ABSTRACT

Jana Rawls, UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEIVED EFFECT OF A MASTER OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION (MSA) PROGRAM ON INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP (Under the direction of Dr. Marjorie Ringler). Department of Educational Leadership, March 2016.

The role of leaders in schools has changed over the last thirty years from managers to instructional facilitators (Leithwood & Rhiel, 2003; The Wallace Foundation, 2013). The move away from an industrial assembly line economy has made a quality education of paramount importance. President Barack Obama stated that reforming U.S. nation's schools will require more than developing teachers; it requires that school administrators focus their efforts on instructional leadership (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 1).

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2010 included preparation of effective principals as the part of the second goal (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). As one measure of success, states were required to report on the performance of principal preparation programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The language in the reauthorization challenged faculty of colleges and universities to examine the methods in which they prepare school leaders for service. Session Law in 2007 under House Bill 536 required, "all currently licensed MSA programs in NC to revision existing programs to meet 2006 NC School Executive Standards" (East Carolina University, LEED Department, 2013).

This study followed up with ECU MSA graduates to gain their perceptions about their preparation in instructional leadership under the revised MSA program.

This study was a mixed methods design in order to identify trends in responses and the institutional factors that impact graduates instructional leadership after graduation from the revised ECU MSA program that started with the graduating class of 2012. These data provided a

better understanding of the perceptions of ECU MSA graduates about their preparation to be instructional leaders.

A longitudinal analysis of the survey was conducted by analyzing graduates responses prior to beginning their internship, at the completion of their internship, and as graduates. A descriptive analysis of the twelve NCSSE Instructional Leadership practices were analyzed by their mean and standard deviations for the pre-internship, post internship and post-graduation. *T-tests* using Microsoft Excel 2010 software were also conducted for each set of data in each of the twelve NCSSE Instructional Leadership practices.

UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEIVED EFFECT OF A MASTER OF SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION (MSA) PROGRAM ON INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

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Jana Rawls

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UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEIVED EFFECT OF A MASTER OF SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION (MSA) PROGRAM ON INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

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DEDICATION

I give all the honor and praise to God for giving me the strength to endure.

To my three beautiful children- KJ, Keila and Camryn- I love you.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On a yearly basis approximately 1.3 million students fail to graduate from high school (Amos, 2006). The principal is the instructional leader of the school and therefore key in affecting graduation rates. Research on school leadership has indicated that successful principals influence student achievement (Bevoise, 1984; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; The Wallace Foundation, 2013) which may lead to fewer drop outs. Many researchers are focusing on school administrators to improve the graduation rate of children in schools. The role of leaders in schools has changed over the last thirty years from managers to instructional facilitators (Leithwood & Rhiel, 2003; The Wallace Foundation, 2013). The Wallace Foundation has invested in several research studies structured to investigate the effectiveness of school administrators. Christine DeVita, president of the Wallace Foundation stated that specifics about program attributes that can affect the way leaders work to improve student learning is needed (Davis et al., 2005).

Traditionally, school administrators have been viewed as the building managers. They have been expected to manage resources and facilities while teachers taught. With increasing pressure to improve instruction in schools, the school administrator's role within the school building has shifted to instructional leaders. Joseph Murphy (2001) suggests three metaphors to help understand the shift to instructional leadership: (1) moral stewardship, (2) educator and (3) community builder. As moral stewards, leaders must possess values and beliefs that will encourage and motive others to do what is in the best interest of students. Leaders will inspire and encourage others to move outside traditions and norms for the greater good of all children. All decisions by all members of the organization are based on ethical values and a greater moral justice. Educators focus of teaching and learning within the building, not just the management of

the building while community builders focus outside the building. Community builders focus on interpersonal relationships with people. They focus on encouragement and empowerment rather than control to build the organization. Murphy further suggests that the field of school administrator preparation should include a compilation of methods: processes (metacognition and decision making skills), roles, functions and tasks, (activities of a school leader) knowledge (technical know-how and practice) and methods (strategy for definition of the school administrator). Because the school leadership style must encompass all of these methods, the leader becomes a facilitator for followers. Presented in this chapter is an introduction of the background research on school leadership and how the role of the school leader has changed over time from managerial to instructional. As political pressures have increased to push for improved student achievement, professors in school administration programs have had to change the way they deliver instruction. Next a problem statement is presented that guides the dissertation study. The significance of the study, the study design, and study delimitations will describe the study in more detail.

Background of the Study

President Barack Obama wrote, "A world class education is a moral imperative-the key to securing a more equal, fair and just society" (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 1). He further stated that reforming U.S. nation's schools will require more than developing teachers; it requires that school administrators focus their efforts on instructional leadership. As a result of political pressures, school leadership has become a widely researched area of study in recent history (Northouse, 2013). The definition of leadership has evolved for more than a century. Leaders, whose role was often thought of in a managerial style of control and power, are now

seen as influencers to help a group achieve a common goal.(National Eduation Association, 2008; Northouse, 2013).

The traditional school leaders were responsible for management of the school. This included being the disciplinarian, maintaining building safety, being the financial expert and community relations director. The administrator as manager ensured that teachers had all the things they needed to teach and then allowed them to do so. The leader controlled the school environment (National Eduation Association, 2008; Northouse, 2013).

In the 21st century it has become imperative that school leaders spearhead the change necessary to facilitate learning (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). The goal of educational leadership has become one of facilitating goal attainment for the group through establishing a culture of interaction to achieve common goals (Northouse, 2013; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Various leadership styles lend themselves to instructional leadership, for example situational, transformational and team. Situational leaders identify where followers are on the developmental continuum and adjust their leadership style to meet the needs of their followers. Transformational leaders are transparent in their beliefs and attitudes about the school environment. They empower followers and support them throughout the change process. Likewise, the team style of leadership is one in which the leader uses a team approach to support change necessary to help the organization succeed. The leader takes the steps necessary to help the followers be effective (Northouse, 2013).

As the focus to improve schools has increased, school administrators have come under scrutiny. While 48 states require some sort of administrator preparation certification, the components of that preparation vary widely from state to state (National Eduation Association, 2008). In a 2003 public agenda poll, 96% of practicing principals indicated that colleagues, not

their preparation programs were helpful in their development as instructional leaders (National Eduation Association, 2008). Because school leaders face an unprecedented amount of responsibilities in the 21st century, it is important to examine how leaders are prepared (Hess & Kelly, 2002).

Administrator Preparation in NC

In 2007, Federick Hess and Andrew Kelly completed a study to examine vital administrative responsibilities to become effective leaders. The responsibilities were, "managing for results, managing personnel, technical knowledge, external leadership, norms and values, managing classroom instruction, and leadership and school culture" (Hess & Kelly, 2002, p. 4). The University of North Carolina (UNC) Board of Governors Subcommittee on Teacher and School Leader Quality made recommendations on what should occur in UNC preparation programs to produce quality educators. Recommendation 5 was to improve the selection process for entry into administrator preparation programs and to use evidence based models for best practice in preparation programs (University of North Carolina, 2014). The Board further recommended that preparation programs be grounded in 21st century skills and knowledge. The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2010 renewed the focus to improve administrator preparation programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Leadership Preparation

To fully understand the purpose of how universities plan for the preparation of school leaders, the ESEA was examined. With the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2010 came a renewed commitment to strengthen public education in the US (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The second goal of the ESEA includes preparation of effective principals. The goal was to have highly effective teachers in schools led

4

by highly effective principals. Each state was charged with the task of identifying measures of student growth and academic achievement. As one measure of success, states were required to report on the performance of principal preparation programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The language in the reauthorization challenged faculty of colleges and universities to examine the methods in which they prepare school leaders for service. As university faculties review their programs for preparation, they must also examine the needs of administrators. A key issue for administrators at struggling schools has been identified as their unwillingness to collaborate on task for fear of losing control, which leads to micromanagement and inevitably suffocates any reform process (Wohlstetter, Kirk, Robertson, & Mohrman, 1997). School leaders are no longer just building managers. A key for goal for leaders should be empowering others (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). A style of leadership that operates on the premise of including others is servant leadership. Servant leaders put the needs of subordinates first and support their personal development (Northouse, 2013).

Administrators as Servant Leaders

With the publication of *The Servant as Leader* in 1970, Robert Greenleaf coined the term servant leader which he borrowed from a story written by Herman Hesse some fifteen years earlier. In this story, Leo travels with a group as their servant. Though a servant, he created a sense of community and well-being through his spirit and song. When Leo was no longer with the group, they became disjointed and did not complete the journey. A member of the group later found Leo, not as a servant, but as a leader in a different organization (Greenleaf, 1970). One does not often think of servant and leader acting in conjunction with each other; after all the definitions are exactly the opposite of each other. Webster Dictionary (An Encyclopeida Britannica Company, 2004) defines each as:

5

Servant: one that serves others especially one that performs duties about the person or home of a master or person employer; a person who is devoted to or guided by something

Leader: a person who leads; something that ranks first.

Greenleaf states that a true leader must be servant first (Greenleaf, 1970). He further stated, that as a leader or follower, the servant is constantly listening, searching and expecting great things (Greenleaf, 1970).

There are many styles of leadership such as transformational, participative, transactional, and situational. East Carolina University's (ECU's) Educational Leadership Department has developed their administrative preparation program of study based on the university's motto, "servire" which means to serve (East Carolina University, LEED Department, 2013). The purpose of this study was to understand how well ECU's MSA program prepared graduates to serve as instructional leaders.

Natural tendencies to lead in situations rise to the forefront when one is truly a servant within, which impacts the overall culture for instruction and learning in a school setting. In the article "Principals as Cultural Leaders", Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) state that instructional effectiveness in the classroom has a strong relationship with changes in culture. In order to meet the needs of all students, a culture of meaningful collaboration is essential to maintain focus on student learning. Instructional leaders address difficulties in learning systematically by creating processes to ensure that struggling students receive additional time and support for learning on a daily basis (DuFour, 2011; Golden, Kist, Trehan, & Padak, 2005). The school leader ensures that needs of others affected by the school climate are nurtured, which includes staff and students. Students who do not feel a connection with anyone in the school, who do not feel challenged or see a relevance to their daily lives outside of high school often drop out (Dunn, Chambers, &

Rabren, 2004). A foundation of a strong academic program sets the tone for all school interventions and is the basis for effective instruction (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2011). The school administrator is the leader of the school who sets the foundation of culture for effective instruction and learning to occur. A school principal can no longer just focus on buildings, books and buses. There has been a shift to also focus on service to the students and community while leading instructional reforms (Bevoise, 1984; Davis et al., 2005; Murphy, 2001; The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

This shift became more evident when federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law mandated that students should perform on grade level by 2014. When that standard was not met, this policy reignited conversations on how to meet the needs of all students within our public schools. A realization occurred that successful schools need more than successful teachers, but successful leaders as well. One educational columnist, Roger Hines (2015), wrote that the school principal is the pivot of educational leadership; the principal is a connecting link between the policy makers and the practitioners. Master of School Administration (MSA) students often learn how to manage schools, but being taught how to manage people and everyday scenarios becomes a bit more daunting.

Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards were developed to guide members of administrative preparation programs as they prepared courses for candidates (Young, Nash, & Tucker, 2015). As university faculty members prepare candidates to lead in schools, they face the challenges of balancing theory with practice. In order to affect change within a school, administrator preparation programs must also change since meaningful and sustained change depends on the leadership in the organization. The members of National Policy Board for Education Administration (NPBEA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers

(CCSSO) have led a national standards revision process to continue to ensure that standards are appropriate to meet the needs of schools today. Current law also mandated that MSA programs make improvements to meet twenty-first century modes of learning.

Session Law (S.L.) in 2007-517 under House Bill 536 required, "all currently licensed MSA programs in NC to revision existing programs to meet 2006 NC School Executive Standards" (North Carolina General Assembly, 2015). University faculties immediately began the task of recasting their MSA programs to meet the new policy guidelines. Meaningful change, however, is a process which occurs over time. As university staff revamp leadership programs, they must also constantly assess effectiveness. In this problem of practice study school level administrator preparation programs at ECU were analyzed. to determine if MSA graduates were successfully prepared to be instructional leaders; if core instructional objectives have moved away from teaching of theory into practical applications; and how this impacts principals' instructional leadership practice in the field.

Problem Statement

There is increasing research on how school administrators influence school effectiveness, less is known about how to help them develop the capacities that make a difference in how schools function and what students learn (Davis et al., 2005). As the professors within ECU's administrator preparation program continue to reorganize the structure of its MSA program, little research has occurred to follow up with graduates to determine whether they have successfully implemented the skills associated with leadership (i.e. teacher empowerment, community involvement and engagement, school culture, positive impact on learning, school improvement) within their administrative positions as instructional leaders.

Standard II, Instructional Leadership, on the North Carolina school executive standards was explored to understand how ECU MSA graduates implement best instructional practices for twenty-first century structures which have a direct impact on learning.

Standard II, Instructional Leadership, indicators of success include:

- Initiates conversations about instruction and student learning focused on specific goals and high expectations,

- Provides opportunities for teacher empowerment and uses distributive leadership,

- Holds and participates in meetings with stakeholders having discussions on 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment,

- Ensures that curriculum and assessments are aligned,

- Ensures that school processes facilitate creation, and sharing of rigorous, relevant, and engaging instructional lessons,

- Encourages staff to be reflective thinkers about the education of students,

- Creates processes for collecting and utilizing various data sources, instructional tools and best practices to meet instructional needs for all students,

- Creates processes to systematically observe in classrooms providing feedback on effectiveness of instruction, and

- Ensures resources are used to support instructional goals and teacher needs (NCSBE, 2006).

Significance of the Study

As schools communities grapple with the idea of ensuring that every child receives an appropriate and meaningful education, they are willing to explore ideas that expand on best practice and use creativity to extend current practices in order to produce results. This study is

appropriate in that it extends and applies knowledge coined by Greenleaf over forty-five years ago and expanded upon by various researchers, most notably Kenneth Leithwood, in recent years. Greenleaf discussed the importance of service as a leader. In his book, Greenleaf acknowledges that an attribute of a true leader is that he shows the way for others. He does so by being an example for others to follow. This study extended on these ideas by examining instructional leadership from a service leadership perspective. ECU's motto is "sevire" which means to serve. As ECU has shifted its MSA program of study to a sevire model, it was important to understand what their leadership preparation program entails.

One goal of the UNC system during its 2013-18 strategic planning cycle is to assess student learning gains (East Carolina University, 2013). ECU is dedicated to providing the best, most academically sound education possible for its students. Because of this commitment, it is crucial that ongoing research occurs within degree programs to assess effectiveness during and after program completion. Many districts are developing intensive support systems to help principals build the skills they need to effectively lead schools; graduating certified school leaders is simply not good enough to meet the demands of school leadership today.

School leadership is more complex than ever and is an essential factor in the success of schools (Leithwood & Rhiel, 2003). School leaders must manage a diverse student body with various social statuses and educational levels. Collaborations with many agencies that also serve children must occur (Leithwood & Rhiel, 2003). Marjorie Ringler, ECU professor, views the role of administrator preparation like an engineer who is building on human capital by helping the administrator learn to "nurture, support and develop teachers that stay in the classrooms and love teaching" (Militello, Ringler, Hodgkins, & Hester, n.d.). The overall purpose of the MSA program is to prepare effective school leaders.

MSA candidates are expected to understand and demonstrate leadership skills as they relate with the "North Carolina State Standards for School Executives and the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) through service leadership projects that impact school improvement" (East Carolina University, 2013). As the Department of Educational Leadership (LEED) faculty continues to revise the MSA program to provide meaningful experiences for their students, it is essential that assessment of whether or not practices are producing intended results and successful school based administrators. Therefore, the research in this study provided meaningful feedback for ECU's LEED faculty as they continue to evaluate and modify the MSA program to meet the needs of the various school districts which employ their graduates. The research in this study extends the body of knowledge about administrative preparation for instructional leadership at ECU.

Study Design

This study was a mixed methods design. Mixed methods designs are procedures for collecting, analyzing, and linking both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or multiphase series of studies (Creswell, 2012). Quantitative data was collected via the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (*NCSSE) self-assessment* survey in order to identify trends in responses of ECU MSA graduates of the revised program that started with the graduating class of 2012. Qualitative data was also collected using open-ended questions to understand the institutional factors that impact graduates instructional leadership after graduation. The combination of both forms of data provides a better understanding of the perceptions of ECU MSA graduates about their preparation to be instructional leaders. This information helps guide ECU faculty for continual improvement of the MSA program.

11

Delimitations

The limitations of this study are that only ECU MSA graduates in 2012, 2013 and 2014 were analyzed. The results of this study expand the body of knowledge needed to enhance the revision process in the ECU MSA program of preparing school instructional leaders to serve.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

From the beginning of formalized public education in North Carolina, leaders have helped to manage the daily operations of the building. The early years of education served the purpose of teaching students basic self-sufficiency skills. The building leader ensured that students and teachers were able to function during the school term. In today's society, school leaders are more than building managers but instructional facilitators as well. The traditional view of leadership noted by P.M. Senge (1990), was that leaders were at the forefront of organizations, led by establishing direction, held decision making capacity and power above all inspired followers. In traditional autocratic leadership, the leader is not only in charge of the organization, but takes personal control of the entity. A leader sets goals and is at the forefront of pointing the direction for attaining those goals (Greenleaf, 1970). In order to better understand where we have been with formal education in North Carolina, a review of history is needed.

Brief History of Education in North Carolina that Leads to Principal Preparation

In the earliest stages, 1780s, of formal education in North Carolina, the state government provided no financial support. The state constitution included a statement advising education by providing for establishment of schools for the convenient instruction of youth (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2001; Smith, 1888). In these established schools, the parents paid to hire a teacher and sustain the building and resources for the school. There were many families too poor to participate in this formal education process. These schools educated mostly affluent white males. Additionally, few women were educated on how to be good homemakers (Smith, 1888) in comparison to the numbers of white males receiving an education. Blacks were not educated at all (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1993; North Carolina State

Board of Education, 2001). As the government leaders began to recognize the disparities in education, the environment began to shift. Leadership shapes the culture of any organization (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1992). When those in charge model values and beliefs others will surely follow, as was the case with Archibald Murphey.

