” but he struggled with “letting go,” as he knew the superintendent expected him to “get the job done.” However, the fact that each was new and had a common problem (the distrust of staff and community and being an unknown to students) allowed them to utilize the talents and skills of the others to both fortify their own positions and to create a safe place in which to both commiserate and build credibility.
Communication Styles

A determining factor in the successful creation of professional relationships to support the school’s new vision and mission was the ability to communicate effectively. The modes of communication used by the participants ranged from conventional (regularly scheduled face-to-face meetings and email) to less conventional and more informal (telephoning via personal cells and text messaging). The regular weekly meetings were eventually discontinued and communication became more “those little fly-by conversations”:

• All of a sudden at like 5 o’clock when we are all supposed to be home, the three of us will end up in his office and it will feel like we were when we first came; we were talking about this and that, and hashing it all out.

Much of the tone of communication was set through the leadership style of the principal. As previously described, the counselor and graduation coach positions were defined by the principal whose own directive from the central office was to improve the academic program, to raise the graduation rate, and to create a more welcoming school climate. He was supported by one assistant principal whose primary task was discipline and staff development. Each department (i.e., Science, Mathematics, English, Social Studies) had a team leader who reported to the principal. The non-certified staff had an elected liaison who also reported directly to the principal. The school’s organizational structure was conventional as the principal was the highest ranking employee in a hierarchical system in which management was top-down. As the identified leader of the building, the principal saw himself as primarily responsible for all of the building operations and described his leadership style as follows:

• My idea of what a leadership team should be is that it’s an actual professional learning community and we’re going to grow in our leadership team. We’re going to share, we’re going to be prepared for our work, we’re going to have outside assignments we’re going to bring in, we’re going to look at how to grow. I want to be a leader of leaders as opposed to “Look, I’ve got a shoulder to hold, the brunt of everything, and I’ve got to think through every situation,” which I know that’s my job and that’s what I’m going to do, but at the same time, take a little initiative. Lead your team.

The counselor and the graduation coach understood the top-down structure typical in most schools and deferred major decision-making to the principal. Each described her sense of his leadership style uniquely:

• It was hard for me to adjust to not having a voice and really did not feel that I had a voice in decisions, although I had an opinion. We’ve learned to be very detailed, to already think ahead because we know that he’s going to want certain things
done a certain way. He is a micromanager. He already has an agenda [for all meetings], so it was like, “Why are we here.” It wasn’t a planning meeting, it was a “Let me tell you what we’re going to do. This is the plan for the week.”

- He is very organized. He is very detailed. He sends out monthly, um, weekly agendas in email form to all of the faculty. If I need support, he will support me if there’s something going on. Sometimes he is a little overzealous in his support. He is very protective of people that he knows to be loyal to him. It’s like he’ll walk off and thinks about it and a few days later he’ll come back; I mean his office is just right down the hall, so he can literally bellow from his office.

Even though the principal’s perception of his own leadership style was not necessarily the reality as perceived by the counselor and graduation coach, they described a willing loyalty to him as they both acknowledged the difficult position he had walked into. They understood it was in the best interest of all three to support one another in the ways that they could. The desire to maintain open and transparent communication was evident:

- We have worked together and we have trusted each other and we know that each of us is going to take care of the other and take care of the students. It’s a nice fit so that everybody is taken care of and that we’re not excluding anybody.

Collaborative and consultative strategies were utilized to realize long- and short-term goals. The principal maintained the position of authority and used the support from both the counselor and graduation coach as back up for the new or redesigned programming impacting teachers and students. Communication was instrumental in the continuing formation of relationships, yet stylistically, the principal’s authoritative manner and relative inexperience produced levels of unnecessary tension and triangulation.

Challenges

Without question, the issue which was most detrimental to the ideal formation of mutually effective relationships between the participants was the imbalance of power between the faculty and staff of the previous administration and the new principal. As previously described, the school climate had been toxic as a result of divided loyalty to the former principal, graduation and retention rates were low, and state test scores were below average. While the principal was much less forthcoming regarding the destructive political atmosphere he encountered and his efforts to diffuse power struggles, the other participants described the situation as follows:

- A lot of tugs of war as far as power and trying to find our own way with the new principal coming in and working with the old teachers. There were protests, there were picket signs, there were police officers at board meetings. We were trying to
move it from a punitive and not student-friendly school to a more student-friendly school where we put the students first.

• I don’t mean to be elitist or anything like that but just understanding how a secretary has that much power, that [they] believe that I’m gonna move on their time. I mean there were days where I didn’t want to come to work and it’s not because of the kids, but it was the adults.

• The [previous] principal gave the staff and several people a lot of power that should have never been given. Power to reprimand people, reprimand teachers. Secretaries were reprimanding teachers, and secretaries were making discipline calls. I mean one of the secretaries came to me and said “You know, I don’t know how you can even hope to do your job when you’re never in your office.” It was exhausting, it was very exhausting. I would cry in my office when people weren’t there.

The power wielded by the former principal and the teachers and staff who remained loyal to that principal made effort to be oppositional in the beginning of the new leadership team’s tenure. The two support participants believed they received the brunt of the abuse because “you’re not going to go after the man that can fire you.” However, after the first year, all participants noted a dramatic change in the school culture. They encountered less overt animosity, greater faculty support of changes, and most notably, a 14-point increase in the graduation rate in one year. All noted that the school climate is still changing and has a long way to go, yet spoke with satisfaction regarding the progress made.

Power imbalance was an issue as well with regard to the relationship development between the three participants. As discussed previously, the principal had authority to define the job descriptions and, to a large degree, the types of relationships he was willing to have. Neither the counselor nor the graduation coach felt totally comfortable confronting the authoritative style or advocating for their views without risking the relationship. Both described incidents when they felt deserted or “thrown under the bus” by the principal, and believed that they were used as political pawns in his effort to gain control of the school.

Power and influence also played out in the relationship between the counselor and graduation coach. The graduation coach’s marriage partner also worked in the school in a high profile position, who had established a personal friendship with the principal. The counselor felt uneasy in her inability to compete in this arena, and the graduation coach took pride in having the larger sphere of influence. This power imbalance impacted how they responded to one another during the norming and storming process (Tuckman, 1965). Their perceptions of one another’s ability to curry favor were the foundation for the triangulation that occurred. As roles and boundaries were defined and acknowledged, the tension decreased and a more collaborative relationship was realized.

The systemic barriers encountered were reflective of the issues surrounding contemporary public education, such as limited resources and opportunity to provide on-
going professional development. The principal was most expressive in this area as he contemplated the choices he would need to make to retain the position of the graduation coach along with other staffing concerns. He expressed his concern accordingly:

- I’m worried about the following year with budget constraints, but right now I have her for at least one more year. I [am] determined to make a position for her. I don’t think we can help students be successful unless we have a culture of helping kids be successful. I feel like I failed, but I know the end result has got to be more positive than it has been in order to keep kids coming to school and getting them to graduation. I think I tried too many things off the bat.

