Contemporary Issues in Instructional Leadership

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Textbook Proposal

I. STATEMENT OF AIMS AND RATIONALE

The 2011 University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) conference theme boldly states that the “value of leadership preparation is under assault from multiple directions and by multiple stakeholders” and challenges scholars to critically explore “effective research-based policies and best practices to pave a way forward for the future of quality leadership preparation and practice” (UCEA program committee). In our edited collection, Postcards from the Schoolhouse: Practitioner Scholars Examine Contemporary Issues in Instructional Leadership, we unflinchingly tackle this challenge. Drawing upon the current literature as well as our own extensive professional experience as practitioner scholars, we discuss the most salient and compelling curricular and instructional leadership topics in contemporary education. The objective of the book is to provide practicing and pre-service administrators with relevant, practical, and scholarly treatment of key issues and reforms that they will face as school and district leaders.

Themes include professional learning communities, Common Core Standards, value added assessment, school turnaround, teacher leadership, 21st century learning, technology as a catalyst for school improvement, reflective leadership, and the principal’s role as an instructional leader. The theoretical framework of practitioner scholarship grounds our work, and the introductory chapter establishes this framework and both draws upon and disrupts previous scholar practitioner conceptualizations. While there is sizable theoretical and philosophical literature on the scholar practitioner, there are few books that are explicitly written by and for practitioner scholars. Additionally, while there are books about each of the topics that are addressed in the text, there is no
current or recent book that pulls together writing on these topics, nor is there a book that does so from the practitioner scholar perspective.

II. BOOK SYNOPSIS, LENGTH, AND SCHEDULE

Each of the chapters in this edited volume focuses on contemporary issues in instructional leadership, and all are written from the perspective of practitioner scholars. The authors in this collection are ethically committed to just education for all students, drawing upon scholarship and embodied experience to navigate, critique, and act in ways that are responsive to their situatedness.

Each of the chapters includes a focused literature review of the topic/issue. The annotated table of contents below includes for each chapter some of the key scholars/works used to ground the piece. The scholarly treatment of each issue/topic is woven with the authors’ professional experience and expertise. Authors generally incorporate their experience and expertise by either integrating their professional experience throughout the entire piece seamlessly, as in Chapters 2 and 7, or by including short, blocked vignettes, as in Chapters 1 and 4. In building this collection, we balanced the need for consistency of formatting and style with providing our authors the freedom to use the approach that best fits their topic.

The table of contents below indicates the variety and breadth with which we address contemporary issues faced by practitioner scholars. The projected length of the entire book, including references and footnotes, will be approximately 71,000 words, and we plan to deliver the completed typescript by September, 2012. Incorporated in the manuscript will be a total of 5-7 tables and diagrams.

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INTRODUCTION: The Tension of Leadership: On Being a Practitioner Scholar
(Kimberly Kappler Hewitt)

The introduction grounds the collection in the theoretical framework of practitioner scholarship and explains the germination of this project in a graduate educational leadership course. The author draws upon the work of Foucault (1977), Friere (1970), Giroux (1994; 1992), Horn, Conway, and Williams (2007), Jenlink (multiple), Kinchloe (1999), and Schultz (2010), both building upon and disrupting previous conceptualizations of the scholar practitioner. Additionally, the introduction provides an overview of each of the chapters.
CHAPTER 1: 21st Century Learning: The Call for Change  
(Diane Hill and Jean Maness)

As educators, one leading a school and one leading at the district office level, the authors feel as caught up in the turmoil and ambiguity that is the transition to Common Core State Standards as other educational leaders. At the same time, they realize that this transition, one of great magnitude and breadth, is an opportunity to transform what they do as educators and how they support students in the process of ‘schooling.’ The authors offer support for capitalizing on this time to change through a critical study of 21st century learning based in the expectations of the Common Core State Standards. The authors draw upon the work of Lombardi (2007), the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009), Quay (2010), Salpeter (2008), Shames (2010), Silva (2009), and others to thoroughly identify and discuss what 21st century learning is, why it is a paradigm shift, and why this shift is crucial to make now.