In the early 1800s, Murphey, a senator from Orange County, began the push to change delivery of education in North Carolina. He wanted to see a school fund and state board to manage the fund. In 1825, the General Assembly did allot a non-reverting fund committed to public school programs (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1993; North Carolina State Board of Education, 2001; Smith, 1888). After the abrupt end to educational progression during the Civil War, in l868 a new state constitution provided a requirement for the General Assembly to institute taxation in order to provide for free public education for all children in the state between the ages of six and twenty-one years "(North Carolina State Board of Education, 2001; Smith, 1888). This legislation also included a provision to educate blacks (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1993). With the election of Governor Charles B. Aycock in 1900 came major reforms to public education, as it existed at that time.

These reforms had a major impact on the educational system. The first Compulsory Attendance Act passed in 1913 which required four months of schooling for children between eight and twelve years of age. By 1919, an amendment was added to the Constitution that increased the mandated school term from four months to six months and then extended the term again from six to eight months in1933 (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1993; North Carolina State Board of Education, 2001). During the early 1940s, among other changes to the governance of schools the compulsory attendance age increased to sixteen and the school term from eight to nine months occurred (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction,

1993). During the 50s and 60s, the process began to desegregate public schools. During this phase of North Carolina schooling, the instructional aspect of leadership was more important than ever. It was essential to develop a sense of productivity, hard work and performance (Deal & Peterson, 1999). A school leader ensures that obstacles do not prevent obligations and commitments from being met. (Sergiovanni, 1992). In order to successfully impact instruction, one must often reject the formal management training received. Sergiovanni (1992) describes this form of stewardship as the heart leading the head which directs the hand and in turn leads to reflections that affirm and reshape the heart and the head, which is illustrated in Figure 1, Moral Stewardship.

The 1983 publication of "A Nation at Risk" started a flurry of conversation about America's failing schools (Wagner, 2003). With this publication, conversations also resurfaced about leadership and the role of school administrator in public schools. Education in the United States emerged through several stages since the early twentieth century, however major high school reform efforts took center stage with the publication of "A Nation at Risk" in 1983. In that publication, several risk factors were addressed: (1) "23 million American adults are functionally illiterate, (2) About 13% of all 17-year olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate. (3) Functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40%, (4) over half the population of gifted students do not match their tested ability with comparable achievement in school." (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 2). While educators and businessmen recognize the value and benefit of a solid education, there are some students and families who do not have the same understanding and often hinder the educational process for others.

The heart ⟶ The head ⟶ The hand
(what I value   (my mindscape of   (my decisions, actions
and believe)   how the world works)   and behaviors)
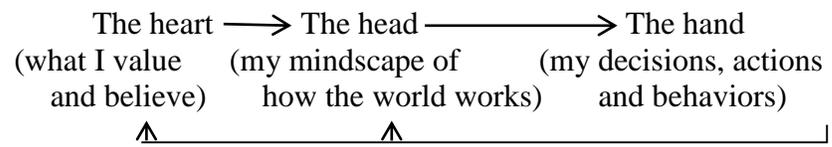
Note. This figure illustrates the model of heart, head and hand working together to meet obligations regardless of obstacles.

Figure 1. Moral stewardship.

It is important to help families understand that the school is committed to high standards for every child. A climate hospitable to education is essential (Cummins, 2015; The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Effective leaders help ensure that adults and children put instruction at the forefront of daily activities. A better-educated society should be more productive in being able to sustain itself. A Basic Education Program (BEP) became law in the mid-80s which defined the components required for a sound basic education (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2001). By the late 80s and early 90s, Superintendent Bob Etheridge continued reforms to education by redirecting monies to support low performing schools and districts. The reelection of Governor James B. Hunt in 1992 enhanced the focus on improving education in North Carolina with his advocacy for public schools and increasing accountability.

New accountability tests were administered for the first time in 1993 for reading and math (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1993; North Carolina State Board of Education, 2001). By 1996, laws were enacted to give the State Board of Education authority to implement the ABCs of Public Education, which centered on individual school accountability and provision of incentives to encourage schools to improve student achievement. A new state superintendent was also elected. With him came additional public education reforms and five strategic priorities, one of which included providing quality school administrators (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2001).

In 2003, Governor Easley launched the North Carolina New Schools Project (NCNSP) and the state's ambitious and aggressive effort to redesign high schools (Cohen, Worsham, & Buxton, 2014). This effort was supported financially with $22.5 million in grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation as well as support from the General Assembly. Murray Rothbard (2006) states in his article, "Education: Free and Compulsory" that children are individuals and

should be educated as such. He went on to explain that it is barbaric to expect all children to learn and progress with education at the same pace as compulsory attendance implies that it should. He spoke to the fact that not all children are necessarily smart in all the same things. Children are often very capable in one subject matter and deficient in another which requires different methods of instruction (Rothbard, 2006). Brett Blake (2004) believes that the technical rational model is still prevalent in schools today. These "methodologies focus on the technical features of language and discrete skills and remains, therefore, a tool that effectively forces all students (if they are to be successful) to accept a Western, literate ideology" (Blake, 2004, p. 31). Blake went on to theorize that poor children who do not see the value of this technical rational approach to learning literacy, often drop out of school instead of attempting to conform to the models. An instructional culture that all students are important must exist in order to prevent this from happening. The school leaders set the tone for inclusiveness and to help students flourish in their schools (Guerrie, 2014; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

Importance of a Positive School Instructional Culture

Schools in the early existence of formal education provided a basic foundation for children to be able to read, write, get a job and help support the family. Although, that practice is frowned upon today, the educational system has not deviated much from that original purpose of formal schooling. Federal and state legislation sought to improve education of all students, removing the acceptance of a normal failure curve (NASSP, 2006). It is no longer acceptable to reach an average group of children, while leaving the slower learner behind. Field journals from economics and sociology to psychology have utilized data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1979 (NLSY79) as a method of supporting research. Topics such as welfare payments, obesity, alcohol consumption, fertility and birth weight of children have all been

18

studied in relation to whether or not students experience success. School leaders directly impact the climate to shape instruction, which in turn leads to students feeling value for their education. Students stated the primary decision to drop out of high school was whether or not they were able to identify a person who showed genuine concern and if they felt school served a purpose for life after school (Dunn et al., 2004). A school's "unwritten rules and traditions, norms and expectations that permeate everything" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 2) directly impact how students internalize their educational experiences. The school administrator is vital in this process.

Creation of the Instructional Leader

The early principal was not just the leader, but the principal teacher. This person ensured the school was ready to operate, whether that meant lighting fires for heat, cleaning or securing supplies. Eventually the tasks became too numerous to also teach, so the principal teacher became just the principal. Thus the principal was born out of service, completing daily tasks that were necessary for a good learning environment. While the school leader does not do the daily task of direct teaching of students, the administrator was a servant in every aspect of the word to ensure that students', teachers' and the community's needs are met. The school administrator still ensures that good teaching is being done. An essential question remains of how to ensure that school administrators are best prepared to serve in the many complex capacities within the buildings they lead today (Davis et al., 2005; Murphy, 2001).

In the world of education many varied harvesting technologies are utilized to meet the needs of students. A major problem with education is that we cannot use a cookie cutter approach. A skilled administrator is able to serve his teachers and students in order to help them succeed. With the many demands of students, parents and the community, administrators must be

professionally prepared to serve their schools and community (Lindstrom & Speck, 2004). It was also important to understand how administrators have a direct impact on the instructional culture in the building.

Successful Instructional Leaders

In an attempt to determine the best type of leader to have in schools in order for them to be successful, early research on principals concentrated on surface issues such as years of teaching experience, aspirations and the amount of formal education (Bevoise, 1984). Bevoise completed a review of literature from several studies in an attempt to determine the traits that qualify exemplary principals. This analysis of the various studies did not produce reliable predictors of principal success in a school. There were, however, some common themes:

- The accomplished principal focuses on student learning by purposefully thinking outside the status quo in order to impact school improvement,
- He does not operate in isolation, is inclusive and relies on many factors inside and outside the school to experience success,
- Situations dictate the style of leadership that must be exerted, and
- Principals facilitate instructional improvements based on individual styles and circumstances (Bevoise, 1984).

Again, in any situation the leader facilitated the norms of the instructional culture in the building.

An instructional culture that makes schools attractive and meaningful for students has teachers and administrators who work together (Somers & Piliawsky, 2004). The old saying of, a person doesn't care how much you know until they know how much you care, makes a difference in creating a school culture where instruction is at the forefront. A school culture that maximizes student outcomes incorporates ways to help students understand the importance of

school and how it relates to their futures. The school administrator is the driving force that creates environments the professional community and organizational culture for learning to occur (Guerrie, 2014).

Leader Preparation Impacts School Instruction

As societal advancements continue and more demands for standards and assessments are placed on schools for student preparation, the focus on performance has moved away from solely focusing on the teacher to a focus on the school leader (Reform Support Network, 2014). The principal is second only to teachers in influencing student success (Leithwood et al., 2004). As school standards have changed, the focus of the role of the administrator has also changed. Schools are more diverse than ever with various cultural backgrounds, immigration statuses, income levels, disabilities and cognitive abilities (Leithwood & Rhiel, 2003). Consequently, more organizations are completing research on the best ways to ensure that school leaders are meeting the many demands required of school leadership.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) does research on ways to ensure southern states have productive schools and educators within those schools. The SREB University Leadership Networks as well as the Reform Support Network (RSN) both focus on improvement of school leadership programs. The Wallace Foundation has also commissioned several studies to understand the impact of school leadership on school culture and success.

In a recent report: *Are SREB States making progress? Tapping, Preparing and Licensing School Leaders Who Can Influence Student Achievement*, SREB highlights conditions for Leadership Program Redesign. One of the key components is "Plan learning experiences in which leadership candidates apply research-based knowledge to (1) solve field-based problems, (2) concentrate on learning about core functions of the school, including instruction and student

21

learning and (3) engage in internship experiences that are well-planned and integrated throughout the preparation program and that allow aspiring leaders to receive mentoring and practice skills with master leaders" (Jacobson, O'Neill, Fry, Hill, & Bottoms, 2002, p. 2). Table 1 illustrates the need to improve current practice as defined by Jacobson et al. (2002).

The RSN is sponsored by the United States Department of Education (Reform Support Network, 2014) and has published five recommendations for improved administrator preparation programs:

1. Outline clear expectations (adhere to what is written),

2. Establish specific criteria for fieldwork (establish positive partnership with schools),

3. Collect and use outcome data (follow up with candidates and graduates),

4. Conduct site visits of programs (ensure quality and reaffirm expectations),

5. Clearly outline requirement for new programs (ensure consistency and quality).

Societal Changes Affect Supply and Demand

In order to fully understand the change that is necessary in administrator preparation programs, a review of organizational structure as models for success and growth was explored. Success and growth are invariably related to the economy. Wagner (2003) described the growth in terms of a rapidly accelerating technology and information based economy rather than the industrial assembly line one of the past.

The Industrial Model is a linear model with points serving as nodes along the assembly line. Only one person is in charge of the node and that person has to demonstrate a single skill and put that skill to effective use in generating the product. The final product is the result of several (line) segments of operation. There is a hierarchical structure in leadership, which is

Table 1

Need for Improvement of Current Practice as Defined by Jacobson et al. (2002)

Current Practice	Need	Rationale
Entry into leadership programs is individual choice	Leadership candidates with characteristics and qualifications to make a difference in schools	Resources currently used to prepare people to be certified but not necessarily qualified
Adoption of curriculum and instruction standards for leaders	Universities to redesign programs to meet standards	Universities have not changed what leaders learn, how they learn it or how they work within schools
Multi-tier licensure systems	Requirement of on the job performance to receive a professional license	Field based experience focused on curriculum and instruction will increase leadership skills and subsequently student learning
Alternative certification that has increased the pool of certified candidates	Recruit teachers with advanced degrees outside leadership areas and that have a proven success with students	Creation of a pool of qualified candidates

conspicuous very much like school leaders of the past. We have computer systems, manufacturing systems, transportation systems, communication systems, energy systems, health systems, etc. Any component of a system works only if it is supported by an appropriate system. By its very nature, a system is not linear. There is a remarkable interactivity that is the result of the system itself. The interactivity acts like a chemical bond. What was hierarchical in the linear system now has taken the form of a team.

The team structure of the organization calls for a variety of skills. It is no longer one man, one woman, one skill, one specialty; rather, teams with multiple skills on the part of a team of members, interdisciplinary know how! Wagner puts it from the point of view of workforce. He (Wagner, 2003) stated that employers today look for hard and soft skills such as knowing how to read and write well and how to communicate with others effectively in order to determine the quality of employees. An effective school leader is able to communicate well and be a part of a team in the very diverse buildings they manage.

Key to School Improvements

It would seem that the concept of leadership itself has called for a change from its hierarchical form to a network form. Administrators in our schools are not in charge of generating the curricula; that is a task that is entrusted to state leaders in all walks of life from business, labor, the liberal professions, etc. In short, the curricula are designed taking into account the qualifications needed for a competitive workforce in an increasingly global world. The role of principals is that of instructional leaders (Davis et al., 2005; Guerrie, 2014; Hess & Kelly, 2002; Jacobson et al., 2002; Leithwood & Rhiel, 2003; The Wallace Foundation, 2013). That is, the principal improves the school by leading the faculty, the parents and the community to the changing curricula from an industrial one to a technological one. The principal leads the

group to the new demands that the new curricula places upon our students and the entire community in a spirit of partnership and teamwork. The administrators have to become actively involve all elements of the community in this seemingly formidable task. Hess and Kelly (2002) stated this in eloquent terms: "School principals are the front-line managers, the small business executives, the team leaders charged with leading their faculty to new levels of effectiveness" (p. 3). As front line managers, principals become the central point of partnerships to impact change.

To recapitulate the flow of identifying the problem in our schools, the solution project, and the practice of implementing the project, it is recognized that the problem of a changing society with more diversity and increasing demands on schools impacts the role of principals as instructional leaders. Whereas, the industrial curriculum impacted the community linearly, the technological or global curriculum impacted the community as a whole. The curriculum required partnership with members and organizations of the community. Forging this partnership and nurturing the faculty and the community as a team has become the first element of the task of the principal as the instructional leader. This element was either absent or minimally present in the old curriculum. Nurturing the faculty and the community as a team in turn has generated shifts in the instructional framework of the school and the classroom which constitutes the second element of the task of the principal as instructional leader. Dr. Alexander Erwin, the 1984 Wachovia Principal of the Year from Wilkes County, NC, brings in these elements when he states that principals should move people toward a common goal (Hart, 1997).

Erwin states, "Most often I adjusted my attitude to the situation… Leadership must be a collaborative effort and a principal must encourage participation by everyone" (as cited in Hart, 1997, p. 166). Recasting his words into the language of the technological model, the principal is not a leader at the top of a hierarchical model, but rather a coordinator of a network of

participants, each sharing the new vision of leadership and partnership. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) reaffirm Dr. Erwin's assertions from eighteen years ago that leadership involves adjusting to situations and requires a collective effort in order to accomplish goals.

Instruction is no longer the work of a single individual, but a collective achievement. Interdisciplinary instruction calls for collaborative group work among faculty as well as community. The essence of practice as an administrator today lies in getting away from the mentality of doing tasks in isolation (Cummins, 2015; National Eduation Association, 2008). The key element of the practice lies in collective achievement, not in individual achievement. This is indeed a restatement of an old finding of John Ruskin, the 19th Century writer: Happiness of an individual lies in the happiness of the society of which the individual is a member (Craig, 2006)!

In the twenty-first century, we can recast Ruskin's statement in the following terms: Individual empowerment lies in the collective empowerment of members of the environment in which the individual belongs. This finding of Ruskin is brought to practice in a study on self-empowerment conducted by Dr. Ron Nanney (2007), Associate Professor and Coordinator of School Administration at Gardner-Webb University. The Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) exam was used to determine if MSA candidates were prepared to practice in the field. Each standards began with, "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by…" (Nanney, 2007). In this study, Dr. Nanney surveyed Gardner-Webb University MSA candidate interns and interviewed one hundred five practicing school based administrators in North Carolina about empowerment. Most of the candidates and administrators felt a sense of empowerment. Those interviewed or surveyed were asked four questions:

1. Do you truly feel empowered to do your job?

2. Where does empowerment come from?

3. Are you self- empowered?

4. How does one become self- empowered? (Nanney, 2007)

As a result of engaging in meaningful collaborative work, the administrators in Dr. Nanney's study felt a sense of self-empowerment which contributes to the maintenance of a healthy school culture. This problem of practice study will refer, from this point forward, to what Dr. Nanney calls "self-empowerment" as "shared empowerment". In shared empowerment, the school administrator is competent in his or her job as a principal and is confident of his or her ability to mold the competence and confidence of the faculty and participants. He or she knows how to strike the chord of empowerment and achievement – that of collective empowerment and collective achievement. Successful school administrators must have confidence from within themselves and the ability to generate these elements in their faculty and stakeholders. Shared empowerment is a skill that is vital to successful school administrators (Nanney, 2007). The ISLLC has developed 43 indicators for nurturing leadership among school administrators.

Standards Related to Instructional Leadership

From his studies, Dr. Nanney has concluded that principals whose values and beliefs align with the related 43 indicators on the ISLLC standards have greater potential for excellence in terms of empowerment. The following standards highlighted by Nanney directly relate to instructional leadership

Standard One: Vision of learning highlights

- Belief in education of all

- High standards for learning

- Plans to achieve goals

- Monitors and evaluates progress

- Consistently reflects on the school's vision, mission and values

The education of all calls for a high degree of engagement and partnership with the community. The principal's job in this area calls for constant reflection and adjustment of leadership. A school leader must be able to adapt to the various situations that arise within a school setting on a daily basis. Northhouse (2013) defines leadership as transactions where the leader affects the followers and vice versa. The National Boards for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) key standards of service learning for teachers seeking national certification also focuses on vision of learning highlights. Standard One states that teachers are committed to students and their learning (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) which directly aligns to the ISLLC standards.

Standard Two: Enhancing Instructional Capacity

- Ensures on-going and differentiated professional learning

- Supports staff with human, financial, and technological resources

- Employs research-anchored and valid systems of performance management

- Buffers learning and teaching from disruptive forces

- Provides emotional support to staff teachers and other professional staff

NBPTS requires that principals facilitate and generate competence of his or her colleagues and community partners. Likewise, standard three of the NBPTS involves generating competence and confidence of faculty and other participants which aligns with standard three below.