The lack of certainty in maintaining needed positions, the tedium of following procedure in order to replace resistant or ineffective faculty and staff, and being accountable for student outcomes seemed burdensome for the principal. The isolation he felt in being accountable to the board and community weighed on him impacting how he could comfortably relate to the participants. From their perception, he did not understand their capacity to support him or share in the leadership process:

- I think sometimes [he] lacks the knowledge of what a school counselor is supposed to be doing. Most counselors end up being the school’s test coordinators, although I really think it is an administrative duty. We are the liaison between the school and the parents, school and the community, and there is no nice little niche for a counselor; I guess that’s why we are counselors because we can be flexible.

The complexity of the construction of relationships played out in how each participant defined him or herself in relation to the other two: each hoping for acceptance, belonging, and support, yet influenced by the need to establish autonomy and demonstrate competency.

**Discussion**

The dynamics of the relationship between the three participants is at the heart of their effectiveness as a leadership team. Coming in to a troubled school as new employees without a wealth of experience or confidence was a major determinant on how their professional identities developed and created a system of support for the school’s core mission of teaching and learning. The first-year principal was endeavoring to establish credibility via improved test scores and graduation rates, as well as construct a school climate conducive to safeguarding the business of education. The school counselor and the graduation coach were also endeavoring to establish their professional identities through relationship building with both the adults and the youth in the school. Much of the tension in the relationship building was a result of the difference in the way the participants approached creating a team in order to accomplish their respective positional goals.
The school counselor and graduation coach (also a certified school counselor) were trained to build relationship and to use that relationship to effect change. The principal’s training was in defining the vision and mission and developing programs and influencing individuals who carry them out. While the principal professed to building a team and distributing leadership, in reality, the context of the setting influenced his capacity to lead from these perspectives. Despite his training, his sense of urgency to turn the school around impacted decision making and his authoritative style. It was difficult not to tell others what to do, even as he recognized that he needed to distribute leadership.

Neither of the female participants took initiative to fully define, explain, or advocate a vision for their roles to the principal. The principal, in turn, did not have a vision for these two positions beyond the conventional. They deferred to his decision making, even though all embraced the mission of the school. As the leader and decision-maker of the team, the principal did not solicit their views in terms of implementing the mission for school improvement; instead, the counselor and graduation coach assumed a support role for the principal’s plans and programs. A distributed leadership approach was not utilized to encourage involvement and investment in the process beyond “pleasing the boss” and working within those parameters. Collective decision-making or aspiration to create such a dynamic did not factor into the working alliance between participants.

**Implications**

The implications of the findings concerning counselor-principal relationships are in stages of team development and leadership emergence. As the team formed, it was evident that the principal and counselor participants shared the vision of a school advocating for academic growth for all students. The team in this study built trust through the forming and storming process, and the principal expressed his leadership desire then to let them do their jobs, implying that leadership could be distributed.

However, in the forming and storming stage, the counselor participants succumbed to the principal’s authority and suppressed their desires to share ideas about how the mission would be carried out. New principals can encourage leadership from those who hold the vision, and perhaps in this case, the principal generated a power imbalance in the forming and storming stages of team development through absence of explicit role clarification. Principals cannot lead school improvement alone, and team development that includes key questions about how to carry out specific strategies of the school improvement mission, serve to advocate for emergent leadership. New counselors may also encourage leadership by asking questions about goals and strategies of the school’s mission. Transformational principals influence others to achieve goals of the organization, and key stakeholders who express commitment to the vision of the school can help balance the power inherent in leading improvement.

The researchers found that collaborative practices existed in terms of mutual support and encouragement among the three participants as a refuge of the political climate, yet did not extend beyond that boundary. The evaluation of policies and programs and their
effectiveness was a function of the principal. As a novice principal, he was not yet willing to rely on others, although he expressed the desire to do so. The school was in improvement mode, and the tensions he struggled with as principal of authority and micromanagement impacted his capacity to collaborate. Although the counselor and graduation coach also recognized the pressures the principal faced in turning the school around, they were not willing to be a partner in the leadership processes, as they did not see initiating structures to encourage their leadership participation. The evolution toward working separately and interdependently became more apparent through their second year together. In a distributed leadership approach, the explicit acknowledgement of who is leading what initiative and progress reports about how the initiatives are working is essential. Interdependence is acceptable, given that collaboration structures are in place to facilitate dialogue about the progress reports.

In this study, the principal still described himself as “the leader” in the final interview. Even though the principal had the foundation for distributed leadership to work, his default position was that he was the leader, unwilling to distribute leadership based on the need to micromanage. He was not yet in a position solid enough to address the concept of building the capacity of leadership in others. Given the high school’s status of improvement, it may be that a principal in that setting prefers to be seen as the authority figure until the school is on a growth trajectory. Leaders in a position to stop an organizational downfall may need to take charge and “right” the ship. It would be disingenuous to project an image of team leadership in “righting the ship,” and then assume full authority as sole leader, as it would interfere with team effectiveness and discourage emergent leadership. The relationship becomes one of follower roles and leadership role. Then, when the school is on a growth trajectory, the principal transitions to the team approach or distributed leadership approach.

The style in which communication is processed creates or prevents trust. The principal had a more aggressive communication style typified by not listening fully, interrupting, and trying to be the dominant figure in all situations. Even though he did set the tone for the relationships, the other participants also influenced how the alliance developed based on their own communication styles. While both the counselor and graduation coach relied on an amalgam of cognitive and affective intelligence to communicate both verbally and non-verbally, their styles were quite distinct. One had a more passive communication style typified by submissive behavior and acquiescence to a bigger voice. The other tended to the passive-aggressive by appearing cooperative and allied, yet feeling superior and acting to promote self rather than the team. In the beginning, the participants allied themselves as a mechanism to cope with the stresses of the situation, but in time they grew less dependent and less collaborative. A true sense of team did not develop.

The relationship between the two support participants shifted from one of mutual affection to competition and suspicion to mutual regard. The relationship developed based on each participant’s perception of having the principal’s ear and recognition of their competence by the staff and students. Each received training as a school counselor, yet only one had the counselor position. That position was defined conventionally by the principal as
one of vocation – working on student schedules, performing credit checks, and bolstering career development – as the counselor found it difficult to convey to the principal her potential to provide greater service to students in terms of reducing and eliminating the in- and out-of-school barriers to their academic performance. The graduation coach found herself in a more data-driven position, identifying those students less likely to graduate and involve (then monitor) them in additional academic programs such as on-line credit recovery. Neither had the endorsement of the principal to invest in the social and emotional development of students unless responding to crises.