CHAPTER 2: Common Core Standards: Curricular Consistency vs. Instructional Freedom  
(Elizabeth M. Hodge and Rhonda C. Schuhler)

The promise of Common Core standards is that of greater consistency, higher standards, and increased instructional quality for our students. But what are we sacrificing in adopting national standards? The authors ground their discussion of Common Core in the work of Burke and Marshall (2010), the Campaign for High School Equity (2009), the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2011), Phillips and Wong (2010), Ravitch (2010), Quay (2010), and Schmidt and Prawat (2006). As district-level curriculum and professional development leaders charged with spearheading Common Core implementation, the authors recognize that there are benefits and pitfalls associated with this shift. This chapter reflects upon their adoption process and challenges the reader to consider the implications on teaching and learning of Common Core standards implementation.

CHAPTER 3: The Principal as Collaborative Leader: Relationships, Coaching, and PLCs  
(Brian Muller, Jennifer Reed, and Darrell Thomas)

Instructional leadership is at the heart of school reform. This chapter, penned by principals currently in the field, weaves personal experiences and research around instructional leadership into a tapestry that highlights the role of the principal as a collaborative leader. Drawing on the work of Bennis (2009), Bloom, Castagna, Moir, and Warren (2005), Dufour and Marzano (2011), Knight (2011), and Louis, Leithwood, Wahstrom, and Anderson (2010), the authors identify relationship building, providing
instructional coaching for improved teacher quality, and leading professional learning communities as the critical components of a collaborative school culture. The authors reflect on their own experiences and offer up their perspectives in conjunction with research in the field of instructional leadership.

CHAPTER 4: Professional Learning Communities: Building a Culture of Collaboration
(Cheri Keels and Lance Stokes)

The authors, both of whom serve as urban principals, explore the benefits of creating a culture of collaboration through professional learning communities (PLCs). Reflecting on their own experiences as teachers and administrators, as well as existing research by Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, and Many (2010), Nelson, Slavitt, Perkins, and Hathorn (2008), Wilhelm (2009), and others, the authors discuss the roles of data, student learning, and teacher inquiry in designing and sustaining effective PLCs. In suggesting concrete processes for transforming a culture of isolation to one of teacher collaboration and inquiry, this chapter represents a useful resource for educational leaders interested in maximizing the success of their professional learning communities.

CHAPTER 5: Critical Reflection: The Key to Second Order Change
(Elizabeth Price and Leslie Eldreth)

In an era of increased emphasis on accountability and reform, educational leaders grapple with facilitating efficient and effective transformation within schools impacted by poverty. This chapter describes teacher reflection and collaboration as powerful tools in implementing second order change in turn-around schools. Drawing from a wide breadth of research, including the work of Cady, Distad, and Germundsen (1998), Darling-Hammond, Williamson, and Hyler (2007), Dewey (1933), Hoffman et al (1994), Loughran (2002), and Schon (1983), the authors engage in a hard, honest discussion of the difficulties and frustrations of developing a new school culture that is ultimately based on trust, positive relationships, and reflective practice.

CHAPTER 6: Technology: Catalyst for School Improvement

The authors share their experiences and the lessons they have learned as participants in a broad-ranging grant project that leverages technology as a catalyst for school improvement in high poverty schools. Principals of rural schools in North Carolina, the authors draw upon literature on technology
leadership, school reform, and democratic schooling to examine the possibilities and challenges of utilizing technology to support and cultivate a team-based approach to school reform.

CHAPTER 7: Value Added: Pitfalls and Potential for Instructional Leadership
(Kimberly Kappler Hewitt)

Drawing on her experience as a building and district administrator and the extant literature, including the work of Baker et al (2010), Corcoran (2010), Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, and Rothstein (2012), Harris (2011), McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, Louis, and Hamilton (2004) Papay (2011) and Sanders (2006), the author examines the difficulty of utilizing value added to inform leadership and instruction. Challenges include instability of the data, limitations of the tests upon which value added measures are based, the opaqueness of value added methodology, and concerns over narrowing of the curriculum. The chapter provides vivid examples and closes with strategies for using value added data in an ethical and efficacious manner.