Standard Three: Promotes instruction that maximizes student learning,

- Decisions made are for the purpose of student learning

- Trusts others and their judgment

- Involves stakeholders

- Commitment to safe environment

- Values high standards and performance

Standard Four: Collaborates with families and mobilizes community resources highlights

- Collaborate and communicate with families and community

- Involve others in decision making

- Families viewed as partners in the educational process

Both the standards for administrators and teachers significantly differ from the industrial model. To have a positive instructional culture, standards five and six need to also be reviewed. Administrators must ensure that students are first and each member of the school community understands the importance of all members of the school community.

Standard Five: Acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner

- Puts school community before personal interest

- Creates a caring school community

- Every student has the right to a quality education

Standard Six: Understanding, responding to and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context highlights

- Participates in continuing dialogue about decisions affecting education

- Recognize a variety of ideas, cultures and values.

Classroom instruction, leadership, empowerment, and school culture go hand in hand. Given the shifts in the curriculum and the standards of student practices, it is no longer simple textbook based classroom instruction. The administrator has to be open to instructional innovations which impact the school culture. The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum demands the administrators demonstrate leadership in every aspect of the institution, from setting high standards of learning to recognizing a variety of ideas, cultures and values. Empowerment is shared. That is, the administration, the faculty and the community succeed collectively or fail collectively and this is a frightening scenario, unless planned with competence and confidence. An instructional school culture must exhume this confidence and the competence upon which the confidence is based.

School Leader Preparation

Successful administrators learn their competencies to earn licensure through administrator preparation programs at universities. These universities must be accredited in order to submit candidates for licensure. Because administrators learn their competencies in their administrative preparation programs, it was important to examine what administrative preparation programs are teaching to prepare leaders to be effective in developing an effective instructional culture.

In an effort to understand what gets taught in administrator preparation programs, Hess and Kelly (2002) collected 210 syllabi from 31 preparation programs for a total review of 2,424 course weeks. Of the total course weeks reviewed, hiring good personnel was indicated as a challenge for principals and evaluation of those personnel was equally important. Employee compensation or termination encompassed 21 of 360 course weeks. As a coach of the team, the administrator's role was crucial for generating both competence and confidence. Hess and Kelly

30

also found that of the 1851 readings assigned, Terrance Deal, Allan Odden, Kent Peterson and Michael Fullan were most often assigned. Hess and Kelly (2002) determined that administrator preparation programs lack the content necessary to fully equip administrators for the challenges they will face in modern schools.

The challenges impact instructional leadership in their buildings. The MSA candidates received minimal training in data analysis, research, or human resource management. There were also continued questions of whether or not the syllabi studied actually represent what is actually taught in principal preparation programs. As universities consider the composition of their principal preparation programs, they must consider various leadership styles and the way to approach each style. The foremost element of the school based administrator is instructional leadership. It is not clear how the various administrator preparation programs address this crucial element of the 21st Century Leader. A review of some models of administrator preparation programs currently prevalent in schools is important to examine.

There are several types of leadership styles: transformational, participative, transactional, situational, and servant to name a few that appear often in school settings (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Northouse, 2013). A transformational leader seeks to uplift by developing a vision, selling that vision, creating trust and seeking to move forward (Marzano et al., 2005). The transformational leader eminently addresses the instructional component of the 21st century administrator. In contrast to the transformational leader is a transactional leader who motivates people with a system of rewards and punishments through an established chain of command. Marzano et al. (2005) explain that transactional leadership involves either responding to issues as they occur, paying attention to issues that arise and monitoring behaviors or setting goals and desired outcomes then providing rewards and consequences. Transactional leadership operates

under the premise that subordinates do as they are told without questioning authority, while the transformational leader likes involvement and is upfront and visible. A transformational leader is one who attends to needs of and provides personal attention for staff members. They must help staff approach problems in new, innovative ways. The transformational leader communicates high expectations and models those expectations for others (Marzano et al., 2005). The transactional leader is a remnant of the Industrial Model while the transformational leader likes to involve the participants of the organization. Involving participants is exactly what the participative leader does.

The participative leader seeks to involve others in decision making and not only seeks advice, but also uses it (Leadership Styles- Changing Minds.org, 2015). Many universities follow this model of leadership, where departments run their business collectively as a department. They try to achieve consensus within certain parameters when operating in participative style of leadership while the situational leader looks at each situation individually.

A situational leader is just that, situational. This type of leader looks at the range of factors surrounding a situation, then adjusts their leadership styles depending on the needs. The motivation and capability of the followers affect the type of decisions that are made. Factors such as stress or mood modify the leader's behaviors in addition to perceptions of self (Leadership Styles- Changing Minds.org, 2015; Northouse, 2013). Situational Leadership can be summarized into four styles: directing, coaching, supporting and delegating (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). For teachers who have low competence but high commitment to a task, directing style would be utilized. In contrast, supporting style would be used for those followers who have high competence and variable commitment (Hersey et al., 2001). A situational leader knows and understands his/her followers.

32

Instructional Leaders as Servants

Merriam Webster dictionary (An Encyclopeida Britannica Company, 2004) defines a leader as a person who has commanding authority or influence, to guide someone or something along the way or to direct on a course or in a direction. In this review of literature several models of leadership are described based on the curriculum changes schools are confronting today. It is not an exaggeration to say that in the industrial model of yesterday (20th Century), the boss was the leader. The transactional and situational leadership models rely on the leader to make the decisions based on the situations at hand. The twenty-first century is an era of participation that does not rely solely on the leader and involves collective efforts for improvement proactively. A leadership model that is appropriate for twenty-first century learning is one of a service. The term "Servant Leader" seems appropriate for our technological model. It is where the leader acts by examples rather than by instructions or precepts. For schools, it is instruction by hands-on; it is interaction as a team.

As school leaders, there is a need to be servant first to assist students and teachers as they focus on education. ECU's SLP enables aspiring principals to grow as service leaders. Marzano et al. (2005) describe servant leadership as unique in the traditional model of a leader operating from the center of the organization as opposed to a top-down approach. This implies that the servant leader is involved in all levels of the organization, not relying on other high level management to interpret what is happening in the organization.

Servant leaders, serve others by helping them to achieve and improve rather than others serving the leader. The servant leader is motivated by an inner desire to help others (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2015; Leadership Styles- Changing Minds.org, 2015) and nurture others in the team to succeed (Marzano et al., 2005). This leadership style is aligns with religious

models adopted by many Christian organizations (Leadership Styles- Changing Minds.org, 2015). Matthew 20:27 in the King James Version of the bible says, "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (King James Bible Online, n.d.).

Taylor et al. (2007) assert that "a leader who embraces their roles as servant leader may create schools in which commitment to self and others are the daily practices of leaders throughout and in turn will transform their followers as well as the organization."

Bolman and Deal (2001) state that leaders give of themselves to join with others for a common cause. The ECU Service Leadership Project Handbook for the Masters of School Administration Program is a comprehensive guideline for completing a portfolio of leadership evidence for North Carolina Principal Licensure. ECU has a strong belief that effective leadership involves serving others therefore includes service as an element in its leadership preparation program (Department of Educational Leadership, 2012).

The Stanford Educational Leadership Institute sought to identify effective ways of developing strong school leaders. The Leadership Institute analyzed principal in-service and preparation programs. Eight programs studied, offered innovative practices and strong effects on principal learning based on expert interviews, review of research and initial research of a larger sample. The researchers surveyed participants and graduates about preparation practices and attitudes. School administrators today are expected to functions in a wide variety of "roles ranging from educational visionaries and change agents, to instructional leaders, curriculum and assessment experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special program administrators and community builders" (Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, 2007, p. 1).

The literature review pointed to seven key features of leadership development programs:
1. Research-based content,

2. Curricular Coherence,

3. Field Based internships,

4. Problem-based learning strategies,

5. Cohort structures,

6. Mentoring or coaching and

7. Collaboration between universities and school districts (Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, 2007).

Other factors that lead to program effectiveness are vigorous recruitment, financial support and district/state infrastructures, active recruitment of potential leaders with proven ability to teach and lead their colleagues, well designed course work and supportive groups such as cohorts, research based, tightly aligned with professional development standards and field based internships and learning situation to emphasize real life situations. The study reported programs that focus on instructional leadership and leadership for school improvements, learning in the cohort structure, integration of theory and practice opportunities to reflect on experiences and receive feedback. Also, exemplary programs rely on districts to reconnect candidates with proven skills and often provide some financial support as well. Some districts studied also go a step further in that they watch the candidates in action groups before officially accepting them into their programs.

Each of the programs in this study used a cohort model. They all had some sort of follow up for new leaders in order to help them transition into the role of a leader. The programs studied were:

1. Delta State University (Delta State Triangle)

2. Bank Street Principal Institute (New York City, Region 1)

3. Jefferson County Principals for Tomorrow Program (Jefferson County Public Schools)

4. University of Connecticut Administrator Preparation Program

5. San Diego Educational Leadership Development Academy.

McREL International (Waters & Cameron, 2007) defines a balanced leadership program as a way choosing the right focus for school improvement efforts; effectively leading changes in a school; and transforming school culture into a "purposeful" community. The Delta State Triangle uses foundations of a balanced leadership program. (1) There is a rigorous admissions process, (2) There is a focus on instructional leadership, (3) A strong focus is placed on ethics and self-reflection, (4) Relevant issues are coupled with theory, (5) Organizational change and renewal is central to leadership development and (6) A strong partnership exists with the school districts within the area. Likewise, the Bank Street College Principals Institute, which supports New York City's Region One, has a rigorous admissions process. They also integrate practical skill development and problem solving, which also includes support for new principals. The Bank Street program teaches traditional components of a leader program such as suspension law, budgets and technology in conjunction with monthly seminar groups on selected topics. The Jefferson County Principals for Tomorrow (PFT) program has shifted from a management focus for principal preparation to collaboration through instructional leadership and change management. They (1) link past experiences with new knowledge, (2) scaffolds to construct new knowledge, (3) provide opportunities to apply the new knowledge, (4) foster continual reflections opportunities and (5) allow multiple opportunities to apply new knowledge. The University of Connecticut Administrator Preparation Program (UCAPP) and the San Diego Educational Leadership Development Academy (EDLA) are two other programs studied which

have proven success. Just as with the others already described, UCAPP and EDLA used blended coursework and internship models. The both also used on the job field experiences to increase learning and attainment of crucial skills. Each of the programs studied use proven methods to produce quality administrators. The different programs are highlighted in Table 2. If these programs are to be deemed exemplars that others should mimic, cohorts with blended course work, grounded in field based experiences are essential.

A UNC Board of Governors Subcommittee on Teacher and School Leader Quality met with faculty, personnel and a variety of stakeholders in order to better understand the "complexity and challenges involved with the opportunities for improvement [of educator preparedness programs]" (University of North Carolina, 2014). The report states, "While there are no simple answers, the sub-committee did form a clear opinion that communication and collaboration between UNC Schools of Education and PK – 12 schools is essential to future success" (University of North Carolina, 2014). There were seven key recommendations made by the board which could result in improved preparation for the day to day job of educating North Carolina's children. Of the seven recommendations, only one focused specifically on leader preparation: universities must develop rigorous selection criteria for potential leaders to enter their leader preparation programs. Once selected for the program, candidates should have training centered around twenty-first century skills. It is also recommended that internships are more structured and longer term with "proven master principals" (University of North Carolina, 2014). The remaining recommendations focused on teacher preparedness. Great teachers have potential to become great leaders, thus both are important. There has been increased focus on recruiting and retaining quality teachers. We must also have the same focus on recruiting and

Table 2

Review of Principal Preparation Programs as Studied by Stanford Educational Leadership

Institute

Program Studies	Length of Time to Complete Program	Length of Internship	Cohort Model	Average Number of Candidates/Year	Key Qualities Contributing to Success
Delta State University	14 months	1 Year	Yes	15	Weekly seminars to discuss field experiences
Jefferson County Principals for Tomorrow (PFT)	"Leadership is a process" belief in ongoing training and support 3 – 4years	1 Year	Yes	16	Problem based case studies as approach to learning 1 year mentor support for new leaders Pre service and in-service learning opportunities
San Diego Educational Leadership Develop Academy		1 year	Yes	15-20	Thematic courses taught by university professors and district leaders Task based internships Follow up support for recently placed leaders

Table 2 (continued)

Program Studies	Length of Time to Complete Program	Length of Internship	Cohort Model	Average Number of Candidates/Year	Key Qualities Contributing to Success
University of Connecticut, Administrative Preparation Program (UCAPP)	2 years	80 days	Yes	15	Blended coursework/ internship model Weaning on the job field experiences with coursework
Bank Street College Principals Institute	18 months	3 semesters	yes	26	Action research via field based internships Prepare in region leaders

retaining quality leaders. Hess and Kelly (2002) completed studies to understand if preparation programs contribute to retaining quality leaders. This Hess and Kelly study is reviewed below.

Hess and Kelly (2002) completed a study of principal preparation programs to determine if the content being taught in these programs is preparing principals for the job they are required to perform in the field. They determined that there has been no systematic way to address this issue. Therefore, they completed a study to "raise thought provoking questions for educational administration researchers, practitioners and policy makers seeking to improve existing arrangements".

Hess and Kelly (2002) used seven indicators deemed vital for the effectiveness of school leadership by some of the leading thinkers in education. The indicators were

1. managing for results- should stress the principals role in setting targets, collections and analysis of data, mentoring progress and managing the school program

2. managing personnel- should be able to hire, induct and education personnel in a sensible manner

3. technical knowledge- while principals are no longer desk-bound building managers, they must still have knowledge of facilities and resources

4. external leadership- must understand community influences and school board relationships

5. norms and values- must use the political arena in order to establish and promote equitable and effective school

6. managing classroom instruction

7. leadership and school culture – effects every part of the educational environment with emphasis on pedagogy, curriculum and classroom management.

Administrators and Instructional Leadership

Leaders in schools set the tone for the interactions in a building. In *Leadership That Works*, Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) contend that leadership in a complex organization such as schools is intimately linked to its effectiveness. School culture that values collaboration and collegiality creates a better learning environment and professional exchange to enhance use of problem solving and use of effective practices (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Marzano et al. (2005) did a meta-analysis of six-nine studies to determine the effect of school leadership on school success. These 69 studies included over 2800 K-12 schools in the US or schools that mirrored U.S. culture and 1.4 million students. To determine the research studies to use, they looked for the effect of building leadership on student achievement, student achievement as measured by standardized tests and effect sizes were reported or could be calculated. The 69 studies that met all criteria spanned from 1978 to 2001. The results of the analysis indicated that, of the more than 94,000 principals in the US, those rated in the top half of all principals based on leadership effectiveness, 62.5% of schools would pass standardized testing while principals rated in the bottom half would constitute 7.5% of schools passing their tests (see Table 3).

In other words this analysis indicates that the leadership in a school has a substantial effect on how well the students achieve in that school (Marzano et al., 2005). He went on to identify 21 responsibilities (see Table 4) of school leaders that have a statistically significant relationship with student achievement.

The National Middle Level Associate agrees that successful schools have a positive instructional culture. In this instructional culture educators valued their work. They were courageous and collaborated with each other, provided an inviting and supportive environment and had high expectations for everyone. Adults advocated for each student and encouraged

41

Table 3

Expected Passing Rates for Schools Depending on Leadership Effectiveness

Principal	Percentage of Schools passing the test	Percentage of schools failing the Test
Schools with principals rated in the top half of all principals based on leadership effectiveness	62.5%	37.5%
Schools with principals rated in the bottom half of all principals based on leadership effectiveness	37.5%	62.5%

Note. Interpretation of a correlation of .25 in terms of expected passing rates for schools, depending on leadership effectiveness.

Table 4

The 21 Responsibilities that Correlate with Student Academic Achievement

Responsibility	The Extent to Which the Principal…
Affirmation	Recognizes and celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures
Change Agent	Is willing to challenge and actively challenges the status quo
Contingent Rewards	Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments
Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication with and among teachers and students
Culture	Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation
Discipline	Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus
Flexibility	Adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent
Focus	Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention
Ideals/Beliefs	Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling
Input	Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies
Intellectual Stimulation	Ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture
Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices
Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices
Monitoring/Evaluation	Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning

Table 4 (continued)

Responsibility	The Extent to Which the Principal…
Optimizer	Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations
Order	Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines
Outreach	Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders
Relationships	Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff
Resources	Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs
Situational Awareness	Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems
Visibility	Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students

engagement in active learning (National Middle School Association, 2003). Feedback and reflection were crucial pieces of any successful program.

The principal should serve as instructional leader providing feedback and thus be an integral part of helping teachers assess what is taught in every lesson to determine its value for student learning (Glatthorn, 1997). John Hattie completed a meta-analysis to study feedback. The purpose of his study was to determine the conditions necessary for feedback in order to maximize positive effects on learning. Feedback was defined as providing information about one's performance or understanding by an agent (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Hattie gleaned more information from an article published by R. Sadler to further explain that feedback is a process that bridges the understood with intended understanding. Another definition of feedback provided by Winne and Butler stated that feedback was a way in which a learner made sense of information, whether it was by cognitive tactics and strategies or restructuring information from memory (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

 In the study, Hattie (2007) learned that the greatest effect occurred when students received information about a task and how to improve it. The most impact is accomplished when goals are specific and tasks complexity is low. Effective feedback must answer three questions: (1) Where are we going? (2) How are we going to get there/ make progress towards the goal?, and (3) What is the next step to continue to make progress? Hattie calls this "feed up, feedback and feed forward" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). There must be a consist process to evaluate where a group is and the direction it will go next with clear goals, high commitment and belief in success, which will lead to increased effort. Table 5 shows what Hattie describes as four levels of feedback which have a direct impact on effectiveness: "Task level, Process level, Self-regulation level and Self level" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Table 5

Levels of Feedback as Described by Hattie and Timperley (2007)

Feedback Level	Level Description
FEEDBACK ABOUT A TASK (FT)	Correct or incorrect feedback which may include directions or mutual/different information
FEEDBACK ABOUT A PROCESS (FP)	Process to complete a task or processing of information
FEEDBACK INVOLVING SELF REGULATION (FR)	Involves already knowing the correct answer- needs prodding complete the correct task
FEEDBACK ABOUT SELF (FS)	Involves reflecting on self to make personal improvements.

It is important that feedback is a two way relationship with both giving and receiving from the parties involved. Feedback combined with meaningful instruction can increase learning. A leader must be able to encourage and refine activities that give meaning to an organization.

Deal and Pedersen (1999) identified positive as well as dysfunctional norms that are found in schools. Allan Glatthorn (1996) discusses learning centered leadership and Thomas Guskey (2000) has similar ideas when discussing Level 3: Organization Support and Change. When a school has positive norms achievement is increased. In dysfunctional situations, the opposite occurs (see Table 6). The principal is crucial in the dynamic of this process.