The researchers concluded that the principal voiced a desire to build a team, yet he did not tend to project an approachable or available persona. He did want others to “do their jobs,” but he did not project a charismatic posture or work to build structures to facilitate communication about how initiatives were working. The counselors eventually developed their respective programs, and tried not to overlap their services, but their roles developed as followers of leadership rather than leaders of the school improvement process. The principal had not found an ease by which to communicate his trust in others, motivating followership, rather than leadership. New principals who recognize key stakeholders who believe in the vision can facilitate collaboration by trusting, clarifying roles, and building structures to communicate accomplishments of the respective initiatives.

Conclusions

The call to lead is respected, and often admired, by faculty and staff members who do not see in themselves the desire or potential to do so. Some educators are generally content in their followership roles in managing curriculum and classrooms; some counselors tend to prefer to focus their attention on individuals and small groups of students. Those who aspire to lead need to do so with the knowledge that all people want to feel validated and recognized for their efforts, valued for their skill and training, and capable of participating at a fundamental, decision-making level to lead students to high achievement.

Principals cannot lead in isolation, as leading a school is a human enterprise. One in six children attend rural schools in America (Browne-Ferrigno, & Knoeppel, 2004), having contact with both principals and counselors in their educational experiences. In rural communities, visibility of role models and leaders from schools may serve to strengthen school-community relationships and inspire trust among citizens. Counselors who aspire to lead can be ideal partners in leadership, serving as role models of collaborative leaders for children.

In all schools, leadership practices that encourage and inspire confidence and investment in the teaching and learning process is essential. Believing that these two elements of effective leadership practice will make a difference in any type of school is fundamental to modeling positive human attributes such as collaboration, appreciation, caring, trust, and respect. Relational trust emerges from such an environment. Superintendents who encourage principals to be visible in the community may also expect that counselors will be visible as leaders in school improvement efforts.
Counselors are identified as one of few or the only adult in a school who has training to address student’s social, emotional, academic, and mental health. Counselors also have training in leadership, and therefore, can be an essential partner with the principal to lead school improvement efforts. The visibility of the counselor as leader, both in the school and community, can demonstrate courage and relational trust between administration and counseling programs, generally promoting to citizens that school renewal takes the proverbial village. As students assume future roles in government, business, education, and community advocacy, they will have witnessed how leadership partnerships strengthen an organization.

References
Browne-Ferrigno, T., & Knoeppel, R. C. (2004, November). “Success for All”: Ensuring equitable opportunities for student learning in a high-need rural school district. In D. C. Thompson & F. E. Crampton (Eds.), The changing face(s) of educational leadership: UCEA at the crossroads (Proceedings from the 2004 UCEA Convention). Available at www.ucea.org


Webinar as a Course Delivery Method at the Graduate Student Level

David L. Stader, Lisa A. Bertrand & Floyd Lockhart
Southeast Missouri State University

Abstract
This research examines the use of webinar as a graduate course delivery method. Participants include 36 graduate degree-seeking students. Results suggest that webinar may combine the best of online and face-to-face course delivery. Participation in the webinar format provides the social interaction, regular class meetings, and instructor-student interaction not typically available in online learning. Student learning outcome data indicates that 90% of students mastered the course material.

Introduction
Online or asynchronous learning, including web-enhanced or blended offerings, has gained in popularity in recent years in the United States. For example, in 2002 1.6 million post-secondary students, or 9.6% of total enrollment, took at least one online course. By 2012, over 6.7 million post-secondary students, or 32% of the total student population, took at least one online class. Almost 70% of higher educational institutions reported in 2012 that online education is critical to their long-term strategies and 62% of higher educational institutions offered complete online degree programs (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Due to this type of learning environment, which is different than traditional synchronous face-to-face classes, changes in how courses are delivered reflect both positive and negative aspects.

For this research we use Allan and Seaman’s (2013) definitions of online, face-to-face and blended course delivery. Online courses are defined as a course with at least 80% of course content delivered online. This is similar to Moore and Kearsley’s (2012) definition of online learning as teachers and students who are located in different places for all or most of the time that teaching and learning are occurring. Face-to-face courses are defined by Allan and Seaman (2013) as courses in which 0–29% of course materials are delivered online. The remainders, or blended courses, are defined as courses in which 30–70% of the materials are delivered online.

Traditional synchronous face-to-face programs, where learners regularly attend classes on a university campus, may not meet the complex needs of graduate degree seeking students. Graduate students, especially in educational leadership programs, often have families, work responsibilities, time constraints, or other obligations. Many may find online learning and the convenience of flexible scheduling an attractive solution to pursuing an advanced degree (Li & Irby, 2008). As suggested by Singh and Pan (2008–2009), the online learning experience provided an ease of connection including time and distance, in addition
to accessibility. Study time could be any time a student chose, except when the instructor elected to use specified times for chat room sessions. Poole (2000) concurred in that he found students participated in online discussions at times most convenient to them, and that students chose to mainly access course materials from their home computers, which was a place most convenient to them.

A second positive aspect of online learning reflected faculty involvement and feedback (Morris & Finnegan, 2008–2009; Singh & Pan, 2004), which contributed to the success of students in completing the course. With the online format, Morris and Finnegan suggested that the faculty’s enactment of social and managerial roles may be more important than pedagogical feedback. Further suggestions by the authors included the idea of providing a comprehensive orientation at the beginning of the semester which may reduce confusion about the course layout and expectations, in addition to maintaining consistent contact early in the semester to encourage students to build self-reliance and group reliance (p. 60).

In a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of online and blended learning, Means, Toyama, Murphy, and Baki (2013) found that, on average, students in online courses performed modestly better than those receiving face-to-face instruction. They also found that students in a blended model in which some coursework was completed online and some face-to-face performed significantly better than students in a traditional face-to-face class. As the authors point out, blended models tend to have more learning time, instructional resources, and elements that encourage social interactions among learners. This is an important point. In a factor analysis study of student barriers to online learning, Muilenburg and Berge (2005) found the single most important barrier to student learning online was a lack of social interaction. Faculty who have taught online and have a positive view of online learning also have concerns about the lack of interaction with students during or outside of class (Jaschik & Lederman, 2013).

Although online learning has expanded, limitations in this method of course delivery have also been reported. Chief academic officers report concerns about low retention rates in online degree programs (Allen & Seaman, 2013). There may be several reasons for low retention rates. This type of class requires a high level of student responsibility (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Students must be well organized, self-motivated, and have good time management skills. Without the routine schedule of a traditional class, students may feel isolated and not meet deadlines or complete course activities. Students must have a minimum level of computer knowledge in order to perform the tasks required by the learning management system or LMS. A student that does not possess these skills may not succeed. As suggested by a research review conducted by Wong (2007), these limitations can be categorized as technological limitations, limitations compared to traditional face-to-face delivery, limitations in the course design, and personal issues.