CHAPTER 8: Revisioning High School: Early College High Schools
(Diane Hill)

In the current era of high school reform, the early college high school initiative is gaining momentum. The interest in and creation of early college high schools in North Carolina began in 2001. Since then, the number of these innovative, collaborative high schools has grown rapidly across the state, with over 75 early college high schools operating in 2012. As an early college principal herself, the author understands that to be successful, early college principals must embrace collaboration and distributed leadership. Since these schools are usually located on the campus of a community college or university, the high school principal works with administrators from the school district as well as the college or university’s administration. Navigating the strange waters of early college leadership involves cultivating a collaborative, learning centered culture. The author situates her discussion of Early College High Schools within the work of Goodwin, Cunningham, and Eager (2005), William and Southers (2010), Kisker (2006), Vargas and Miller (2011), Thompson and Ongara (2011), the American Institutes for Research & SRI (2009), Berger, Adelman, and Cole (2010), Hallinger (2005), and Leithwood (2005), amongst others.
CHAPTER 9: *Outsider-Within: A Journey towards Transformative Teacher Leadership*  
(Cherese Childers-McKee)

In casting a critical gaze on top-down hierarchical models of leadership, the author explores the effectiveness of distributed leadership in transforming the ways in which teachers view their roles in education. Interwoven in a discussion of scholarship in this area, including the work of Barth (2001), Giroux (1985), Harris and Spillane (2008), Shields (2004), and Spillane and Healey (2010), the author reflects upon her own journey and struggles in understanding the nuances of teacher leadership. In closing, the chapter offers suggestions for empowering teachers to view themselves as transformative forces in an educational environment.

CONCLUSION  
(Carl Lashley and Aaron Woody)

The authors adroitly pull together the key themes and compelling arguments from each of the chapters and provide a powerful vision of practitioner scholars who serve as instructional leaders for their schools and as advocates for a new tomorrow for public schools—a tomorrow focused on socially just and equitable education for each student.

III. THE TARGET MARKET

We envision two key audiences for the book. Educator Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)—those for teachers as well as those for administrators—continue to grow in popularity. Often PLCs use a core text as a centripetal force for the PLC’s focus (Hewitt, 2012). We believe that this book would be a top choice for administrative PLCs, given its focus on contemporary issues in curricular and instructional leadership, as well as its practitioner scholar framework.

The second key audience for the book, graduate courses for practicing and pre-service administrators, would also benefit from the compelling discussions of key issues in educational leadership addressed in this book. Educational leadership preparation programs often include coursework on contemporary issues in curricular and instructional leadership (see below), and recent scholarship (English, et al, 2012) further promotes the need for pedagogically oriented leadership preparation programs. Indeed, the work of this book grew out of such a course, entitled *Contemporary Problems: Leadership and Instructional Practice*. When one of our editors, Dr. Kimberly Kappler Hewitt, was looking for texts for the course, she was disappointed by the paucity of available works addressing contemporary issues in curricular and instructional leadership. Similarly, leadership
preparation program faculty who are invested in cultivating practitioner scholars will find great merit in this text. As educational leadership programs and classes become increasingly focused on practitioner scholarship, we believe that this book both serves a need and fills a gap in the current leadership preparation market. In fact, we have a commitment from the educational leadership department at our university to adopt this book for the *Contemporary Problems: Leadership and Instructional Practice* course. Listed below is a diverse sampling of other postgraduate leadership preparation courses on contemporary issues in curricular and instructional leadership for which this book would be appropriate.

- **ELC 688-01D** Contemporary Problems: Leadership and Instructional Practice (University of North Carolina at Greensboro)
- **EDST 5461** Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership (University of New South Wales)
- **EDLPS 569** Issues in P-12 School Reform (University of Washington)
- **EDLPS 479** Crucial Issues in Education (University of Washington)
- **EDD 802** Contemporary Issues in Regional Stewardship (Northern Kentucky University)
- Instructional Leadership and Educational Reform—Fall Year 1 (Vanderbilt University)
- **EDLF759** Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership (Brigham Young University)
- **282A.** Beginning Issues and Practices: Contemporary Leadership (UC Davis)
- **EDL 980:** Current Issues in Educational Leadership (Clemson University)
- **EDLE 634:** Contemporary Issues in Education Leadership (George Mason University)

In addition, many leadership preparation programs require at least three courses in curriculum and instructional leadership. This book would likely fit the content of one of those courses. For example, Auburn University requires **EDLD 7330**: *Introduction to Curriculum and Instructional Leadership*.