RickWormeli (2006) agreed that it doesn't matter what is taught, but what students learn. A situation in a school and classroom needs to be conducive to students learning what is necessary to experience success. In a differentiated setting, instructional scenarios are based on the students served as well as what is known about the curriculum just as in a service learning situation being emphasized through ECU's MSA program.

<div align="center">

Administrator Preparation Legislation

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The North Carolina General Assembly also recognized the importance of principal preparation. In the 2015 session, the General Assembly passed HB 902: An Act to Establish a Competitive Grant Program to Elevate Educators in North Carolina by Transforming the Preparation of School Principals. The act laid out the definition of principals, school leaders and student achievement. In order for an institution to qualify for the grant it must:

- Be able to demonstrate that it can prepare school leaders "who implement practices linked to achievement, and

- Be able to have a program that uses a variety of research based programmatic elements (North Carolina General Assembly, 2015).

Table 6

Positive Versus Dysfunctional Situations in Schools

Positive	Dysfunctional
People treated with respect	Atmosphere of distrust among colleagues
Others are valued for their insights and expertise Others are willing to take on extra responsibilities	Rewards/recognition given based on politics
Changes are initiated to improve performance Conscious of expenses	Rationalization of problematic areas of curriculum, instruction and learning
Others encouraged to suggest new ideas Time managed according to the importance of tasks	Make fun of/criticize those who are innovative
Conversations of pride about the school occur Employees are enthusiastic about work	Constantly complains about the school/situations
School/situations promoted with students and community	Criticizes the school to those on the outside
Employees are helpful to and support others within the school Ideas are shared to improve the school	Information is only shared when it has personal benefits
Serves the needs of students first	Employees do what benefits personal needs first

Program Requirements Leading to Accreditation

Programmatic elements included continuous review to determine the effectiveness and needs of the program. ECU has an office of Assessment and Accreditation to collect, organize and analyze data. Measurable outcomes guided by the mission and goals of the College of Education to prepare for the processes to determine effectiveness is used.

In order to present candidates for administrative licensure, ECU must undergo accreditation processes. Accreditation requires a thorough and intensive review of all programs to determine their quality, effectiveness and alignment with state and national performance standards. During an accreditation process, the IHE must submit written reports and provide evidence to support claims of alignment. Members from the specific accrediting agency visit the IHE to interview faculty, students, staff and graduates as another component of the accreditation process. ECU is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools- Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC). NCDPI and CAEP require review every five years while SACS has a requirement of every ten years for review. SCAS is a total review of all programs to accredit the university while CAEP and NCDPI only complete an accreditation process for degree programs with licensure.

SACS-Commission on Colleges (COC) is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. Being accredited by SACS-COC means that the institution "(1) has a mission appropriate to higher education, (2) has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that mission, and (3) maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers, and that indicate whether it is successful in achieving its

stated objectives" (SACS- Principles of Accreditation, 2012). Accreditation is defined by ELCC as "a process for assessing and enhancing academic and educational quality through voluntary peer review" (NPBEA, 2011). SACS accreditation, though voluntary, is important for national recognition as well as federal grants. NCDPI review and CAEP requirements are also important for national recognition, but required for North Carolina.

The process of continual improvement is three fold: An institution should have an internal review, external review and COC review. The internal review involves consideration of whether or not an institution is meeting its stated mission. They also review SACS standards to determine if the institution is following the requirements outlined by SACS-COC. During an external review an approved team of reviewers, external and internal to the institution, review the institution's mission and programs for effectiveness. The requirements outlined in the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement is used by the COC to analyze institutions for effectiveness and grant accreditation. SACS describes the accreditation process as one that "involves a collective analysis and judgment by the institution's internal constituencies, an informed review by peers external to the institution, and a reasoned decision by the elected members of the Commission on Colleges Board of Trustees" (SACS- Principles of Accreditation, 2012). The set of standards outlined by the COC for SACS accreditation is also approved by the federal government for institutional funding. Table 7 outlines ECU accreditation requirements.

CAEP is the accrediting agency for colleges of education programs. When an institution has a professional education unit that has met state, professional, and institutional standards of educational quality, it is eligible for CAEP accreditation.

Table 7

ECU Accreditation Requirements

Within ECU	Regional Certification	State License	National Certification
Program review cycle	SACS-COC	Approval by NCDPI	CAEP
On-going	Every ten years	Every five years	Every five years
External Reviewers	External and Internal Reviewers	External Reviewers	External Reviewers
Individual programs	All COE	Degree programs for licensure	Degree programs for licensure

In 2001, ECU had an external review of the graduate programs in educational leadership. At that time, the review team stated that ECU had recently been recognized as "one of the twenty-one outstanding principal preparation programs nationally recognized by the ELCC" (Brown, Foster, Chia, & Markowski, 2001). They also continue to be accredited by CAEP (formally National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education), "which is one of the most prestigious accrediting associations for principal preparation" (Brown et al., 2001). An overall finding from the audit was an indication of "an exemplary working environment that has resulted in strong collegial and collaborative relations among department faculty and students" (Brown et al., 2001). One of the main recommendations from the reviewers was a "need to collect longitudinal data and to follow graduates throughout their careers" (Brown et al., 2001). Also, in 2001, the ECU Curriculum Committee developed a new curriculum for the MSA program.

Session Law in 2007 under House Bill 536 required, "all currently licensed MSA programs in NC to revision existing programs to meet 2006 NC School Executive Standards" (East Carolina University, LEED Department, 2013). ECU MSA faculty utilized principal preparation research to collaborate and pilot revisions that were aligned with ELCC standards and the NC School Executive Evaluation Rubric. As a result of their work, the NC General Administration and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) approved and reauthorized a revisioned MSA program.

In 2012, ECU had a program review of the Department of Educational Leadership (LEED). As a result of the 2012 review, the LEED faculty completed a written response to address the suggestions from the External Review Team. The suggestions were grouped into five categories: (1) articulate leadership theory and associated conceptual framework, (2) secure

appropriate faculty resources for enhanced faculty productivity, (3) Improve data collection for accountability purposes, (4) revitalize department culture and (5) enhance internal and external communication. Three of the five areas directly address principal preparation.

To address category one, articulate leadership theory and conceptual framework, the faculty response was that monthly meetings in order to plan for consistency among MSA syllabi and student experiences. The plan was to implement the new syllabi beginning in the fall of 2013. Category three addresses data collection. The LEED Department Chair agreed to schedule regular meeting with the College of Education Assessment Director and selected LEED Faculty to discuss data and make informed decisions to improve the LEED program. The LEED Department Chair, program advisors and faculty will also meet each semester to discuss the faculty impact of off campus cohorts. One of the overall suggestions from the program review was to have consistency in course syllabi from all faculty across the different LEED programs. The response from the MSA Faculty to this suggestion was to continue meetings each month to ensure consistency across syllabi as well as student experiences. Additionally, the reviewers noted the strong practice and experience base of the MSA program at ECU. They felt there should be more theoretical/conceptual framework offered in the MSA program. ECU LEED faculty responded by stating that a presentation was given to a national review panel on the MSA program at ECU. This national review panel "lauded the new program" (The Department of Educational Leadership, 2013). ECU LEED faculty pledged to continue meetings to review of the MSA syllabi to ensure inclusion of leadership theory and conceptual framework.

In March 2013, ECU submitted paperwork for the ELCC accreditation. The accreditation process was used to review the MSA program under the Educational Leadership- principal

preparation category. The MSA program at ECU is crucial for preparation of highly qualified leaders in Eastern North Carolina (NC).

<div align="center">**MSA Redesigned**</div>

ECU's motto is *sevire,* which means to serve. The Department of Education Leadership Strategic Plan aligns with this motto. ECU's redesigned program changed to focus on service leaders. Service learning allows students to affect change by engaging positively in their environment (Smink & Schargel, 2004). Seven of the courses in the redesigned MSA course of study received service learning designations. The field and clinical experiences encompass best practice through coaching and professional learning communities centered around leadership theory, practical application and best practice (East Carolina University, LEED Department, 2013). As one of the final components to earning a MSA, candidates must complete an internship that engages the candidates in field experiences designed to provide on the job training which allows for them to hone their leadership skills and apply theory learned during their coursework. The ECU webfolio required of all candidates mandates evidences in each of the following areas:

- Updated resume,

- Growth plan for the internship,

- Journal of daily activities with weekly reflections,

- Month reflections on diversity issues within the school, and

- Artifacts for ten required experiences reflecting each of the ELCC and NCSEER standards (East Carolina University, LEED Department, 2013).

One of the measures to assess a candidates potential for success in the field is the School Improvement Leadership Project, which is used to allow candidates to demonstrate instructional

leadership skills in working with faculty on issues of instruction, curriculum, culture and professional development within the school via a yearlong internship. During previous ELLC accreditation cycle, 2009-2012, ECU enrolled an average of 85 candidates per year to begin a two year cohort program of study. An average of 83 of the 85 per year completes their course of study. ECU LEED faculty completes a review process to analyze why candidates graduate or not.

One goal of the ECU MSA faculty is to continuously review and assess their program for effectiveness and relevance for principals and assistant principals once they enter the field. As a part of the annual assessment process, ECU faculty reviews five learning outcomes established as a result of the SACS-COC accreditation process.

As a result of the most recent review, ECU plans to

- Discuss successes and challenges in coaching MSA candidates to become principals by holding work group meetings with relevant constituents,

- Create community syllabi to ensure course content is consistently taught regardless of the cohort to which a candidate belongs,

- Streamline a process to provide appropriate feedback of SLPs for current candidates and include more SLP examples in the student SLP handbook,

- Continue to strengthen the collaborative work process between MSA university and site supervisors.

This will be done by the creation of a formal coaching process for site supervisors of MSA candidates during their yearlong internship experiences. As a process of continual improvement of the program, ECU has a desire to follow MSA graduates to determine how they perform as school leaders (East Carolina University, LEED Department, 2013). Because one of seven

administrators in NC is an ECU MSA graduate, it is crucial to ensure effective preparation to serve occurs.

One question this problem of practice sought to understand was, how well do graduates from ECU's principal preparation program perceive they were equipped to practice instructional leadership as defined by the NC School Executive Standards (SES)?

As a new, revised Masters of School Administration (MSA) program focused on service, ECU MSA candidates return to their districts seeking to serve the school. The candidates must complete service learning projects focused on six leadership development areas:

1. Positive impact on student learning and development,

2. Teacher empowerment and Leadership,

3. Community Involvement and Engagement,

4. Organizational Management,

5. School Culture and Safety, and

6. School Improvement.

To better understand the premise of service, let us review servants and followership.

A servant is defined in Merriam Webster dictionary is a person who is devoted to or guided by something; one that serves others. A leader is defined as one who leads, that is one who directs on a course on in a direction; a person at the front. Leaders are often followers first (Sergiovanni, 1992). In his book *Moral Leadership,* Thomas Sergiovanni (1992), discusses the idea of followership. Followership occurs when leaders and followers have the same ideals and values on which their practices are based and the leader is open to shared leadership. He/she becomes an advocate for those whom he/she serves. Once followership occurs, everyone works for the greater good of the organization. Without true followership, the commitments to work

depend on a system of rewards as the only motivation for completion of task (Sergiovanni, 1992). Wholstitter, Kirk, Robertson and Mohrman (1997) completed several case studies on successful school based management. In one of the studies, they focused on leaders as the key to success.

The principal of the school must be the lead change agent and facilitator of the reform process (Wohlstetter et al., 1997). Through the change process, the leader must have a clear direction and delegate responsibility to others by seeking input and gaining commitment. On the converse, Wholstetter et al. (1997) found that principals of struggling schools did not share power for fear of losing control. The result of this style of leadership resulted in a lack of staff motivation because of micromanagement (Wohlstetter et al., 1997) which led to power struggles internally that halted true reform. Sergiovanni (1992) specifically refers to Mahatama Gamdhi as a servant leader while giving a likeness of a principal who also does what is necessary to provide a safe and nurturing environment for students, whether washing their clothes or scrubbing restroom floors and toilets, as a form of shared responsibility. In order to ensure that meaningful and sustainable reform occurs, ECU MSA faculty emphasized a think, value, communicate, lead model.

In the process of creating an updated vision for the ECU MSA program, the LEED faculty employed the Think, Value, Communicate, Lead (TVCL) (Ringler, 2015). "TVCL served as a framework for curriculum mapping to ensure positive learning outcomes while considering how to improve the principal preparation program at East Carolina University" (Ringler, 2015). See Table 8 for an outline of the steps in the TVCL model. The faculty used a backwards by design process in order

57

Table 8

Steps in the Development of the TVCL Model to Revise ECU's MSA Program

#	TVCL Model
1	Identification of desired outcomes- What knowledge and key skills will principal candidates be able to demonstrate?
2	Review of assessment evidence completed by candidates- What authentic performance task provide indicators for successful completion of step 1?
3	Review of learning evidences- Are learning evidences aligned with the goals of the desired outcomes?
4	Creation of service learning projects (SLPs) – What impact did the SLP have on the school in which it was performed?
5	Adoption of core syllabi to identify key concepts and competencies- How should key competencies apply within a core body of knowledge?
6	Creation of simulations- How do MSA candidates apply core knowledge and competencies in simulations of a day in the life of a principal?

to develop what MSA graduates should be able to successfully perform once graduating from ECU's program. In determining the expectations of MSA graduates several steps were employed.

Administrator Preparation Model at ECU

The LEED faculty developed a comprehensive manual to guide SLP for MSA candidates. Once the process is completed, there is no definitive method designed to follow up with practicing administrators to determine if the SLP process for MSA graduates contributes to administrative success. In his article, *A Program Evaluation Primer*, Simon Priest (2001), presented that evaluation of any program is essential to determine effectiveness. He stated that the field of education must be studied in order to provide a sense of efficacy for what we do (Priest, 2001). We must have direct evaluation by those in the field in order to improve what we do. Every opportunity to serve is an opportunity to learn. The [revised MSA] program developed syllabi that outlined the process to work with principals and school stakeholders by approaching them and asking, "how may I help?" The service learning premise embedded in the MSA program addresses each candidate's need to learn leadership through authentic experience to develop skill sets (Ringler, 2015). The instructional culture of the school dictates how effectively this will happen.

Guskey (2000) asserted that protection from intrusions, openness to experimentation, alleviation of fear, principal leadership, principal support, higher level administrative support, recognition of success and necessary resources are crucial to providing a positive climate in schools. In its process to revamp the principal preparation, the faculty of the ECU MSA program, studied the various courses offered and how they are designed to meet the needs of practicing principals or not. One vital area of service is the ability to listen and provide feedback.

Graduate Competencies Relate to Instructional Leadership

In a School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals, commissioned by the Wallace Foundation in 2005, several key findings from existing research and literature were reviewed. Table 9 outlines the key findings from this study to develop successful leaders.

Graduating certified school leaders is simply not good enough to meet the demands of school leadership today. Many districts are developing intensive support systems to help principals build the skills they need to effectively lead schools. "There is increasing research on how principals influence school effectives, less is known about how to help principals develop the capacities that make a difference in how schools function and what students learn" (Davis et al., 2005, p. 5). The school administrator evaluation instrument addresses several of these components.

This problem of practice study sought to determine if MSA graduates are successfully practicing instructional leadership as school based administrators. More specifically this study sought to understand, in what ways are ECU MSA graduates successfully practicing as school administrators in the NC School Executive Standard II: Instructional Leadership. In addition to assisting school leaders, the school executive standards serve the purpose of informing higher education programs in the development, content and requirements of principal preparation programs (NCDPI, 2013).

Principals exhibiting instructional leadership "will set high standards for the professional practice of 21st century instruction and assessment that result in a no nonsense accountable environment" (Department of Educational Leadership, 2012). Standard II for instructional leadership also states that:

Table 9

Developing Successful Leaders

Key Finding	Implications
1- Essential Elements of Good Leadership	Subscribe to a set of common expectations of the knowledge, skills and dispositions of school leaders
2-Effective Program Design	Research-based, have curricular coherence, provide authentic experiences, use cohort groupings and mentors, collaboration with area schools
3-Multiple Pathways to High Quality Leadership Development	Intensified innovations in both leadership development and program structures
4-Policy reform and finances	Effective reform must be "aligned with program components and systems that support their implementation and sustainability"

Note. (Davis et al., 2005).

The school executive must be knowledgeable of best instructional and school practices and must use this knowledge to cause the creation of collaborative structures within the school for the design of highly engaging schoolwork for students, the on-going peer review of this work and the sharing of this work throughout the professional community. (NCDPI, 2013)

This standard correlates to the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) Evidence I: Positive Impact on Student Development and Learning and Education Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standard 3.0 which states that building leaders should apply knowledge to promote the success of all students and that educational time should be dedicated to student learning and high quality instruction. (East Carolina University, LEED Department, 2013). The feedback from this study will inform ECU LEED faculty and will impact the planning and delivery options for the MSA program.

In the process of data collection a survey was administered to understand the effects of principal preparation on instructional leadership. Survey questions developed and used as a pre and post internship survey at ECU was used as a post-graduation follow up to determine the effectiveness of practices being implemented. In addition to the survey results, interviews were held to determine the most effective practices to impact instructional leadership. Chapter three explains the process of data collection and follow up analysis of this study in more detail.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Administrative leadership can improve classroom instructional practices (Leithwood & Rhiel, 2003; NCDPI, 2013). The administrator who effectively uses instructional leadership supports staff for organizational change that improves teaching and learning. Several studies have been conducted to demonstrate the effect that administrators have on instruction and student learning. Cummins (2015) reviewed more than ten years of research studies and found that principals play a critical role in inspiring change that impacts the culture of teaching and learning in a school building. This study reinforces the need to complete further research of administrative preparation programs to analyze how leaders translate theory into practice. The Wallace Foundation (2013) has published more than seventy research reports and other publications on school leadership; as a result of these studies, five key practices have been identified in effective administrators: (1) Shaping a vision of academic success for all, (2) Creating a climate hospitable to education, (3) Cultivating leadership in others, (4) Improving Instruction, and (5) Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement. These key practices are widely used by administrative preparation programs across the United States, including North Carolina (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Murphy, 2001; Northhouse, 2013).