Views that online course delivery is ‘just as good as’ traditional face-to-face learning is mixed at best (Allen & Seaman, 2013). In a survey of faculty and technology administrator attitudes on online learning, Jaschik and Lederman (2013) report that only 7% of surveyed
faculty strongly agreed that online courses can achieve student learning outcomes that are at least equivalent to traditional classroom instruction. Almost twice as many faculty, but still only 13%, who have taught an online course strongly agree that student learning online is equivalent to traditional in-person courses. This lack of acceptance by faculty represents another barrier to the widespread adoption of online courses (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Not surprisingly, more technology administrators (27%) surveyed strongly agreed that online learning is at least equivalent to in-person learning (Jaschik and Leaderman, 2013). Chief academic officers have a more positive view of the legitimacy of online learning with almost 75% reporting that online learning is just as good as face-to-face learning (Allen & Seaman, 2013). However, as pointed out by Allen and Seaman (2013), this view is often from personal perceptions and not from actually teaching an online course.

Research on the relative effectiveness of online learning remains an emerging but growing body of knowledge. However, research into the relative effectiveness of webinar as a delivery model for graduate education remains thin at best. Therefore, the purpose of this study was an initial exploration of the use of the webinar or video-conferencing format as an instructional delivery model in the educational leadership degree programs at Southeast Missouri State University. Specifically, the following questions framed this study:

1) What factors led to students choosing the webinar format for course delivery?
2) How likely were they to enroll in another webinar course?
3) How do students perceive the positive and negative aspects of the webinar course delivery?
4) How do students perceive their learning in a webinar course delivery format?

**Course Redesign at the Graduate Level**

As a means to address the complex needs of graduate students, a webinar format was chosen in redesigning three administrative leadership courses at the graduate level at Southeast Missouri State University. The courses included School Law and Curriculum for Leaders, both required classes in the elementary and secondary administration degree program. Previously the classes had been taught both as a traditional face-to-face, and as blended classes with an online component.

At present, the University uses the Adobe Connect for webinar presentations. According to the Adobe website,

Adobe Connect enables the instructor to provide rich multimedia experiences for participants, with integrated audio and video conferencing. Unlimited webcam streams at DVD quality, integration with video teleconferencing systems, and the ability to share rich media without requiring any codec or player downloads, ensure that the instructor can meet face-to-face and deliver ideas most effectively. (Adobe Connect, n.d.)
Course development and redesign was supported by the University Center for Scholarship and Teaching (CSTL).

The goal of the CSTL is to assist faculty in all aspects of course redesign, from reimagining courses to investigating and adopting appropriate technologies and developing assessment instruments to gauge student learning. The staff of the CSTL and the Faculty Innovators Committee provides an on-demand support network for faculty interested and engaged in teaching innovation and course redesign. (CSTL, n.d.)

At Southeast, one Instructional Designer was assigned to the faculty instructor.

One faculty member volunteered to redesign the courses into webinars. The faculty member attended professional development sessions that assisted him in the planning phase of the project. Curriculum for Educational Leaders served as a pilot class in the Fall of 2011. Directions for linking to the webinar were linked on the course website. Detailed lectures, PowerPoint presentations, and formative assessments were built into the lesson plans. The instructor uploaded PowerPoint presentations and other class materials into the webinar system as well as the learning management system. A “bell ringer” or introductory activity was planned to engage students at the beginning of the class. The chat room was utilized for student discussions with each other as well as the instructor. With this as the pilot class and with the webinar presentation new to the degree program offerings, the instructor met with the students for an orientation meeting at the beginning of the semester. Students were instructed how to access the website, log in and enter the chat feature. Students were also instructed as to the technological requirements for the webinar. Computer access and internet connection, a web camera, and a microphone were required for the webinar format.

Based on the pilot study, the course design was changed to include several best practices in webinar delivery as suggested by Molay (n.d.). For example, course materials were redesigned to frame and present content in more interesting ways. Rather than asking a question such as ‘any questions,’ the instructor developed a series of questions such as ‘how do you think Title IX has changed your school or district?’ This type of question can help frame the webinar to match the various interests of participants. The instructor made an effort to address students by individual name and not as a group. Each student should have the feeling that the instructor is speaking directly to her or him rather than to the class in general. In addition, the instructor found that students were more comfortable using the chat room. This assumption was later confirmed in this study. All webinars were recorded and made available to students who were unable to attend or for students to review or make sure they understood the concepts presented.
Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the use of the webinar format as an instructional delivery model in the educational leadership degree programs. A convenience sample of Master’s degree candidates in two sections of School Law in Fall 2013 were selected as the research population. A total of 45 students were enrolled, 20 in one section and 25 in the other. Classes met on different evenings and were taught by the same instructor. Both sections used the webinar course delivery method. A review of the literature relating to the topic was conducted to identity concepts relative to this type of online delivery. Following the review, a six-question survey was developed. Data gathered included number of graduate webinar courses the student had taken, degree program, access and connectivity, school district size of the participant, reasons for enrolling in the webinar class, the likelihood of enrolling in additional webinar classes, and perceptions of their learning. Two opened-ended questions were also included to address positive and negative feedback regarding the online experience.

Participants

Surveys were sent by Survey Monkey to all 45 enrolled students. An informed consent introduced the survey. Clicking on the link indicated consent. Participants were assured of confidentiality and that no rewards were being offered. Thirty-six returned the survey. Of these participants, 11 students (37%) were enrolled in the Master of Arts in school administration degree program and 25 students (63%) were enrolled in the Master of Arts in teacher leadership degree program (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Graduate Majors
Participants were employed in a variety of district sizes, with 16 reporting their district was less than 1000 students, 11 reported their district was between 1000–2000 students, and seven reported their district had more than 3000 students. The number of webinar courses taken by students ranged from one to four. However, for a majority of students (70%) this was their first webinar experience.

**Results and Emergent Themes**

The first research question considered the factors that led to students choosing the webinar format for course delivery and how likely they were to enroll in another webinar course. Students overwhelmingly (83%) reported that the convenience factor was the prevalent reason for selecting the webinar course. Aligning with this choice, approximately 32% of respondents reported that job, family, or personal responsibilities conflicted with travel to the campus. Students also reported that this was a required course, so enrollment in the course led to degree completion. A majority of the participants (62%) reported that they were very likely to enroll in another webinar course. When considering degree option, 22 Teacher Leader degree students (88%) reported that they would very likely or likely enroll in another webinar, while 3 were not likely or very unlikely to enroll in another webinar. Similarly, 8 MA in Educational Leadership degree students (72%) reported they were very likely or likely to enroll in another webinar course (Figure 2).