While this book focuses on key issues in American education, many of these topics (e.g., value added, school turnaround, rural school improvement, distributed leadership, and teacher leadership) are relevant in other nations, as evidenced by the recurrence of these topics in international journals.

**IV. COMPETING BOOKS**

We assert that our book represents a unique collection of theoretically grounded, contemporary issues relevant to the preparation and practice of educational leaders.

- While there are competing books that address contemporary issues in leadership, few are focused on contemporary issues in instructional leadership, and none reflects the distinctive voices of practitioner scholars. In addition, our book provides suggestions, recommendations, and discussion points that would make it more pedagogically useful for a class or PLC:

Jazzar & Algozzine provide lengthy legal references and a focus on school management and organization in educational leadership. Their text is not focused on instructional leadership.


Marx presents trends in education from the perspective of a futurist and entrepreneur, not an educator. Additionally, the text is focused on broad-based trends, as opposed to specific issues in instructional leadership.


Items in this collection provide theoretical and empirical analyses of contemporary policy issues in education. This book does not share our emphasis on instructional leadership, not does it incorporate a practitioner scholar approach.


Although some of the issues engaged in Rosenbach & Taylor’s book continue to be relevant in a discussion of preparing future leaders, their text is over a decade old and does not fulfill the demand for cutting-edge research and discussions about the most recent trends in education.

- The single-topic books listed below address some of the individual issues discussed in our book. However, none of them presents a collection of diverse, contemporary issues within one text uniquely interwoven with the experiences and perspectives of practitioner scholars.


V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Our editorial team is working diligently to ensure that each chapter contains consistent, academic caliber writing that is backed by substantial research and theoretical literature. We have assigned an editor to each author/author team, and the editor is working intimately with her authors to ensure that each chapter showcases quality writing and insightful thinking. At this point, all chapters in the book are newly commissioned, and we do not envision the need to excise any chapters; however, we do have an auxiliary plan involving replacement material in case we need to remove a chapter from the book.

The central theme of the book, contemporary issues in curricular and instructional leadership, is undergirded by a consistent theoretical framework of practitioner scholarship. Chapters refer to one another in a way that coheres them together but does not preclude reading chapters out of order or reading less than the entire book. Furthermore, all chapters in the book draw upon both theoretical and empirical literature related to the chapter topics, as well as the authors’ professional experiences as practitioner scholars. In order to further strengthen the quality of our book, we will include both a robust introductory chapter written by Dr. Kimberly Kappler Hewitt as well as a conclusion chapter written by Dr. Carl Lashley and Dr. Aaron Woody of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

We can provide author and student resources in the form of additional readings, discussion guides, website links, and a glossary. For each chapter we could provide links to readings and documents on the chapter topic as well as an online glossary of key terms used in the book with links to examples/further information on the term. In addition, we could provide a discussion guide for each chapter, which
would facilitate active engagement and meaningful class/PLC discussion. These resources will enable readers to delve more deeply into the topics and encourage further study.

VI. REFERENCES


Transactional vs. Transformational Leadership. Transactional - leaders who guide or motivate their followers in the direction of established goals by clarifying role and task requirements. Transformational - leaders who inspire followers who transcend their own self-interests and who are capable of having a profound and extraordinary effect on followers. Visionary Leadership. The ability to create and articulate a realistic, credible, attractive vision of the future for an organization or organizational unit that grows out of and improves upon the present. Q: What skills do visionary leaders e 12 Leadership Issues Ratings Example Local State National International Efficiency Control Resources Opportunity Direct Impact Crises Economics High Low High Low High Low High Low High Low High Low High Low On a piece of paper. Complete the following grid and select high or low. See example on board. 13 21 Possible Leadership Issues Workforce RecruitingWorkforce Development Workforce Retention Workplace CulturePeople ManagementStrategy ExecutionInnovationChange Crisis ManagementEthicsTechnology EconomicsLegislationGlobalization Changing Demographics EfficiencyControl ResourcesOpportunitiesDirect