In North Carolina, all five of the key practices of the Wallace Foundation studies are evident in the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (NCSSE) and North Carolina School Executive Evaluation Standards (NCSEES) at the preservice level. All North Carolina Master of School Administration programs (MSA) were required by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to revise their programs to meet the NCSEES at the

pre-service level in 2006. East Carolina University was one of the universities who revised their

MSA program to align to the NCSEES. As a result of this revision, ECU created a service

leadership projects (SLP) handbook to guide their MSA program. Table 10 shows the alignment

among the practices, standards and guidelines from the Wallace Foundation, the NC Evaluation

standards and the ECU SLP handbook. Table 10 also shows that ECU's MSA program

incorporates national research in preparation of future administrators.

Context of the Study

The state of education has been under heightened scrutiny in recent years. In addition to

the attention given to teachers, school leaders are also under the microscope as a means to

improve public schools (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood & Rhiel, 2003). The reauthorization of

ESEA in 2010 reaffirmed the need to improve principal preparation programs (U.S. Department

of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development). This reauthorization led

to North Carolina passing S. L. 2007-0517 which required that NC institutions of higher

education revamp their school leadership preparation programs to meet revised NCSSES

standards for pre-service candidates by July 2009 (North Carolina General Assembly, 2015).

Following the revisions, a committee of educational leaders reviewed all sixteen University of

North Carolina (UNC) System MSA programs. The review of ECU's program resulted in several

requests for more information about a process to evaluate the MSA program over time by

evaluating graduates' impact on student learning (The University of North Carolina General

Administration, 2010).

Overall, this study sought to understand how well ECU's MSA program prepares

graduates. Specifically this dissertation sought to understand how ECU MSA program prepares

graduates to practice instructional leadership, one of the five key components from national

Table 10

Alignment of Key Practices with Executive Standards

Key Practice (The Wallace Foundation, 2013)	NC School Executive Evaluation Standard (SBE Department of Public Instruction, 2015)	ECU SLP (ECU Department of Educational Leadership)
1. Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards	IIa. The school's identity, in part, is derived from the vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals of the school, the processes used to establish these attributes, and the ways they are embodied in the life of the school community	6. School improvement
2. Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail	IIa. The school's identity, in part, is derived from the vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals of the school, the processes used to establish these attributes, and the ways they are embodied in the life of the school community	1. Positive impact on student learning and development
3. Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their parts in realizing the school vision	IIa. The school's identity, in part, is derived from the vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals of the school, the processes used to establish these attributes, and the ways they are embodied in the life of the school community	2. Teacher empowerment and leadership
4. Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn to their utmost	IIb. The principal/assistant principal articulates a vision, and implementation strategies, for improvements and changes which result in improved achievement for all students	1. Positive impact on student learning and development

65

Table 10 (continued)

Key Practice (The Wallace Foundation, 2013)	NC School Executive Evaluation Standard (SBE Department of Public Instruction, 2015)	ECU SLP (ECU Department of Educational Leadership)
5. Managing people, data and process to foster school improvement	IIb. The principal/assistant principal articulates a vision, and implementation strategies, for improvements and changes which result in improved achievement for all students	3. Community involvement and engagement 4. Organizational management

research stated in the Wallace Foundation studies. Instructional leadership is essential to address because the support provided by instructional leaders encourages reform and sustains meaningful change (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). To practice instructional leadership, effective administrators create collaborative structures within the school to facilitate high time on task and include peer feedback and sharing of ideas and strategies throughout the learning community (SBE Department of Public Instruction, 2015). ECU's MSA program faculty has little formal research about their graduates; therefore, this study attempts to evaluate MSA graduates' perception of their preparation to be instructional leaders.

ECU's MSA's Faculty have traditionally offered topics surrounding instructional leadership; however, the program was redesigned in 2010 to include SLPs in an attempt to provide more hands-on experiences while learning instructional leadership theory, practices and techniques. The SLPs are completed throughout the two years of the MSA program. In order to accomplish the competencies of the redesigned program, students completed the ECU MSA in one of two ways, as a full time or part time student. The full time program is delivered via a cohort model with courses offered fall and spring semesters for two years. One way to participate in the full time course of study is on campus via the North Carolina Principal Fellows (NCPF) program. The NCPF is a merit-based scholarship awarded to outstanding future school leaders in North Carolina by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (East Carolina University, LEED Department, 2013). NCPFs complete the MSA in two years: one year of full time study on campus and one year of full time internship in a NC public school. The part time program is delivered with some online components and evening face to face sessions via a cohort model. Part time students begin their course of study in the second summer semester of each calendar year. In addition to regular coursework, MSA students must also complete internships.

ECU MSA student internships are designed to fully immerse students into the school where they will serve. At the completion of the internship students will have earned 15 s.h. (ECU, 2015). The internship is designed to incorporate the NCSSES. To evaluate learning and experiences with the practices associated with the NCSSE, students are required to complete a pre-assessment of their perceptions of their experiences with these standards prior to beginning the internship and again at the end of their yearlong internship. Once students graduate, there is no formal follow up with them to assess how well the MSA program prepared them to be instructional leaders. ECU does not currently track their MSA candidates upon graduation to determine satisfaction with the curriculum delivery and how that delivery has translated into experiences within their current administrative roles. A follow up with graduates to gain their perceptions about their preparation in instructional leadership occurred.

Study Questions

There were five questions for this study. Research questions one and four focused on the twelve NCSSE instructional practices for instructional leadership. The study questions are:

Question 1- How well do ECU's MSA graduates perceive they were equipped to practice instructional leadership as defined by twelve practices listed in the NCSSE Instructional Leadership Standard?

The twelve practices in The NCSSE are

1.1 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she focuses on his or her own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals.

1.2 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates an environment of practiced distributive leadership and teacher empowerment.

1.3 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she demonstrates knowledge of 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment by leading or participating in meetings with teachers and parents where these topics are discussed, and/or holding frequent formal or informal conversations with students, staff and parents around these topics.

1.4 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she ensures that there is an appropriate and logical alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program.

1.5 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes and schedule that facilitate the collaborative (team) design, sharing, evaluation, and archiving of rigorous, relevant and engaging instructional lessons that ensure students acquire essential knowledge.

1.6 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she challenges staff to reflect deeply on and define what knowledge, skills and concepts are essential to the complete educational development of students.

1.7 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes for collecting and using student test data and other formative data from other sources for the improvement of instruction.

1.8 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes for identifying, benchmarking and providing students access to a variety of 21st

century instructional tools (e.g., technology) and best practices for meeting
diverse student needs.

1.9 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes
that ensure the strategic allocation and use of resources to meet instructional goals
and support teacher needs.

1.10 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes
to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their
classroom instruction.

1.11 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes
that protect teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their
instructional time.

1.12 Practices effective instructional leadership when he or she systematically and
frequently observes in classroom and engages in conversations with students
about their learning.

Question 2- Is there a difference in perceived preparation for instructional leadership
between ECU graduates that completed the MSA program as full time or part time
students? If yes, which practices are perceived to be different by full or part time program
of study?

Question 3- Is there a difference in perceived preparation for instructional leadership
identified by graduates that work in various NC counties? If yes, which practices are
perceived to be different in certain counties?

Question 4- Is there a difference in perceived preparation for instructional leadership by

the year of graduation from ECU's MSA program? If yes, which practices were identified

as different in various years?

Question 5- What are some perceived institutional factors that affect instructional

leadership practices beyond what graduates learned from ECU's MSA program?

Study Participants

ECU MSA candidates are for the most part educators at schools located in eastern NC.

The ECU MSA program graduates an average of eighty-five MSA candidates per year and has a

very low attrition rate of approximately two candidates per cohort (East Carolina University,

LEED Department, 2013). The first cohort of graduates that completed the revised MSA

program was the class of 2012 and therefore the target sample for this study are all ECU MSA

graduates from 2012 (n=84), 2013 (n=74) and 2014 (n=62).

Criterion based samples include all cases that meet a certain criterion (Creswell, 2007).

This criterion identified a sample population of students that completed the revised MSA

program. Identifying where the graduates are currently employed in North Carolina and

obtaining their contact information was not easy because ECU does not keep current

employment records of their graduates. This researcher utilized a multistage cluster sampling

process (Creswell, 2007) to select a sample. In multistage cluster sampling, the researcher

chooses a sample in two or more stages because either the researcher cannot easily identify the

population or the population is extremely large (Creswell, 2007). In the first stage this researcher

obtained a list from the MSA program coordinator of graduates from each year (2012, 2013, and

2014) and their respective pre and post perception survey scores of the NCSSE instructional

leadership practices completed prior to graduation. A more in depth description of the survey is

provided in the instrumentation section. Next, the researcher will request a list of current administrators in NC from the NCDPI Human Resources Director. This list will include their current employment school, job title, and email addresses. If email addresses were not available, the researcher visited school websites to find email lists of ECU MSA graduates in the final stage. Finally, the researcher identified the sample of ECU MSA graduates by comparing the NCDPI list to the ECU MSA graduate lists. This first list was utilized to deploy the Instructional Leadership NCSSE survey.

The researcher continued using multistage clustering (Creswell, 2007) to identify a smaller sample to be interviewed. In this stage the researcher randomly selected 2 male and 2 female participants from the survey sample in each of the study categories: part-time/full-time program of study; year of graduation 2012, 2013, 2014; two randomly selected counties for a total of 28 possible interviews.

Study Design

This study was a mixed methods design. Mixed methods designs are procedures for collecting, analyzing, and linking both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or multiphase series of studies (Creswell, 2012). Quantitative data was collected via the *NCSSE self-assessment* survey in order to identify trends in responses of ECU MSA graduates of the revised program that started with the graduating class of 2012. Qualitative data was also collected using open-ended questions to understand the institutional factors that impact graduates instructional leadership after graduation. The combination of both forms of data provided a better understanding of the perceptions of ECU MSA graduates about their preparation to be instructional leaders.

The mixed-method design was a sequential collection of quantitative and qualitative data to facilitate a longitudinal study of ECU MSA graduates (see Figure 2). This study was formative in that it will laid the groundwork for a program evaluation in the area of instructional leadership. Accuracy, utility, feasibility and propriety help frame the validity of the study (Creswell, 2012). Accuracy was substantiated by use of the same pre-internship, post-internship and post-graduation survey that allowed for accuracy of perceptions on preparation for instructional leadership. The information from this study was used to paint a picture of where ECU MSA graduates are employed and their perceptions of how well they were prepared to serve as instructional leaders in their respective districts outlined utility. This information helped guide ECU faculty for continual improvement of the MSA program. The feasibility of this study was practical in that there are already pre and post internship surveys from MSA graduates since 2012. Because these data are already being collected by the LEED faculty at ECU, this study will add to the body of data by administering the same survey one additional time post- graduation. The researcher analyzed the data and placed it into a format for ease of use for continued studies at ECU. To satisfy propriety, an IRB approval was be obtained to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical and legal manner. Table 11 outlines the study design criteria. Once this study is completed, there will be potential for ongoing studies to follow up with graduates. The information will be useful to ECU MSA faculty as they continue to assess the effectiveness of administrator preparation in the area of instructional leadership.

Procedures for Data Collection

In order to identify a sample for this study, ECU's MSA program coordinator was contacted to obtain a list of graduates from the MSA program during the years of 2012 through 2014 along with their NCSEE pre and post survey data. An extensive search to locate the

North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Practices (ILPs)

MSA Student NCSSE Pre-assessment of ILPs prior to starting their internship

End of Internship

MSA Student NCSSE Post-assessment of ILPs at the end of yearlong internship

After Graduation

MSA Graduate NCSSE Self-Assessment of ILPs in current role

Stage 2. Interviews to determine factors that affect instructional leadership practices beyond graduation from ECU's MSA program?

Figure 2. Longitudinal mixed-methods study.

Table 11

Study Design Criteria

Study Design Element	Definition of Design Element	Design Element as it applies to this study
Accuracy	the extent to which the information obtained is an accurate reflection with reality	The use of the same pre, post and graduates survey will allow for accuracy of perceptions on preparation for instructional leadership
Utility	the extent to which the results serve the practical information needs of the subject	The information from this study will paint a picture of where ECU MSA graduates are employed and their perceptions of how well they are prepared to serve in their respective districts. This will help guide ECU faculty for continual improvement of the MSA program.
Feasibility	the extent to which the evaluation is realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal	There are already pre and post internship surveys. Administration of the same survey post-graduation will add to data for this study. A portion of this data is already being collected by the university. This study will serve to analyze the data and place it into a format for ease of use for continued studies
Propriety	the extent to which the evaluation is done legally and ethically, protecting the rights of those involved	IRB approval will be obtained to ensure that the study is conducted in an ethical and legal manner

graduates was conducted by requesting information from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in Raleigh, NC and searching school websites in NC to retrieve contact information about ECU graduates not found in NCDPI's information. A database of this information was created delineating the various counties in which ECU graduates are employed. Once email addresses were obtained, the NCSEE survey (see Appendix A) was deployed electronically using Qualtrics. Qualtrics is a browser based software program which allows for ease of survey creation, distribution and collection of data (ECU ITCS, 2015). The survey was deployed to all ECU MSA graduates of 2012, 2013, and 2014.

The NCSEE survey were deployed with a deadline for completion of fifteen days. A second survey request was sent to the MSA graduates who did not respond after five days of deployment and a third request was sent five days letter. The initial deployment of the NCSEE survey occurred during the third week of January 2016. Additional requests for survey completion were sent to non-respondents five and ten days after initial deployment of the survey. If all email addresses were located, a total of 220 surveys would have been sent to selected ECU MSA graduates. "Most experts in the field believe that researchers should aim for a 60% return" (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005); this would allow for a return of 132 surveys. After gathering survey data, a sample of practicing administrators were selected to interview based on their willingness to be interviewed. The researcher randomly selected 2 male and 2 female participants from the survey sample in each of the study categories: part-time and full-time program of study; year of graduation 2012, 2013 and 2014 by using excel randomization process. There were also 1 male and 1 female from two randomly selected counties for a combined total of 28 interviews. Survey and interview data were analyzed to determine patterns in responses that have potential to

improve the ECU MSA program in preparing administrators to be instructional leaders. Table 12 outlines the data collection steps, processes and purpose.

Study Limitations

Because there are currently only four years of graduates from the revised ECU MSA program, it will be important to continue to follow up with graduates for effectiveness of programs offered through the ECU MSA program. This study analyzed only one of eight school executive standards on the NC evaluation instrument. Even though the sample had potential to be large and optimism existed for return rate of responses, reality was that administrators are very busy, which led to a lower rate of return for surveys. An additional limitation was ensuring consistency of structure when interviewing administrators. Because free verse allows for greater variability in responses, it was important to remain as scripted as possible in questioning technique.

Data Analysis

Survey researchers typically collect data using two basic forms: questionnaires and interviews (Creswell, 2012). The researcher in this study used both forms. The questionnaire was the same one utilized by the ECU MSA program in their pre-assessment of the internship and then again as a post assessment of the internship. The section about instructional leadership in the questionnaire entitled, *NCSSE Self-Assessment* (see Appendix A) was used in this study.

The NCSSE Self-Assessment was developed by ECU MSA faculty by utilizing the exact wording found in the NCSSE and asking students to rate their current experiences with each of the twelve practices of instructional leadership using a Likert scale of 0(not applicable), 1(little), 2(some), 3(good), and 4(strong) experiences with each of the 12 practices. For this study, the research edited the questions to read in first person (see Appendix B) without changing any of

Table 12

Data Collection Steps

Step	Process	Purpose
Identify ECU MSA Graduates from 2012 through 2014	Contact ECU LEED office	Beginning collections of information for data base formation
Locate ECU MSA graduates from 2012 - 2014	Contact DPI, search internet, and contact colleagues for employment location	Identify region and district of employment
Create geographic map by region of graduates	Create a spreadsheet of ECU graduate information to include name, contact, district, region, year of graduation	Organization of contact information of graduates
Deploy post graduate survey	Send email requests of ECU MSA graduates to complete survey using Qualtrics	Gather longitudinal data on graduate perceptions
Analyze Survey	Collect survey results and analyze looking for trends	to identify graduates for possible interview
Interview selected graduates	Select random sample based on willingness to interview, set up interviews and conduct interviews	To determine patterns in responses to guide ECU MSA faculty in preparation of course materials and delivery

the content of the questions. For this reason and because the ECU MSA program faculty had not formally tested the validity of this instrument, the researcher established the construct validity of the NCSSE instructional leadership questionnaire by sending the questionnaire to three educational leadership experts and asking them to read the survey and indicate whether each question was a good measure of the practices associated with instructional leadership as defined by the NCSSE and elicited their opinion on whether the questions in this survey could be used with MSA graduates to understand their perceptions of their use of instructional leadership as defined by the NCSSE. The three experts asserted their agreement and did not offer a need for editing.

In survey research it is important to select as large a sample as possible so that the sample will exhibit similar characteristics to the target population (Creswell, 2012).In this study the target population were all ECU MSA graduates that completed the revised MSA program. For this reason, this survey research intended to study the entire population because of its small size. This type of survey study is sometimes called a census study (Creswell, 2012) and it permits conclusions to be made about the entire population. For this type of study, the researcher reported descriptive statistics about the entire population. *T-tests* were utilized to determine the mean and standard deviation for each of the twelve practices in research questions 1 and 4.

The interview survey was the form on which the researcher recorded answers supplied by the interviewees. An interview guide was developed to address research question 5: What are some perceived institutional factors that affect instructional leadership practices beyond what graduates learned from ECU's MSA program? To obtain data for this research question the researcher utilized the following questions:

1. How well did the ECU MSA program prepare you to be to an instructional leader? Please share some examples that describe this preparation.

2. Did you complete SLPs in your MSA program? If so, how did they contribute to your feelings of preparation as an instructional leader? Please share some examples that describe this preparation.

3. What are some factors that affect(ed) your instructional leadership practices beyond what you learned from ECU's MSA program?

The researcher asked these open-ended questions and will listen to and record the comments of the interviewees for qualitative analysis. The survey responses were analyzed to determine trends in the responses. Interviews of selected respondents was recorded and transcribed. Once all data are collected, final categories of responses were coded and tallied. Trends in the transcribed interviews and survey responses were identified. Table 13 shows the measures that were used to analyze data from surveys.

The qualitative portion of this mixed method study relied primarily on MSA graduate experiences, perceptions and understandings (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 2010).