*Figure 2. Would Enroll in Another Webinar by Degree Option*
The third research question considered how students perceive the positive and negative aspects of their webinar experience. A majority (86%) of students provided feedback regarding positive and/or negative aspects of the course delivery. A majority of participants, approximately 85%, made positive comments. Three positive themes emerged from the data analysis: convenience, social interaction, and scheduling relating to course presentation.

**Convenience**

As a positive note, students reported that the travel factor was important. With the convenience of participating in the sessions from home or school, students were able to spend time on class assignments rather than traveling to and from a university campus site. One student voiced her support of the course delivery as she stated, “The webinar with our instructor has been such a blessing. When you’re a full time mother and teacher, having a class where you don’t have to drive makes it so much better. I would definitely do a webinar again.” Additional support was reported as a student stated, “You can participate in class even if you have a family to attend to or other things going on in a busy schedule. If you live far away, you wouldn’t have to drive. The scheduling was flexible for when you could do assignments.”

Other convenience issues centered on financial matters in that students did not have to purchase gas for travel or for child-care while the parent was away from home. As communicated by students, “there was no driving time, or wear on my vehicle so money was saved,” and “I can be a part of a class from the comforts of my home. As a parent with five children, this is definitely a plus!”

The time convenience was addressed in that the participants reported they were full-time employees with limited amounts of extra periods during the week to address their graduate work. As reported by one of the participants, “It was easy to take the class while at home. I could cook and clean while listening to our instructor.” As a full-time teacher, another student voiced support with the comment, “The webinar was nice because after working all day, it is nice to be able to log in to a home or work computer but not have to be rushed to get to a class somewhere.”

**Social Interaction**

A challenge for online course delivery often involves student-to-student or student-to-instructor interaction as all participation is done through technology. On a positive note, students did report they were able to interact with classmates as well as the instructor. One such student reported, “I get the same knowledge out of actually going to the classroom as I do sitting at home watching the webinar. If I have questions on the webinar, then I ask. I am also still capable of associating with other colleagues via email. Overall, I love it!” Another student reported, “It was easier to reply to questions. I was not nervous or scared to comment or answer questions.” The chat room was utilized for addressing questions and for students to interact with each other. Voicing support of this component, one student
reported, “I also liked the chat room. Sometimes it is easier to voice opinions in a chat room than a regular classroom setting. I liked the fact that this was live.”

**Scheduling as Related to Class Presentation**

The schedule of the course and how it related to the class presentation was a third theme that emerged from the open-ended responses. The class was delivered at a scheduled time; however, if a student did have to miss the presentation, the session was recorded and could be viewed at a later date. A comment that was reported from one student summarizes this aspect: “I liked the ability to be at home on my computer, yet, I still had classroom-type access to the instructor. I was still able to ask questions and interact with classmates in real time. This format is far better to me than web courses. I also loved the fact that there was a recording of the class to reference, if needed, considering I missed the first class. Actually, I did not because I was able to still see it—Great!”

Students also reported that they were able to work in groups which enhanced the learning process. The only negative reported involved the course content. One student suggested having the course split into either the elementary school administration level or the secondary school administration level so that school law issues would be pertinent to the student’s teaching level.

A few negative comments also emerged. Negative aspects of the webinar course included technology and bandwidth related issues. At times, the chat room was perceived to be “too crowded” when an activity or questions were presented by the instructor. Chat area threads would scroll too quickly while students were trying to type with the interaction becoming overloaded. As reported by a participant “The only negative thing that I can come up with is the fact that the teacher has to wait for everyone to type their response to a question. It wasn’t a big deal at all but just a bit of wasted time every now and then while the teacher has to wait.”

Other times, the delivery by the instructor would pause, with students having to wait for the continued presentation; however, as voiced by one participant, with the assistance of a tech support individual, this aspect was considered minimal. “The only aspect I didn’t like was that it would be hard to hear my instructor because there were technical difficulties so he would cut out here and there. Having a better connection would be nice. But it was handy that tech support was available.”

Of particular note, negative comments came from two students who reported they performed and learned better in a face-to-face class. Comments included, “I learn best by being present in a classroom. I tend to get distracted by everything around me in my home setting” and “When a student has an instructor in front of the class (in a classroom setting), it’s more engaging.”

The fourth research question considered participant perceptions of the impact of the webinar course delivery model on their learning. Several positive comments regarding student learning included: “It is very nice to not have to go to Semo to take the course. I feel like I am getting the same education because I am able to communicate with the teacher
and then the teacher communicates right back.” “I liked the aspect that we could watch and participate with another class if we weren’t able to participate in the night that we were registered. “I liked the ability to be at home on my computer, yet, I still had classroom type access to the instructor. I was still able to ask questions and interact with classmates’ real time.” “This format is far better to me than web courses. The class was enjoyable, got as much as a face-to-face class, still got interaction all though it was web-based.” And another student commented, “I get the same knowledge out of actually going to the classroom as I do sitting at home watching webinar. If I have questions on webinar then I ask. I also am still capable of associating with other colleagues via email.” These comments were confirmed at least to some degree by an analysis of student learning outcomes.

In the Fall of 2011 and Spring of 2012, Southeast Missouri State University was evaluated for accreditation by The Higher Learning Commission (HLC, 2012). The HLC requires all institutions of higher education to develop Action Projects. Southeast Missouri State University chose as one action plan: the development, implementation and assessment of formalized course-level student learning outcomes (Category 1-Helping Students Learn). The plan called for the development of student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all courses and to measure student attainment of these outcomes. All courses were required to contain three SLOs starting in Fall of 2012 (HLC Action Project, 2012).

The following SLOs were developed for the School Law courses in this research: a) Demonstrate the ability to locate, read and critique assigned texts, legal opinions and articles; b) Demonstrate the ability to integrate legal and ethical knowledge and provide rational and defensible solutions to problem scenarios; and c) Be able to analyze legal opinions and evaluate the impact of these opinions on students, teachers, administrators, and parents in their schools and communities. A rubric was developed to assess the SLOs. SLOs are assessed only for those students who complete the course. All 45 students originally enrolling completed the course and were assessed. The assessment is either the student met the SLO or the student did not. A summary of the SLO data for both sections are presented in Table 1.
Table 1

*Student Learning Outcomes Summary Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Students Assessed</th>
<th>Met the Criteria</th>
<th>Percent Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demonstrate the ability to locate, read and critique assigned texts, legal opinions and articles</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Demonstrate the ability to integrate legal and ethical knowledge and provide rational and defensible solutions to problem scenarios</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Be able to analyze legal opinions and evaluate the impact of these opinions on students, teachers, administrators, and parents in their schools and communities</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depth of Knowledge Level (Webb and others, 2005) is one way to evaluate learning outcomes. The four Depth of Knowledge (DoK) levels reflect the complexity of a task or information in relation to the prior student knowledge (Webb’s depth of knowledge guide, 2009). A brief description of the four DoK levels follows:

- **a)** DoK Level one tasks involve basic recall and recognition skills.
- **b)** Level two tasks include summarization and predictive skills.
- **c)** Level three tasks demand short-term higher order thinking skills and the ability to draw conclusions from academic texts.
- **d)** Level four activities involve extended thinking skills as well as the synthesis and analysis of information from various sources.

The first SLO (locate, read, and critique assigned texts, legal opinions and articles) calls for the ability to critique text materials and analyze and explain legal issues. A lack of prior student knowledge and the need to acquire legal language skills supports this SLO as a DoK level three task. Data indicates that all students were able to meet this criterion. The second (integrate legal and ethical knowledge and provide rational and defensible solutions) and third SLO (analyze legal opinion’s and evaluate the impact of these opinions on students, teachers, administrators, and parents) require extended thinking and the application of information to solve ill-defined problems. Therefore, these two SLOs can be viewed as more difficult DoK level four learning tasks. Consequently, only 86% met the second SLO and 89% the third SLO.

**Discussion**

In a meta-analysis of research into the effectiveness of online learning, Means et al. (2013) found students in a blended model of instruction performed significantly better than students in a traditional face-to-face course. Blended courses have the potential to
Webinar as a Course Delivery Method

overcome some of the barriers inherent in online courses to student learning including a lack of social interaction with peers (Muilenburg & Berge, 2005) and the instructor (Jaschik & Lederman, 2013), a lack of routine, and feelings of isolation (Wong, 2007).

This preliminary research indicates that webinar may combine the positive benefits of distance learning and in-person course participation. Students could login to the webinar from anywhere broadband Internet connection was available. Class materials, handouts, web links, and homework assignments and instructions were posted online giving students access at their convenience. New materials or emerging trends in education law could be discussed in the webinar and then uploaded to the learning management system (LMS) for student download or reading at their leisure. Webinars were recorded by the instructor and made available for students to review at their convenience. Similarly to a blended or hybrid course, the class met at a predetermined time. Several students commented on the importance of the real time chat room to ask questions and view other student posts and responses to instructor prompts. At least two students commented that they felt more comfortable posting a question or a comment in the chat room than when participating in an in-person classroom.

In addition, one of the advantages of online learning is flexibility and convenience (Poole 2000; Singh & Pan, 2008–2009). Several students in this study commented on convenience as a primary factor in their choice to enroll in the webinar course. For example, some students preferred to login to the webinar from home. Others chose to stay at their campus with other faculty members enrolled in the course.

Approximately 98% of graduate students met SLOs at DoK levels three or less during these semesters. As illustrated in this research the percentage of students meeting level four SLO criteria was somewhat less at 92–93%. Level four SLOs are more difficult when students bring little background knowledge (Webb, et al., 2009). For example, students in a curriculum class have been teaching for at least a few years. Therefore, they generally possess considerable curricular background knowledge (i.e. DoK levels, lesson planning and so forth). In courses such as school law, most graduate students do not bring as much background knowledge applying legal principles to ill-defined situations since these decisions are often referred to administrators and sometimes legal counsel.

Support for this teaching format was evident in that the University provided resources for both faculty and student use. Further research regarding online learning and the impact on student achievement will be informative as online classes are offered leading for degree completion, especially at the graduate level of education. In short, this study indicates that webinar course delivery may combine the best of hybrid and online learning for graduate degree-seeking students.

Implications and Recommendations

The study contributes to the understanding regarding online course delivery specifically with the webinar presentation. The findings of the study are consistent with the
literature when addressing the challenges and the positive aspects relative to asynchronous learning. With this in mind, the following implications and recommendations are presented.

**Design of the Course**

Class size should be controlled. It is important that the instructor ensure that all students are able to participate in the chat room and have a voice. For the Southeast experience, it was suggested that a class enrollment of no more than 25 would be appropriate for teaching, providing feedback, and engaging students in group activities.

Frequent checks for understanding should be built into the course during each session. Misunderstanding of material was found to be more common during online presentations when compared to face-to-face classes. Frequent checks assisted students in their learning and understanding of the subject and resource materials.

Instructors should design the class and have all documents uploaded into the webinar system at the beginning of the semester in which the course is taught. This will ensure that transitions are relatively smooth during each week of the course. Video recordings, Powerpoint presentations, and online resources should be available from the beginning of the semester for student use.

**Professional Development**

Webinar teaching is often perceived as more difficult for the instructor to design, implement, and assess. At Southeast, the Center for Scholarship and Teaching is offered as a faculty resource. This Center provides instruction relative to software and hardware requirements as well as how to design and deliver a course online. Ongoing support throughout the semester is available to faculty.

**Technology Support**

Technology support is essential during the course. For this course delivery, the first class session was scheduled as a face-to-face class in order for technology instruction and requirements to be presented. Regardless of the expertise or experience of the instructor, it was deemed important to have a technology instructor to also attend the class to be available for questions regarding how to use the chat room, post assignments, and to address the hardware required for participation.

From the findings of the study regarding the use of the webinar format as an instructional delivery model, further questions have emerged. First, the instructor for this study is considering a course design of using the webinar format for several sessions of the class (3–4 sessions of meetings), with online assignments provided for the remainder of the semester. The webinar session could meet once per month of the semester, with the remaining weeks presented as totally online. Questions emerge as to the effectiveness of this blended approach and the impact on student learning. This information could provide additional information regarding the educational experience and preferences of students as they complete their degrees.
Limitations and Implications for Further Research

This research has several limitations. First and foremost, this research is based on a relatively limited convenience sample of participants. At least four students did comment that they learned as much in the webinar course as they would in a traditional face-to-face course. However, confounding factors make comparisons of student learning outcomes in a face-to-face, hybrid, webinar or online course difficult. Therefore further research into the relative effectiveness of student learning outcomes in webinar delivery should be undertaken.

References
Center for the Study of Teaching and Learning (CSTL). (n.d.). Retrieved from (http://cstl.semo.edu/cstl)
Scaling of Educational Leadership Candidates’ Commitment to the ISLLC Standards: The ELCBS Scale

Dorothy C. Rea  
Florida Gulf Coast University

Thomas C. Valesky  
Florida Gulf Coast University

Cecil F. Carter  
Florida Gulf Coast University

Judy Wilkerson  
Florida Gulf Coast University

Abstract

Colleges of education are faced with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (2014) requirements to assess dispositions in addition to knowledge and skills. Preparation programs across the country are looking for ways to assess dispositions through valid and reliable measures. We describe the validation of a survey instrument to assess the dispositions of master’s degree candidates in Educational Leadership. We used the dispositions outlined in the Educational Leadership Policy Standards developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers. These standards provide a viable content domain from which to assess leaders’ affective learning. The instrument described in this article, the Educational Leader Candidate Belief Scale (ELCBS), was developed for measuring educational candidates’ leadership dispositions.