Perceptions of program practices that support instructional leadership of MSA graduates was gathered via administrative interviews and surveys. The researcher analyzed respondents' interview responses to determine whether or not the MSA graduates perceived that their MSA program adequately prepared them to be instructional leaders and to identify institutional factors that influence instructional leadership post MSA graduation. The researcher reviewed the interview notes and recordings to identify common comments or words that would help address the last research question. According to Merriam (2001), a researcher must adopt some system for coding and cataloging the interview data, and it helps to start with basic descriptive

80

Table 13

Survey Analyzing Measures

Year of Graduation (total graduates)	ILP Pre Assessment	ILP Post Assessment	ILP Current Role	Differences among data sets
2012 (n=84)	Mean, standard dev., diff between part-time and full time	Mean, standard dev., diff between part-time and full time	Mean, standard dev., diff between part-time and full time	Differences in means of: Pre & Post Post & Current
2013 (n=74)	Mean, standard dev., diff between part-time and full time	Mean, standard dev., diff between part-time and full time	Mean, standard dev., diff between part-time and full time	Differences in means of: Pre & Post Post & Current
2014 (n=62)	Mean, standard dev., diff between part-time and full time	Mean, standard dev., diff between part-time and full time	Mean, standard dev., diff between part-time and full time	Differences in means of: Pre & Post Post & Current

categories early in the coding. A coding system was developed that rated key words that described perceptions of being prepared to be instructional leaders in two categories: prepared comments = 1 and not prepared comments = 2. Key words that described perceptions of the graduates' preparation were selected from the NCSSE practices that indicate that the participants perceived they were practicing behaviors that encouraged teacher development and student learning. Key words that describe institutional factors that affect instructional leadership beyond the MSA preparation were listed and tallied to determine which factors were mentioned and how often by interviewees.

A coding system was also used to glean information provided by participants that could be used to improve the curriculum of the MSA program. The coding system identified 1 = information that the graduates use after graduation, 2 = the importance and relevance of the information learned while students were in the MSA program, and 3 = information not included in the MSA program that may have been beneficial to graduates as they practice instructional leadership. A synopsis of all data was presented via narrative, graph and chart format to determine trends in the data. Qualitative data was utilized to identify trends that helped with interpretation of quantitative data.

<div align="center">

Summary

</div>

This chapter described the mixed methods study to determine effectiveness of preparation of MSA candidates to affect instructional leadership in the schools where they serve. A survey and interviews were used as instruments to determine which practices used in the ECU MSA program were most effective in graduate preparation to serve as instructional leaders. Chapter four will discuss the results obtained from interviews and these instruments.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter provides the results of the longitudinal, mixed-methods analysis of ECU MSA graduates' perceptions of their preparation to become instructional leaders. This chapter begins by summarizing the study design and the research questions. Next this chapter examines the demographics of respondents to the survey used in this study. This is followed by the longitudinal analysis of graduates' perceptions of their instructional leadership preparation from the pre- internship, post-internship and post-graduation. The difference, mean, and standard deviation among years are examined. Next, this researcher examined the results of interviews conducted to glean more information about perceptions of preparation for instructional leadership.

Study Design

This study utilized a mixed methods design. Mixed methods designs are procedures for collecting, analyzing, and linking both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or multiphase series of studies (Creswell, 2012). Quantitative data was collected via the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (*NCSSE) self-assessment* survey in order to identify trends in responses of ECU MSA graduates of the revised program that started with the graduating class of 2012. Qualitative data was also collected using open-ended questions to understand the institutional factors that impacted graduates' instructional leadership after graduation. The combination of both forms of data provides a better understanding of the perceptions of ECU MSA graduates about their preparation to be instructional leaders. This information will help guide ECU faculty for continual improvement of the MSA program.

Study Questions

The study questions were:

1. How well do ECU's MSA graduates perceive they were equipped to practice instructional leadership as defined by twelve practices listed in the NCSSE Instructional Leadership Standard?

2. Is there a difference in perceived preparation for instructional leadership between ECU graduates that completed the MSA program as full time or part time students? If yes, which practices are perceived to be different by full or part time program of study?

3. Is there a difference in perceived preparation for instructional leadership identified by graduates that work in various NC counties? If yes, which practices are perceived to be different in certain counties?

4. Is there a difference in perceived preparation for instructional leadership by the year of graduation from ECU's MSA program? If yes, which practices were identified as different in various years?

5. What are some perceived institutional factors that affect instructional leadership practices beyond what graduates learned from ECU's MSA program?

Study Sample

This researcher utilized a multistage cluster sampling process (Creswell, 2007) to select the sample. In multistage cluster sampling, the researcher chooses a sample in two or more stages because either the researcher cannot easily identify the population or the population is extremely large (Creswell, 2007). In this study the population's contact information was difficult to identify. In the first stage this researcher obtained a list from the MSA program coordinator of

graduates from each year (2012, 2013, and 2014) and their respective pre and post perception survey scores of the NCSSE instructional leadership practices completed prior to graduation. The target sample identified for this study were all ECU MSA graduates (n=220) from 2012 (n=84), 2013 (n=74) and 2014 (n=62). The database of current administrators in NC obtained from NCDPI Human Resources Director included 211 graduates. This database included ECU MSA graduates' current employment school, job title, and supervisor email addresses. The researcher identified the sample of ECU MSA graduates by comparing the NCDPI list to the ECU MSA graduate lists obtained from the ECU MSA program coordinator. This list included some duplicate graduates working in different schools or districts as indicated in Table 14. This researcher was not able to locate all graduates in the ECU data base, therefore the NCDPI list of graduates was utilized to deploy the Instructional Leadership NCSSE survey. Table 14 displays the counties and levels of employment for ECU MSA graduates for 2012, 2013 and 2014 as captured in the October 2015 data summary from NCDPI.

Graduates are employed in 36 counties throughout central and eastern North Carolina. The majority of 2012 through 2014 ECU MSA graduates are employed in Wake County (n=49). The county which employs the second largest group of 2012 through 2014 ECU MSA graduates is Pitt (n=25). Beaufort (n=12), Craven (n=10), Johnston (n=14), Lenoir (n=13), Onslow (n=13), and Wayne (n=12) counties all employ ten or more ECU MSA graduates. The twenty-eight remaining counties employ between 1 and 7 ECU MSA 2012, 2013 or 2014 graduates. Figure 3 shows a NC map of location of ECU MSA 2012, 2013, and 2014 graduates' employment by county.

Table 14

ECU MSA Graduates 2012-2014 by County of Employment

County	ECU MSA Graduation Year	Total at all levels	Elementary Level	Middle School Level	High School Level	Central Office Level	Other Level i.e K-8, 4-5, 6 – 13 or K-12	Totals for all years
Beaufort	2012	8	4	3	-	1	-	12 = 5.6%
	2013	4	2	1	1	1	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Bertie	2012	1	-	-	-	1	-	1= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Carteret	2012	2	-	2	-	-	-	5= 2.4%
	2013	2	-	-	1	1	-	
	2014	1	-	-	1	-	-	
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	2012	1	1	-	-	-	-	2= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	1	-	-	1	-	-	
Chatham	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	1	-	-	1	-	-	
Chowan	2012	2	-	-	1	1	-	3= 1.4%
	2013	1	1	-	-	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Table 14 (continued)

County	ECU MSA Graduation Year	Total at all levels	Elementary Level	Middle School Level	High School Level	Central Office Level	Other Level i.e K-8, 4-5, 6 – 13 or K-12	Totals for all years
Clinton City	2012	1	-	-	1	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Craven	2012	5	1	2	2	-	-	10= 4.7%
	2013	1	1	-	-	-	-	
	2014	4	3	-	1	-	-	
Currituck	2012	1	-	-	1	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Dare	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	5= 2.4%
	2013	6	2	1*	3*	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Duplin	2012	2	1	-	-	1	-	5= 2.4%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	3	1	-	2	-	-	
Durham	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	2= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	2	3*	-	1	-	-	
Edgecombe	2012	2	1	-	-	1	-	2= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Table 14 (continued)

County	ECU MSA Graduation Year	Total at all levels	Elementary Level	Middle School Level	High School Level	Central Office Level	Other Level i.e K-8, 4-5, 6 – 13 or K-12	Totals for all years
Franklin	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	1	-	-	1	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Greene	2012	2	1	-	1	-	-	5= 2.4%
	2013	3	-	1	-	1	1	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Halifax	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	1	1	-	-	-	-	
Hertford	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	1	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Johnston	2012	4	1	1	2	-	-	14= 6.6%
	2013	5	1	1	3	-	-	
	2014	5	2	2	-	-	1	
Jones	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	1**	-	-	1**	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Lee	2012	1	-	1	-	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Table 14 (continued)

County	ECU MSA Graduation Year	Total at all levels	Elementary Level	Middle School Level	High School Level	Central Office Level	Other Level i.e K-8, 4-5, 6 – 13 or K-12	Totals for all years
Lenoir	2012	3	3	-	-	-	-	13= 6.2%
	2013	8	2	2	-	1	3	
	2014	2	1	1	-	-	-	
Martin	2012	2	2	-	-	-	-	3= 1.4%
	2013	1	-	-	1	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Nash	2012	1	1	-	-	-	-	5= 2.4%
	2013	3	1	1	1	-	-	
	2014	1	-	-	-	1	-	
New Hanover	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	3= 1.4%
	2013	2	-	-	1	1	-	
	2014	1	1	-	-	-	-	
North Hampton	2012	1	1*	-	-	1*	-	1= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Onslow	2012	3	1	1	1	-	-	13= 6.2%
	2013	8	3	2*	4*	-	-	
	2014	2	2	-	-	-	-	
Orange	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	1	1	-	-	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	

68

Table 14 (continued)

County	ECU MSA Graduation Year	Total at all levels	Elementary Level	Middle School Level	High School Level	Central Office Level	Other Level i.e K-8, 4-5, 6 – 13 or K-12	Totals for all years
Pamlico	2012	1	1	-	-	-	-	2= <1%
	2013	1**	-	-	1**	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Pender	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	1	-	-	1	-	-	
Pitt	2012	10	2	1	3	-	4	25= 11.8%
	2013	9	3	3	3	-	-	
	2014	6	1	1	2	-	2	
Sampson	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2014	1	-	-	1	-	-	
Tyrrell	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	1	-	1	-	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Wake	2012	23	9*	7*	6	1	1	49= 23.2%
	2013	1	-	-	1	-	-	
	2014	25	14	3*	3	7*	-	
Washington	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	1= <1%
	2013	1	1	-	-	-	-	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Table 14 (continued)

County	ECU MSA Graduation Year	Total at all levels	Elementary Level	Middle School Level	High School Level	Central Office Level	Other Level i.e K-8, 4-5, 6 – 13 or K-12	Totals for all years
Wayne	2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	12= 5.7%
	2013	12	4	1	5	1	1	
	2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Wilson	2012	3	-	2	1	-	-	6= 2.8%
	2013	2*	1*	-	1	-	-	
	2014	1	1	-	-	-	-	
Totals		211***	83	41	62	22	14	211***

Note. *same person different schools, **same person different districts, ***excludes duplicates.
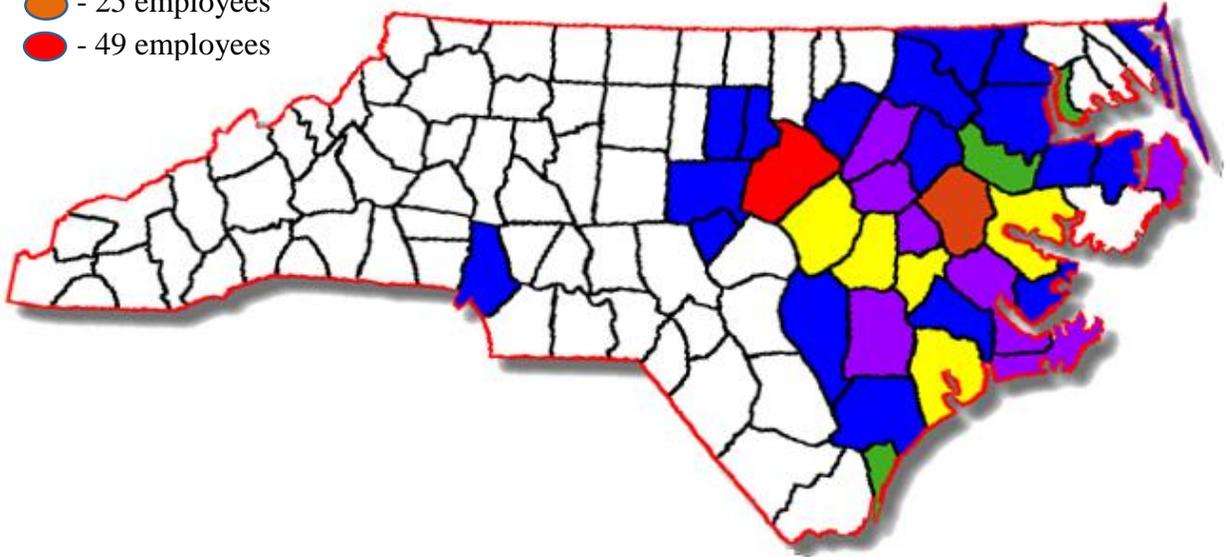
Note. Clinton City is located in Sampson County and both have 1 or 2 employees each. Source: Retrieved from diymaps.net©.

Figure 3. ECU MSA graduates by county of employment as of October 2015.

The next step in the multistage cluster sampling process was to identify contact information for graduates. The researcher requested a list of current administrators in NC from the NCDPI Human Resources Director that included their current employment school, job title, and supervisor email addresses. For those email addresses that were not available, this researcher visited school websites to find email lists of ECU MSA graduates. This researcher completed an extensive search to find email addresses of the list of MSA graduates received in the database from NCDPI. When email addresses were not easily found on the internet, emails were sent to human resource directors in the individual counties. In some cases, phone calls were made to individual schools to obtain email addresses of the MSA graduates. This search process resulted in a list of 188 current email addresses of ECU MSA graduates. Of the 188 surveys deployed, 77 (41%) of the MSA graduates began the NCSSE self-assessment survey. Out of the 77 respondents 61 (79%) ECU MSA graduates completed the survey in its entirety. The demographics portion of the survey was completed by 72 (38%) of the total contacts made. The respondents were evenly dispersed over three years of MSA graduates participating in this study as follows: MSA 2012 graduates n= 24 (33.33%) respondents; MSA 2013 graduates n= 23 (31.94%) respondents; and MSA 2014 graduates n= 25 (34.72%) respondents. Out of the total respondents, n=19 (26.39%) were full time graduate students (principal fellows) and n=53 (73.61%) were part time graduate students (cohort participants). Of the total respondents n= 19 (26.39%) males and n=53 (73.61%) females and n=57 (79.17%) whites, n=12 (16.67%) blacks, n=1 (1.39%) other and n=2 (2.78%) who preferred not to disclose. There were 15 (20.83%) of the respondents who have worked in their current district between 0-2 years, 6 (8.33%) who have worked between 3 -4 years in their current district, 5 (6.94%) between 5 and 7 years and 46 (63.89%) who have worked in their current district 8 or more years. The number of respondents

who began work in an administrative role immediately upon graduation was 34 (48.57%) while

25 (35.71%) are not in administrative roles at all. The difference in totals represents respondents

who chose not to answer some of the questions in the survey. Table 15 provides an illustration of

demographics for the respondents.

Study Findings

Analysis of Research Questions #1 and #4

Question 1 in this study was, "How well do ECU's MSA graduates perceive they were

equipped to practice instructional leadership as defined by twelve practices listed in the NCSSE

Instructional Leadership Standard?" To investigate this research question, the NCSSE Self-

Assessment survey was utilized. This instrument elicits respondents to rate graduates' current

experiences with each of the twelve practices of instructional leadership using a Likert scale of 0

(Not Applicable), 1(little), 2(some), 3(good) and 4(strong) experiences with each of the 12

practices (see Appendix B).

A longitudinal analysis of the survey was conducted by analyzing graduates responses prior to

beginning their internship (Pre), at the completion of their internship (Post), and as graduates

(Graduates).

A descriptive analysis of the twelve NCSSE Instructional Leadership practices were

analyzed by their mean and standard deviations for the pre-internship (Pre), post internship

(Post) and post-graduation (Graduates). *T-tests* using Microsoft Excel 2010 software were also

conducted for each set of data in each of the twelve NCSSE Instructional Leadership practices.

In addition, to address research question 4: "Is there a difference in perceived preparation for

instructional leadership by the year of graduation from ECU's MSA program? If yes, which

Table 15

Demographics of Survey Respondents

Gender	Race	Graduation Year	Principal Fellow	Years in District	Administrative Role after graduation
Male – n=19 (26.39 %)	Black – n=12 (16.67%)	2012 – n=24 (33.33%)	Yes – n=19 26.39%	0 - 2 – n=15 (20.83%)	Immed. –n=34 (48.57%)
Female- n=53 (73.61%)	White – n=57 (79.17%)	2013 - n=23 (31.94%)	No – n=53 73.61%%	3 – 4 n=6 (8.33%)	1 year – n=8 (11.43%)
	Other – n=1 (1.39%)	2014 – n=25 (34.72%)		5 – 7 n= 5 (6.94%)	2 years – n=2 (2.86%)
	Not Disclosed n=2 (2.78%)			8 or more n=46 (63.89%)	3 years – n=1 (1.43%)
					Not Admin – n=25 (35.71)%

practices were identified as different in various years?" The data analysis was desegregated by graduate year. Tables 16-39 represent the data analysis per Instructional Leadership practice.