In this article, we describe the validation process for an instrument, Educational Leaders Belief Scale (ELCBS), designed to assess the level of commitment to Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) dispositions of master’s level educational leadership candidates. Assessing dispositions is important for a number of reasons, the most vital of which is to ensure pre-service preparation programs are graduating future school leaders who possess dispositions necessary for success. In addition, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) requires institutions to assess candidate dispositions (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2014). We began the process of developing an assessment instrument, the ELCBS, by using the dispositions enumerated in the document developed as a companion piece to the 2008 national Educational Leadership Policy Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008a) titled Performance Expectations and Indicators for Education Leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008b).
Dispositions Defined

To assess dispositions effectively, one needs to define the construct. Katz (1993) defined dispositions as patterns of behavior, exhibited frequently and intentionally in the absence of coercion, representing a habit of mind. Later, Perkins (1995) defined dispositions as the proclivities that lead us in one direction rather than another within the range of freedom possessed. Then in 2001, Ritchhart viewed dispositions as a collection of cognitive tendencies that capture one’s patterns of thinking, addressing the gap between abilities and actions.

Damon (2007) warned that for certification-related assessment, dispositions “must be based on clearly defined principles rather than the fuzzy intuitions of whoever happens to be in charge of the process at any one time” (p. 368). Dottin (2009) concluded that educators are just beginning to grapple with the definition. He further stated, “Dispositions, therefore, concern not only what professional educators can do (ability), but also what they are actually likely to do (actions)” (p. 85). The plethora of definitions, then, is of concern. In our work with dispositions and in working with our students, we have adopted the definition used by Wilkerson and Lang (2007): dispositions are attitudes, values, and beliefs that influence the use of knowledge and skills. We like this definition for two reasons: it encompasses other authors’ definitions and it focuses on the observable behaviors which can be evidence of dispositions.

Disposition Assessments

In an exploratory, qualitative study, Lindahl (2009) examined if and how dispositions were taught and assessed in principal preparation programs. All respondents who were interviewed considered that dispositions were a key element of principal preparation. In almost all cases, the dispositions identified in the ISLLC standards were used. He concluded that if dispositions were to be addressed in educational leadership programs, a valid and reliable instrument should be developed. However, he qualified this conclusion with cautionary questions about the reliability of assessment practices:

1. Is it possible to develop an effective process for assessing dispositions, or are there some idiosyncratic elements that might not conform well to even a well thought-out process?
2. What levels of expectations (“dispositional tolerance”) should be set and what levels define a passing score? Who determines this, and how?
3. How can evaluators prevent their personal biases in favor or against specific dispositions from entering into their subjective judgment of candidates?
4. Are dispositions synergistic in nature, where the whole is greater than a sum of the parts?

Currently at most institutions, the assessment of dispositions is largely dependent on the use of Likert scales of self-reported beliefs less closely linked to the standards than
instruments that measure cognitive abilities. Examples of instruments measuring cognitive abilities are reported by Richardson and Onwuegbuzie (2003); Brown, King, and Herron (2008); and Schulte, Edwards, and Edick (2008). Scale development is typically based on locally developed construct definitions such as those identified above, rather than the ISLLC standards directly. These studies also rely on classical statistical procedures, including descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and chi square tests.

**Research Questions**

The gap in the literature of leader dispositions assessment research is twofold. First, there is limited attention to building a scale that systematically samples from the content domain needed for accountability and accreditation (i.e., the ISLLC standards). Second, the measurement process is largely reliant on statistics that fail to address the assumptions for their use and/or do not lead to research designs that take advantage of pairing dispositions results with interval level achievement scores. The questions explored here are:

1. Does the Educational Candidates Leadership Belief Scale (ELCBS) provide a valid and reliable measurement of master’s level educational leadership students’ commitment to the ISLCC standards?
2. Do students who have had specific training in dispositions for educational leaders outperform students who have not been trained in these dispositions?

**Methodology**

In the Educational Candidates Leadership Belief Scale (ELCBS) the educational leadership candidates choose whether they agree or disagree on each of 53 statements which we created. There are eight to ten items on the ELCBS per ISLLC Performance Expectation (PE). Each statement was classified based on our expectation of how difficult the statement would be to answer correctly, with the goal of ensuring variability in responses. This is important because without variability in responses there is no measurement, only confirmation. We also associated each item in the instrument to the affective taxonomy by Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1964) as adapted to educational leadership (Wilkerson & Lang, 2011). This adapted taxonomy includes the following steps to internalization of an attitude, value or belief: **Unaware; Receiving; Responding; Valuing; Organization; and Characterizing**. Each successive step in the taxonomy increases internalization of the attitude, value or belief. Through the application of the taxonomy to the instrument, we recognize that there are levels of internalization of attitudes, values, beliefs and through internalization, an individual accepts or conforms to that attitude, value, or belief, resulting in direct behavior.

Existing measures, such as the one proposed by Brown, Kin, and Herron (2008), showing virtually no variability, are less likely to explain differences in performance. To avoid having no variability of responses in which respondents simply agreed to all items without much thought, we developed items so there was a mix of dichotomous responses of
“agree” and “disagree”. In other words, we worded the items so respondents must think carefully about each item before answering “agree” or “disagree”.

After administering the ELCBS to a sample of undergraduates and graduate students described below, we then tested the scale using the Rasch model of item response theory. The actual item scores were used to redefine the theory related to the construct of attitude toward the Standards. This definition of the construct can then be used to determine decisions about program design.

Instrument and Measurement Method

Thurstone (1928) defined attitudes to include a person’s inclinations, feelings, prejudice, bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and convictions about any topic. Both Likert and Thurstone scales are comprised of statements to which respondents agree or disagree, but the Thurstone’s technique requires a dichotomous decision (agree/disagree only), while Likert provides for a rating scale, typically five-points, from strongly agree to strongly disagree with a neutral midpoint. Roberts, Laughlin, and Wedel (1999) examined the relationship between Likert and Thurstone agreement scaling, recommending the Thurstone scale when extreme positions (e.g., high/low levels of commitment) are of interest:

… the Likert procedure may falter for individuals who hold extreme attitudinal positions when responses result from some type of ideal point process. This is because the Likert procedure is functionally a cumulative model of the response process, and as such, it is not always compatible with responses from an ideal point process. In contrast, the Thurstone procedure is functionally an unfolding model, and thus, it does correspond to the situation in which responses follow from an ideal point process. Due to this correspondence, the Thurstone procedure does not suffer from the degraded validity exhibited with the Likert method when individuals with extreme attitudes are measured. (pp. 229–230)

The Rasch (1960) model is the simplest form of item response theory, calling for careful delineation of the construct during the design stage (Wilson, 2005). Conceptually, the idea behind the Rasch model is simple. The ability (or, in this case, commitment) of individuals and the difficulty of items influence each other conjointly. The Rasch (1960) model places them on the same interval scale, so predictions about one from the other can be made. Rasch established the mathematical relationship between a person’s ability (or commitment) and the difficulty of an item, demonstrating that the probability of providing a correct response was related to the ability (or commitment) of the respondent.