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership 2.1 practice is: "elicits perception of respondents about their practice of effective instructional leadership when he or she focuses on his or her own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals." The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the internship (Pre) reflects their average perception of MSA students' current practice at that time. The mean of 2.72, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "some" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the post-internship (Post), the survey mean increased by .79 points (3.51) to indicate "good" experiences in leadership practice 2.1. This indicated that the internship was perceived to provide meaningful experiences on how to focus on their own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals. The analysis of the mean scores (3.41) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as good which indicated that the ECU MSA program had no impact on perceptions of impact of this standard as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-test*, with .05 to indicate levels of significance was utilized for standard 2.1. The comparison of Pre and Post data for the graduating class of 2012-13 indicated a significance level of 7.15x10^ (-13) and 1.32x10^(-8) for the 2013-14 graduating class. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis that the two means are equal. There is strong statistical evidence

96

Table 16

Comparison of Standard 2.1 scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.1 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	132	3.00	.77
Post	134	3.00	.81
Graduates	62	3.32	.72

Table 17

Standard 2.1 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	16; 3.31(.60)
2013	71; 2.72(.74)	71; 3.51(.53)	22; 3.41(.73)
2014	61; 2.82(.60)	61; 2.54(.54)	24; 2.25(.79)

Table 18

Comparison of Standard 2.2 Scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.1 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	134	3.00	.80
Post	134	3.00	.80
Graduates	60	3.32	.68

Table 19

Standard 2.2 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	15; 3.20(.68)
2013	71; 2.59(.71)	71; 3.38(.53)	21; 3.33(.66)
2014	61; 2.56(.84)	61; 3.54(.59)	24; 3.08(.88)

Table 20

Comparison of Standard 2.3 Scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.1 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	133	3.00	.81
Post	134	3.00	.85
Graduates	61	3.38	.73

Table 21

Standard 2.3 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	16; 3.44(.73)
2013	71; 2.62(.74)	71; 3.45(.49)	22; 3.55(.60)
2014	61; 2.67(.91)	61; 3.46(.66)	24; 3.04(.86)

Table 22

Comparison of Standard 2.4 Scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.1 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	133	3.00	.86
Post	134	3.00	.85
Graduates	60	3.20	.89

Table 23

Standard 2.4 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	16; 3.13(.89)
2013	71; 2.62(.74)	71; 3.42(.53)	21; 3.33(.73)
2014	61; 2.46(.92)	61; 3.30(.67)	24; 3.08(1.02)

Table 24

Comparison of Standard 2.5 Scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.1 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	133	3.00	.86
Post	134	4.00	.90
Graduates	62	3.00	.62

Table 25

Standard 2.5 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	16: 3.33(.62)
2013	71; 2.55(.74)	71; 3.59(.53)	20; 3.35(.73)
2014	61; 2.57(.99)	61; 3.54(.62)	24; 2.88(.83)

Table 26

Comparison of Standard 2.6 Scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.1 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	133	2.00	.89
Post	134	3.00	.85
Graduates	62	2.97	.83

Table 27

Standard 2.6 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	15; 3.13(.83)
2013	71; 2.49(.69)	71; 3.39(.61)	20; 3.40(.75)
2014	61; 2.28(.99)	61; 3.34(.73)	24; 2.88(.90)

Table 28

Comparison of Standard 2.7 Scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.1 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	133	3.00	.84
Post	134	3.00	.84
Graduates	59	3.20	.76

Table 29

Standard 2.7 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	15; 3.27(.80)
2013	71; 2.66(.74)	71; 3.52(.53)	22; 3.18(.73)
2014	61; 2.56(.96)	61; 3.46(.71)	25; 2.80(.77)

Table 30

Comparison of Standard 2.8 Scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.1 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	133	3.00	.84
Post	134	3.00	.93
Graduates	61	2.92	.96

Table 31

Standard 2.8 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	15; 3.00(.60)
2013	71; 2.55(.73)	71; 3.42(.59)	21; 3.00(1.00)
2014	61; 2.52(.89)	61; 3.26(.66)	26; 2.69(.97)

Table 32

Comparison of Standard 2.9 Scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.1 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	129	2.00	.88
Post	134	3.00	.89
Graduates	57	2.89	.92

Table 33

Standard 2.9 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	15; 2.87(.99)
2013	69; 2.36(.74)	71; 3.23(.53)	21; 3.33(.73)
2014	61; 2.18(.99)	61; 3.11(.70)	24; 3.08(1.03)

Table 34

Comparison of Standard 2.10 Scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.1 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	130	2.00	.95
Post	134	3.00	.98
Graduates	59	3.07	.83

Table 35

Standard 2.10 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	15; 3.40(.63)
2013	71; 2.18(.81)	71; 3.46(.58)	20; 3.15(.88)
2014	61; 2.15(.91)	61; 3.39(.70)	22; 3.05(.90)

Table 36

Comparison of Standard 2.11 Scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.1 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	128	2.00	.97
Post	134	3.00	.94
Graduates	55	2.91	.93

Table 37

Standard 2.11 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	15; 2.93(.88)
2013	71; 2.18(.87)	71; 3.25(.58)	18; 3.00(.91)
2014	61; 1.95(.93)	61; 3.43(.73)	22; 2.82(1.01)

Table 38

Comparison of Standard 2.12 Scores Pre, Post and Graduates

Time	N	2.12 Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Pre	128	2.00	.97
Post	134	3.00	.76
Graduates	59	3.19	.95

Table 39

Standard 2.12 Experiences Perceived by Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Pre-internship N; Mean(SD)	Post Internship N; Mean(SD)	Graduates N; Mean(SD)
2012	Not available	Not Available	15; 3.13(.64)
2013	71; 2.20(.87)	71; 3.48(.58)	22; 3.09(.97)
2014	61; 2.31(1.01)	61; 3.41(.68)	24; 3.04(1.12)

that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they felt prepared for NCSSE standard 2.1 after their internships.

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership standard practice 2.2 is "creates an environment of distributive leadership and teacher empowerment." The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the internship (Pre) reflects their average perception of MSA students' current practice at that time. The mean of 3.00, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "good" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the internship (Post), the survey mean stayed the same. This indicated that the internship was not perceived to provide meaningful experiences in creating an environment of distributive leadership and teacher empowerment. The analysis of the mean scores (3.20) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as "good" with a slight increase of .20 points, which indicated that the ECU MSA program had a small influence on perceptions of impact of this standard as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-test* were utilized to indicate levels of significance for standard 2.2. The comparison of Pre and Post data indicated a significance level of 3.97×10^{-12} for the 2012-13 graduating class and 7.91×10^{-12} for the class of 2013-14. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis that the two means are equal. There is strong statistical evidence that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they felt prepared for NCSSE standard 2.2 after their internships.

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership standard practice 2.3 is "practices effective instructional leadership when he or she demonstrates knowledge of 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment by leading or participating in meetings with teachers and parents

where these topics are discussed, and/or holding frequent formal or informal conversations with students, staff and parents around these topics."

The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the internship (Pre) reflects their average perception of MSA students' current practice at that time. The mean of 3.00, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "good" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the internship (Post), the survey mean stayed the same. This indicated that the internship was not perceived to provide meaningful experiences in practicing effective instructional leadership when he or she demonstrates knowledge of 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment by leading or participating in meetings with teachers and parents where these topics are discussed, and/or holding frequent formal or informal conversations with students, staff and parents around these topics.

The analysis of the mean scores (3.38) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as "good" with a slight increase of .38 points, which indicated that the ECU MSA program had a small influence on perceptions of impact of this standard as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-test* were utilized to indicate levels of significance for standard 2.3. The comparison of Pre and Post data indicated a significance level of 1.77×10^{-12} for the 2012-13 graduating class and 6.84×10^{-9} for the class of 2013-14. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis that the two means are equal. There is strong statistical evidence that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they felt prepared to practice NCSSE standard 2.3 after their internships.

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership standard practice 2.4 is "practices effective instructional leadership when he or she ensures that there is an appropriate and logical alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program."

The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the internship (Pre) reflects their average perception of MSA students' current practice at that time. The mean of 3.00, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "good" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the internship (Post), the survey mean stayed the same. This indicated that the internship was not perceived to provide meaningful experiences in practicing effective instructional leadership when he or she ensures that there is an appropriate and logical alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program.

The analysis of the mean scores (3.20) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as "good" with a slight increase of .20 points, which indicated that the ECU MSA program had a small influence on perceptions of impact of this standard as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-test* were utilized to indicate levels of significance for standard 2.4. The comparison of Pre and Post data indicated a significance level of 2.07×10^{-11} for the 2012-13 graduating class and 2.38×10^{-9} for the class of 2013-14. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis that the two means are equal. There is strong statistical evidence that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they felt prepared for NCSSE standard 2.4 after their internships.

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership standard practice 2.5 is "practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes and schedule that facilitate the

collaborative (team) design, sharing, evaluation, and archiving of rigorous, relevant and engaging instructional lessons that ensure students acquire essential knowledge." The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the internship (Pre) reflects their average perception of MSA students' current practice at that time. The mean of 3.00, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "good" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the internship (Post), the survey mean increased to 4.00. This indicated that the internship was perceived to provide meaningful experiences in practicing effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes and schedule that facilitate the collaborative (team) design, sharing, evaluation, and archiving of rigorous, relevant and engaging instructional lessons that ensure students acquire essential knowledge. The analysis of the mean scores (3.00) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as "good" with a slight decrease of 1.00 points, which indicated that the ECU MSA program did not have an influence on perceptions of impact of standard 2.5 as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-test* were utilized to indicate levels of significance for standard 2.5. The comparison of Pre and Post data indicated a significance level of 5.86×10^{-17} for the 2012-13 graduating class and 1.81×10^{-11} for the class of 2013-14. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis that the two means are equal. There is a strong statistical evidence that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they feel prepared for NCSSE standard practice 2.5.

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership standard practice 2.6 is "practices effective instructional leadership when he or she challenges staff to reflect deeply on and define what knowledge, skills and concepts are essential to the complete educational development of students." The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the internship (Pre)

reflects their average perception of MSA students' current practice at that time. The mean of 2.00, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "some" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the internship (Post), the survey mean increased by 1.00 point to 3.00. This indicated that the internship was perceived to provide meaningful experiences on challenging staff to reflect deeply on and define what knowledge, skills and concepts are essential to the complete educational development of students. The analysis of the mean scores (2.97) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as "good" with a slight decrease of .03 points, which indicated that the ECU MSA program had an influence on perceptions of impact of this standard as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-test* were utilized to indicate levels of significance for standard 2.6. The comparison of Pre and Post data indicated a significance level of 1.03×10^{-12} for the 2012-13 graduating class and 1.66×10^{-10} for the class of 2013-14. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis that the two means are equal. There is strong statistical evidence that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they felt prepared for NCSSE standard 2.6.

The Instructional Leadership standard 2.7 is "practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes for collecting and using student test data and other formative data from other sources for the improvement of instruction".

The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the internship (Pre) reflects their average perception of MSA students' current practice at that time. The mean of 3.00, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "good" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the internship (Post), the survey mean stayed the same. This indicated that the internship was not perceived to *provide* meaningful

experiences on creating an environment of distributive leadership and teacher empowerment. The analysis of the mean scores (3.20) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as "good" with a slight increase of .20 points, which indicated that the ECU MSA program had a small influence on perceptions of impact of standard 2.7 as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-test* were utilized to indicate levels of significance for standard 2.7. The comparison of Pre and Post data indicated a significance level of 5.54×10^{-15} for the 2012-13 graduating class and 1.83×10^{-9} for the class of 2013-14. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis that the two means are equal. There is strong statistical evidence that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they felt prepared for NCSSE standard 2.7.

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership standard practice 2.8 is "practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes for identifying, benchmarking and providing students access to a variety of 21st century instructional tools (e.g., technology) and best practices for meeting diverse student needs." The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the internship (Pre) reflects their average perception of MSA students' current practice at that time. The mean of 3.00, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "good" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the internship (Post), the survey mean stayed the same. This indicated that the internship was not perceived to provide meaningful experiences on creating an environment of distributive leadership and teacher empowerment. The analysis of the mean scores (2.92) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as "good" with a slight decrease of .08 points, which indicated that the ECU MSA program had a small influence on perceptions of impact of this standard as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-*

test were utilized to indicate levels of significance for standard 2.8. The comparison of Pre and Post data indicated a significance level of 2.50x10^(-13) for the 2012-13 graduating class and 3.40x10^(-8) for the class of 2013-14. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis that the two means are equal. There is strong statistical evidence that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they felt prepared for NCSSE standard 2.8.

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership standard practice 2.9 is "practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes that ensure the strategic allocation and use of resources to meet instructional goals and support teacher needs".

The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the internship (Pre) reflects their average perception of MSA students' current practice at that time. The mean of 2.00, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "some" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the internship (Post), the survey mean increased by 1.00 point, which indicates "good" perceptions of experiences. This indicated that the internship was perceived to provide meaningful experiences in creating processes that ensure the strategic allocation and use of resources to meet instructional goals and support teacher needs The analysis of the mean scores (2.89) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as "good" with a slight decrease of .11 points, which indicated that the ECU MSA program had a small influence on perceptions of impact of this standard as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-test* were utilized to indicate levels of significance for standard 2.9. The comparison of Pre and Post data indicated a significance level of 1.80x10^(-12) for the 2012-13 graduating class and 3.0x10^(-8) for the class of 2013-14. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis

that the two means are equal. There is strong statistical evidence that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they feel prepared for NCSSE standard 2.9.

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership standard 2.10 is "creates processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction".

The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the internship (Pre) reflects their average perception of MSA students' current practice at that time. The mean of 2.00, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "some" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the internship (Post), the survey mean increased by 1.00 point, which indicates "good" perceptions of experiences. This increase indicated that the internship was perceived to provide meaningful experiences in creating processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction. The analysis of the mean scores (3.07) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as "good" with a slight increase of .07 points, which indicated that the ECU MSA program had a small influence on perceptions of impact of this standard as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-test* were utilized to indicate levels of significance for standard 2.10. The comparison of Pre and Post data indicated a significance level of 9.70×10^{-17} for the 2012-13 graduating class and 1.50×10^{-13} for the class of 2013-14. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis that the two means are equal. There is strong statistical evidence that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they felt prepared for NCSSE standard 2.10.

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership standard practice 2.11 is "creates processes that protect teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their instructional time".

The mean of 2.00, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "some" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the internship (Post), the survey mean increased by 1.00 point to 3.00, which indicates "good" perceptions of experiences. This increase indicated that the internship was perceived to provide meaningful experiences in creating processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction. The analysis of the mean scores (2.91) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as "good" with a slight decrease of .09 points, which indicated that the ECU MSA program had a small influence on perceptions of impact of this standard as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-test* were utilized to indicate levels of significance for standard 2.11. The comparison of Pre and Post data indicated a significance level of 2.2×10^{-11} for the 2012-13 graduating class and 1.20×10^{-14} for the class of 2013-14. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis that the two means are equal. There is strong statistical evidence that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they feel prepared for NCSSE standard 2.11.

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership standard practice 2.12 is "systematically and frequently observes in classroom and engages in conversations with students about their learning".

The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the internship (Pre) reflects their average perception of MSA students' current practice at that time. The mean of 2.00, indicated that the participants' perceptions prior to the internship had "some" experiences in this instructional leadership practice. After completing the internship (Post), the survey mean increased by 1.00 point, which indicates "good" perceptions of experiences. This increase

indicated that the internship was perceived to provide meaningful experiences in systematically and frequently observes in classroom and engages in conversations with students about their learning. The analysis of the mean scores (3.19) after graduation, Post, indicated that their current practices of this standard remains as "good" with a slight increase of .19 points, which indicated that the ECU MSA program had a small influence on perceptions of impact of this standard as Graduates from the MSA program. Independent *t-test* were utilized to indicate levels of significance for standard 2.12. The comparison of Pre and Post data indicated a significance level of 6.10×10^{-18} for the 2012-13 graduating class and 4.10×10^{-9} for the class of 2013-14. These are very small P-values, which means in this case that one must reject the null hypothesis that the two means are equal. There is strong statistical evidence that the ECU training had a significant impact on student perceptions that they feel prepared for NCSSE standard 2.12.

Analysis of Research Question #2

Research Question 2 asked, "Is there a difference in perceived preparation for instructional leadership between ECU graduates that completed the MSA program as full time or part time students? If yes, which practices are perceived to be different by full or part time program of study?" To investigate this research question, the NCSSE Self-Assessment survey was utilized. As stated for question 1, this instrument elicits respondents to rate graduates' current experiences with each of the twelve practices of instructional leadership using a Likert scale from 0 to 4 and Not applicable where 0-indicates not applicable, 1-indicates little, 2-indicates some, 3-indicates good, and 4-indicates strong experiences with each of the 12 practices.

Table 40 shows the mean and standard deviation as well as differences of responses for each of the 12 NCSSE standards for Instructional Leadership in the post graduate survey. The responses are reported by full time and part time students. The difference in means between full and part time students is less than ½ point for each of the twelve standards except standard 2.4: practices instructional leadership by ensuring that there is an appropriate and logical alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program. The indication of perceptions would be that part time students were better prepared to practice this standard than full time students. To further analyze standard 2.4 the researcher ran a test to determine if a significant difference exists between the means. The *t-test* result for the pre internship survey results for instructional leadership, 2.4 is 0.000443302. The results for the post internship survey are 0.37611584 and 0.199264862 for the graduate survey results. These results would suggest there is no significant difference for ECU MSA students prior to their internship experience. A significant difference does exist, however, between the perceived experiences between full and part time students during the post internship survey and graduate survey.

Analysis of Research Question #3

Question 3 asked, "Is there a difference in perceived preparation for instructional leadership identified by graduates that work in various NC counties? If yes, which practices are perceived to be different in certain counties?" To address this question the researcher analyzed results of the NCSSE survey desegregated by county. To analyze survey results, the mean responses of employees in each county were calculated using Microsoft Excel formula tools.