Item response theory and the family of Rasch models permit ordinal level data, including dichotomous and rating scale items, to be converted to an interval scale. This allows more appropriate use of common statistics, providing advantages over a simple raw score (count) of correct responses. With a purposive sample and a skewed distribution,
inferential statistics are not appropriate. Rasch modeling is sample independent and requires neither a large sample nor a normal distribution (Bond & Fox, 2007). Rasch allows the user to create an interval level scale that can then be used for associational or intervention research designs in subsequent studies. Validity and reliability statistics can also be reported (Linacre, 2003). Rasch is extensively used by most modern test publishers, such as Pearson, in the development of major high-stakes tests.

Sample

Four groups of students were assessed. One group was composed of master’s level educational leadership candidates (n = 77), for whom the instrument was designed (please refer to research question number 1). A second group was composed of doctoral level students (n = 25). In addition, there were two groups of undergraduate students: one group was composed of sophomores enrolled in an instructional technology class (n = 24) and one group of seniors enrolled in an undergraduate measurement course (n = 48). The four groups completed the instrument to allow for comparisons across three levels of university experience. The total sample size was 177 (see Table 3).

Data Analysis

Statistical Results on ELCBS

Descriptive statistics are provided in Table 1. Note that these results include both raw scores for persons and scaled scores for both persons and items. In Rasch measurement, the extent to which items and people fit the mathematical model are reported for outfit and infit, which differ based on the extent to which outliers are incorporated. The mean expected mean square fit statistic is 1.0 with a standardized z value of zero. For ELCBS the fit statistics are provided in Table 2. Note that both items and persons fit the model well, meaning that scores were mathematically predictable based on the relative difficulty of each item and the relative commitment level of each individual.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for ELCBS, Fall 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Person Raw Scores</th>
<th>Rasch Person Measure (Commitment)</th>
<th>Rasch Item Measure (Difficulty)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>60.97</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7.87</td>
<td>13.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>96.58</td>
<td>84.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>44.32</td>
<td>22.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2
Fit Statistics for ELCBS, Fall 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Infit Mean Square</th>
<th>Standardized Z</th>
<th>Outfit Mean Square</th>
<th>Standardized Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 provides the variable map from the Rasch model, showing the relationship between items and people on the same vertical scale. Note that the person distribution on the left side of the map varies nicely from about 45 to 75 correctly answered items, and scores are skewed toward the higher end of the scale. As research continues with this instrument and students from lower levels of experience are added to the scale, we expect the distribution will be more normal. The right side of the map displays item difficulty with easy items at the bottom and harder items at the top. This side of the map shows there are still items at the bottom right that are too easy for these students. The spread of items on the right indicates that there is good coverage of the construct however, supporting construct validity of the instrument.

In Figure 2, the item measures (in measure order from most difficult at the top to least difficult items at the bottom) are provided for each item on the instrument except the eight which were dropped from the analysis—these eight items were not functioning well from a mathematical perspective in that their point biserial correlations were negative. Two items remaining in the ELCBS have a negative point biserial, but they were left in the scale since they tapped important traits and did not have a noticeable difference in overall scores. The expected range of .5 to 1.5 for infit and outfit statistics (Linacre, 2003) held for each item. Although there were two items with a negative point biserial correlation, each of the remaining items is functioning well.

Reliability and separation statistics are acceptable, with Cronbach’s alpha (KR-20) estimated at .72. The person reliability of .70 indicates satisfactory separation of about one and a half levels (separation = 1.61). Item reliability and separation are excellent at .97 and 6.07. The higher separation index for items shows that there is more variability in the scores, including a larger standard deviation. The lower index for persons indicates that the population is relatively homogeneous.
Figure 1. ELCBS Variable Map
It was hypothesized that students who were taught about the educational leadership dispositions would outperform students without such instruction. Descriptive statistics for all groups are listed in Table 3. From this data we conducted an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in SPSS, resulting in an $F$ value of 78.245 at 173 degrees of freedom, with $p=.000$. This analysis indicated a significant difference between the groups we had defined (sophomores, seniors, master’s, and doctoral level students). Since the difference in the mean ELCBS scores was significant, a post-hoc Least Significant Difference (LSD) test was conducted. The result of the LSD test indicated a significant difference, again with $p=.000$, between all pairs of groups except sophomores and seniors ($p=.315$). The group mean difference between master’s students (the group being trained in dispositions) is about 1.5 standard deviations higher than seniors (with little to no experience in schools) and about 1.8 standard deviations higher than doctoral students. One might believe that the doctoral group would have been highest, but they have not yet benefited from instruction in dispositions.

Figure 2. Items in Measure Order
Table 3  
*SPSS Output of Descriptive Statistics for ELCBS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>53.50</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54.72</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>66.40</td>
<td>5.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>59.24</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>60.37</td>
<td>7.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusions and Implications**

Evidence of construct validity and reliability (internal consistency and separation reliability) were presented in this study. Use of the ELCBS is, therefore, providing useful data to document educational leadership program strategies that are working. This is evidence of construct validity.

In most contexts, we would expect doctoral students to score higher than master's level students. In the research reported in this study, however, only master’s students are receiving training in dispositions, so we view this as a positive finding, supporting our general hypothesis that training can make a difference in the development of positive dispositions in educational leadership. The master’s level students were trained during their program to improve their dispositions in Educational Leadership. This is not the case with the doctoral students since this cohort of doctoral students was new to the program and the cohort was composed of only a few students who completed a master’s degree in Educational Leadership, but had many from curriculum and instruction, and an equal number from higher education with degrees outside education.

Eight items were dropped from the analysis as items that were not working well mathematically as described above. These items will need to be reviewed. In addition, all items will need to be reviewed for placement on Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1964) taxonomy as adapted by Authors (2011).

Our goal is to increase students’ awareness of the proper dispositions to be successful school leaders. Several possibilities for improving candidate dispositions in this area exist. Coursework that encompasses the ISLLC Performance Expectations could be added into the program’s curriculum. Candidates could then articulate their positions to appropriate audiences. Candidates could be counseled on an individual basis concerning dispositional areas in which to improve. A third possibility for improving dispositions would be to include special projects related to Performance Expectations in the candidate internships. This option might be especially viable; inasmuch as internships includes experiences related to social justice.
References