ECU MSA graduates who responded to this survey are dispersed throughout central and eastern North Carolina. Of those responding to the NCSSE survey, the majority of graduates are located in Wake, n=18 (25.71%) and Pitt, n=8 (11.43%) counties. Figure 4 displays a graphic of

Table 40

Mean and Standard Deviation for Full Time and Part Time Students in Post-Graduation Survey

Mean Total Responses (Standard Deviation)	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.10	2.11	2.12
Full time	3.05	3.06	3.05	2.74	3.06	2.89	3.06	2.82	2.82	3.29	3.18	3.06
	(.71)	(.87)	(.85)	(.99)	(.56)	(1.08)	(.83)	(.88)	(.81)	(.85)	(.88)	(.94)
Part time	3.49	3.37	3.52	3.39	3.40	3.25	3.26	3.07	2.93	3.21	2.72	3.19
	(.66)	(.67)	(.69)	(.83)	(.77)	(.73)	(.72)	(1.00)	(.96)	(.81)	(.95)	(.97)
Difference in means	0.44	0.31	0.47	0.65	0.34	0.36	0.20	0.25	0.11	-0.08	-0.46	0.13
Difference in Std. Dev.	0.05	0.20	0.16	0.16	-0.21	0.35	0.11	-0.12	-0.15	0.04	-0.07	-0.03
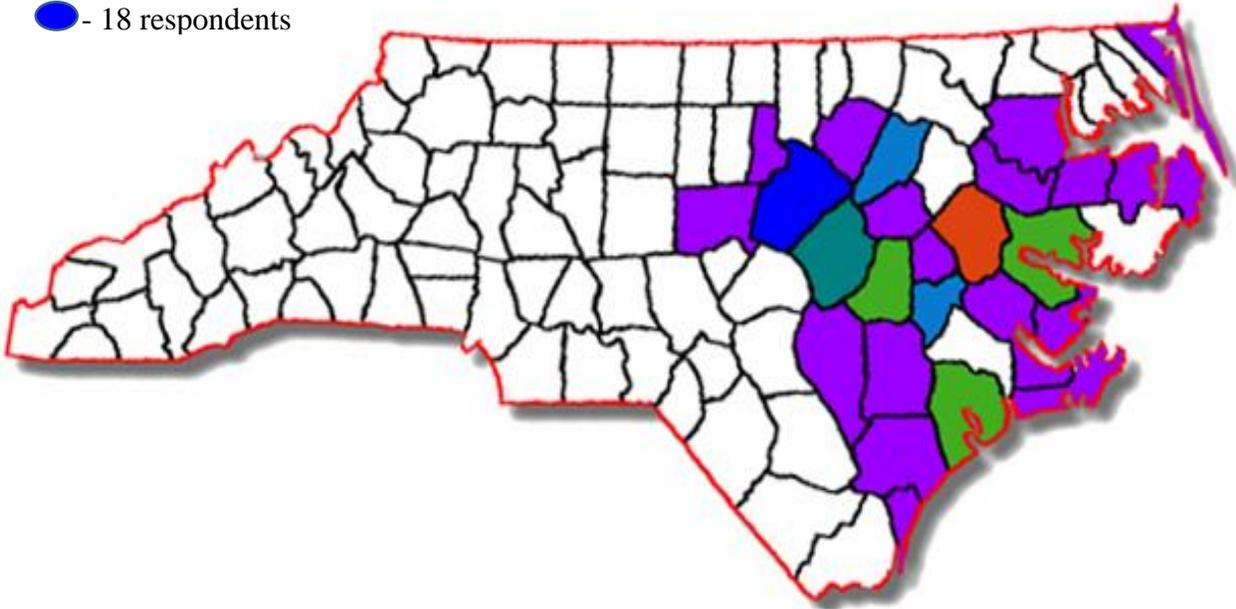
Figure 4. Map by county of employment of respondents to NCSSE survey.

ECU MSA graduates who responded to the NCSSE instructional leadership survey deployed to gather perceptions of preparation for instructional leadership. The graphic displays the counties of employment for respondents.

The mean responses of survey respondents by county of employment during the Graduate survey are displayed in Table 41. Respondents from two different counties (Currituck and Durham) rated standard 2.4, "ensure that there is an appropriate and logical alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program", as little practice. Each of the counties with the most respondents, Johnston n=5, Pitt n=8, Wake n=18, rated each of the standards as having some or good perceptions of practice. The largest difference among these three counties was 1.33 which is in standard 2.7, "create processes for collecting and using student test data and other formative data from other sources for the improvement of instruction". None of the counties had mean responses for all twelve standards rated as good (3.0) or strong (4.0).

In summary, the NCSSE survey for standard 2, Instructional Leadership supports that ECU MSA students and graduates perceive they are prepared to practice instructional leadership after the internship and as graduates. The majority of ECU MSA graduates find employment in Eastern and Central North Carolina. There was not a significant difference in perceptions of graduates based on county of employment. The final research question analyzes qualitative data.

Analysis of Research Question #5

To address research question 5: What are some perceived institutional factors that affect instructional leadership practices beyond what graduates learned from ECU's MSA program?, the researcher analyzed both the open-ended question on the Qualtrics survey: Please provide any additional comments that you would like to share in regard to how you feel ECU could

Table 41

Mean Responses by Survey Respondents Desegregated by County of Employment on Graduate

Survey

County (total responses)	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.10	2.11	2.12
Beaufort (4)	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.25	3.75	3.5	3.25	2.50	2.5	2.75	3.0	2.5
Bertie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carteret (1)	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Chatham (1)	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	4.0
Craven (1)	2.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	3.0
Currituck (1)	3.0	4.0	3.0	1.0	4.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	3.0	3.0
Dare (1)	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	2.0
Duplin (2)	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	2.5	4.0
Durham (1)	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0
Franklin (1)	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0
Greene (2)	3.0	3.5	3.0	2.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5
Johnston (5)	2.75	3.0	3.25	2.5	3.25	3.0	2.0	2.25	2.67	2.5	3.0	3.0
Lenoir (3)	3.0	2.67	3.67	3.33	3.33	3.33	3.67	4.0	3.0	2.33	2.0	2.67
Martin (1)	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	2.0
Nash (3)	4.0	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.0
North Hampton (1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Onslow (4)	3.5	3.75	3.75	3.0	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.0	3.5	3.25	3.5

135

Table 41 (continued)

County (total responses)	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.10	2.11	2.12
Pamlico (1)	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	4.0
Pender (1)	3.0	4.0	2.0	4.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	4.0
Pitt (8)	3.88	2.83	3.14	3.0	3.4	3.17	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.4	3.2	3.17
Sampson (1)	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Tyrrell (1)	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	2.0
Wake (18)	3.4	3.07	3.71	3.36	3.36	3.29	3.33	2.94	2.67	3.29	2.71	2.80
Washington (1)	4.0	-	3.0	2.0	-	-	3.0	3.0	-	-	-	-
Wayne (4)	3.5	3.67	3.25	3.5	3.67	3.33	3.67	3.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.25
Wilson (2)	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.5	4.0	3.5	4.0	3.5

Note. - = responses to demographic questions but not Instructional Leadership questions.

better prepare graduates to practice instructional leadership and conducted interviews of a random sample. In addition to review of comments made by 18 respondents on the open ended section of the survey, follow up interviews were requested of 28 randomly selected participants. The sample was selected by utilizing the Microsoft excel application to randomly select 2 male and 2 female participants from the survey sample in each of the study categories: part-time/full-time program of study; year of graduation 2012, 2013, 2014; two randomly selected counties for a total of 28 interviews. Once the random selections were made the researcher proceeded to contact the selected graduates to conduct the interviews. Of the total 28 possible interviewees, 4 consented to be interviewed. However, only three interviews were able to actually be scheduled. See Table 42 for the demographic description of this sample.

To obtain data for this research question the researcher utilized the following questions:

1. How well did the ECU MSA program prepare you to be to an instructional leader? Please share some examples that describe this preparation.

2. Did you complete SLPs in your MSA program? If so, how did they contribute to your feelings of preparation as an instructional leader? Please share some examples that describe this preparation.

3. What are some factors that affect(ed) your instructional leadership practices beyond what you learned from ECU's MSA program?

The researcher asked these open-ended questions and listened to and recorded the comments of the interviewees for qualitative analysis. The researcher analyzed respondents' interview responses to determine whether or not the MSA graduates perceived that their MSA program adequately prepared them to be instructional leaders and to identify institutional factors that influence instructional leadership post MSA graduation. The researcher scripted the interviews

Table 42

Interviewee Demographics

Interviewee	MSA Class	Gender	Position	District Type
#1	2014	M	Principal	Rural, Distant
#2	2014	F	Assistant Principal	Rural, Fringe
#3	2012	F	Classroom Teacher	Town, Distant

for review and reviewed the interview notes to identify common comments or words that would help address the last research question. According to Merriam (2001), a researcher must adopt some system for coding and cataloging the interview data, and it helps to start with basic descriptive categories early in the coding. A coding system was developed that rated key words that described perceptions of being prepared to be instructional leaders in two categories: prepared comments=1 and not prepared comments=2. Key words that described perceptions of the graduates' preparation were selected from the NCSSE practices that indicate that the participants perceived they were practicing behaviors that encouraged teacher development and student learning. Key words that describe institutional factors that affect instructional leadership beyond the MSA preparation will be listed and tallied to determine which factors are mentioned and how often by interviewees. Table 43 outlines common comments by participants on the open ended survey question and in interviews.

While there were not enough interviews conducted to make generalization from interviewee comments, the researcher was able to note repetition in comments. The interviewees overall felt prepared to practice instructional leadership. Two categories were repeated several times by two of the interviewees: "I wish I could have gotten a bit more of" didn't really get a good foundation in" while referring to aspects of managing budgets and facilitating use of resources and using the teacher evaluation tool to facilitate learning. They especially commented on the SLP process with comments such as: "truly facilitated my learning", 'were gonna be prepared," "good modeling" and "professor…giving you feedback." The large number of comments in prepared category indicated that participants perceived they were well prepared to be instructional leaders.

Table 43

Instruction Leadership Preparation Perceived by Participants in Interviews and Open End

Survey Question

Comment	Standard Addressed	Prepared Comments	Not-Prepared Comments
Manage allocation of funds	2.9	0	6
Managerial finance	2.9	0	2
Hands on	N/A	4	0
Facilitated learning	2.5	6	1
Cohort format	N/A	2	0
Evaluation using NCEES	2.12	0	2
Feedback	2.3	2	0
SLP	All	10	2
Use of data	2.7	1	4
More role play	N/A	0	2

Summary

This chapter presented the results of a study of MSA graduates' perceptions of being prepared for instructional leadership. It provided the opportunity to evaluate MSA graduate perceptions about their preparation to be instructional leaders and determine factors that contributed to their perceived preparation and factors that did not. Results indicated that students' perceptions prior to the internship were that they felt "little to "some" prepared on the majority of the NCSSE Instructional Leadership practices. Upon completion of the internship, participants perceived that they were prepared for instructional leadership with ratings of "good" and "strong". The ratings decreased in some standards and stayed the same for others in the graduate survey, with the overall ratings being "good". The study also showed a strong indication that participants that completed the program full time perceived they had "good" preparation for practice in the instructional leadership, while participants that completed the program part-time also indicated "good" preparation for instructional leadership; though part-time participants rated the standards an average of .23 higher than the full time participants. The study did not determine major differences when analyzing the data by year of graduation. The study did determine that largest difference among counties 1.33 points which was in standard 2.7, create processes for collecting and using student test data and other formative data from other sources for the improvement of instruction. None of the counties had mean responses for all twelve standards rated as good (3.0) or strong (4.0) when analyzing data by county of employment.

From the interviews in this study, the findings suggest what might be included and not included in the MSA program of study to effectively prepare graduates for instructional leadership. Recommendations include use of more role play activities and more real world

strategies on use of funds and resources to facilitate instruction. There was also a recommendation to include more work with the teacher evaluation tool (NCEES).

In chapter 5, the implications of the study are discussed, and recommendations are made for further research in this area. Additionally the implications of the findings of this study are discussed in relation to principal preparation program improvement.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The role of leaders in schools has changed over the last thirty years from managers to instructional facilitators (Leithwood & Rhiel, 2003; The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Research on school leadership indicates that successful principals influence student achievement which may lead to fewer students who drop out of school (Bevoise, 1984; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; The Wallace Foundation, 2013). The move away from an industrial assembly line economy has made a quality education of paramount importance. President Barack Obama wrote, "A world class education is a moral imperative-the key to securing a more equal, fair and just society" (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 1). He further states that reforming U.S. nation's schools will require more than developing teachers, it requires that school administrators focus their efforts on instructional leadership. As a result of political pressures, school leadership has become a widely researched area of study in recent history (Northouse, 2013). There has also been an increased push for improved student achievement which forces professors in school administration programs to change the way they deliver instruction.

Principal preparation programs are the path for aspiring school administrators to learn what is needed to be effective in their roles (The Wallace Foundation, 2016). One of the most recent Wallace Foundation reports acknowledges five themes that stand out when reviewing the quality of principal preparation programs:

1. University understands their programs have room for improvement as district leaders express dissatisfaction with the quality of preparation programs,

2. University and district partnerships are essential,

3. University syllabi objectives don't necessarily reflect principal job roles,

4. University policies can hinder change and

5. States are not effectively using their power to improve preparation programs. (The Wallace Foundation, 2016).

With the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2010 came a renewed commitment to strengthen public education in the US (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The second goal of the ESEA includes preparation of effective principals. The goal was to have highly effective teachers in schools led by highly effective principals. Each state was charged with the task of identifying measures of student growth and academic achievement. As one measure of success, states were required to report on the performance of principal preparation programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The language in the reauthorization challenged faculty of colleges and universities to examine the methods in which they prepare school leaders for service. Session Law in 2007 under House Bill 536 required, "all currently licensed MSA programs in NC to revision existing programs to meet 2006 NC School Executive Standards" (East Carolina University, LEED Department, 2013). East Carolina University (ECU) Masters of School Administration (MSA) faculty utilized principal preparation research to collaborate and pilot revisions that were aligned with ELCC standards and the NC School Executive Evaluation Rubric.

Currently, ECU does not track their MSA candidates upon graduation to determine satisfaction with the curriculum delivery and how that delivery has translated into experiences within their current administrative roles. This study followed up with graduates to gain their perceptions about their preparation in instructional leadership. The results of this study will guide ECU MSA faculty with course preparation and delivery.

144

Findings and Discussion

There is increasing research on how school administrators influence school effectiveness; less is known about how to help them develop the capacities that make a difference in how schools function and what students learn (Davis et al., 2005). As the professors within ECU's administrator preparation program continue to reorganize the structure of its MSA program, little research has occurred to follow up with graduates to determine whether they have successfully implemented the skills associated with leadership (i.e. teacher empowerment, community involvement and engagement, school culture, positive impact on learning, school improvement) within their administrative positions as instructional leaders.

Instructional Leadership Standards

Standard II, Instructional Leadership, on the North Carolina school executive standards was explored to understand how ECU MSA graduates perceive they were prepared to implement best instructional practices for twenty-first century structures which have a direct impact on learning.

Standard II, Instructional Leadership, indicators of success include:

- Initiates conversations about instruction and student learning focused on specific goals and high expectations,

- Provides opportunities for teacher empowerment and uses distributive leadership,

- Holds and participates in meetings with stakeholders having discussions on 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment,

- Ensures that curriculum and assessments are aligned,

- Ensures that school processes facilitate creation, and sharing of rigorous, relevant, and engaging instructional lessons,

145

- Encourages staff to be reflective thinkers about the education of students,

- Creates processes for collecting and utilizing various data sources, instructional tools and best practices to meet instructional needs for all students,

- Creates processes to systematically observe in classrooms providing feedback on effectiveness of instruction, and

- Ensures resources are used to support instructional goals and teacher needs (NCSBE, 2006).

This study was a mixed methods design. Mixed methods designs are procedures for collecting, analyzing, and linking both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or multiphase series of studies (Creswell, 2012). Quantitative data was collected via the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (*NCSSE) self-assessment* survey in order to identify trends in responses of ECU MSA graduates of the revised principal preparation program. The initial graduating class of the revised program was 2012. Qualitative data was also collected using open-ended questions to understand the institutional factors that impact graduates instructional leadership after graduation. The combination of both forms of data provided an understanding of the perceptions of ECU MSA graduates about their preparation to become instructional leaders. This information gained from this follow up study will help guide ECU faculty for continual improvement of the MSA program.

Findings about Instructional Leadership Practices

Overall ECU MSA students perceived that they were well prepared to become instructional leaders because of the training they received at ECU. Of the 12 instructional leadership standard practices, graduates rated their perceptions of preparedness as 3.10 mean rating on a Likert scale of 0 to 4 with 0=Not applicable and 4= strong practice as follows:

2.1 (mean 3.32) –"elicits perception of respondents about their practice of effective instructional leadership when he or she focuses on his or her own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals"

2.2 (mean 3.20) – "creates an environment of distributive leadership and teacher empowerment"

2.3 (mean 3.38) – "practices effective instructional leadership when he or she demonstrates knowledge of 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment by leading or participating in meetings with teachers and parents where these topics are discussed, and/or holding frequent formal or informal conversations with students, staff and parents around these topics"

2.4 (mean 3.20) – "practices effective instructional leadership when he or she ensures that there is an appropriate and logical alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program."

2.7 (mean 3.20) – "practices effective instructional leadership when he or she creates processes for collecting and using student test data and other formative data from other sources for the improvement of instruction"

2.12 (mean 3.19) - "systematically and frequently observes in classroom and engages in conversations with students about their learning".

The NCSSE Instructional Leadership standard practice 2.3 is "practices effective instructional leadership when he or she demonstrates knowledge of 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment by leading or participating in meetings with teachers and parents

where these topics are discussed, and/or holding frequent formal or informal conversations with students, staff and parents around these topics." The analysis of the mean scores (3.38) after graduation, Post, indicated current practices of this standard as better than "good" which illustrates that the ECU MSA program had an influence on perceptions of impact of this standard as Graduates from the MSA program. *T-tests* indicated there was strong statistical evidence that the ECU MSA program had a significant impact on student perceptions that they felt prepared to practice NCSSE standard 2.3 after their internships. The analysis of the mean scores (3.38) after graduation, Post, indicated graduates' self-perception of their practice of holding effective conversations about instruction and assessment with teachers and parents as better than "good" which illustrates that the ECU MSA program had a positive influence. The NCSSE Instructional Leadership practice 2.1, "elicits perception of respondents about their practice of effective instructional leadership when he or she focuses on his or her own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals" had the second highest analysis of mean scores (3.32) by graduates, Post. These findings are corroborated by Guerrie (2014) who states that the school administrator is the driving force who creates the environment for the professional community and organizational culture for learning to occur. This finding also agrees with Rick Wormeli's (2006) statement that it doesn't matter what is taught, but what students learn. A school administrator needs to create open dialogue in schools about teaching and learning so that a school and its classrooms are always conducive to students' learning.

The principal of the school must be the lead change agent and facilitator of the reform process (Wohlstetter et al., 1997). Through the change process, the leader must have a clear

direction and delegate responsibility to others by seeking input and gaining commitment. On the converse, Wholstetter et al. (1997) found that principals of struggling schools did not share power for fear of losing control. The result of this style of leadership results in a lack of staff motivation because of micromanagement (Wohlstetter et al., 1997) which leads to power struggles internally that halt true reform. Sergiovanni (1992) specifically refers to Mahatma Gandhi as a servant leader while giving a likeness of a principal who also does what is necessary to provide a safe and nurturing environment for students. Two of the NCSSE Instructional Leadership practices align with the comments from these authors. The NCSSE Leadership Instructional practice 2.1"elicits perception of respondents about their practice of effective instructional leadership when he or she focuses on his or her own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals" has a mean graduate response of 3.32 and Instructional Leadership practice 2.2 "creates an environment of distributive leadership and teacher empowerment" had a mean graduate response of 3.20. These would indicate that ECU MSA graduates perceive they have been well prepared with better than "good" mean responses for these standards.

Over 97% respondents (of 408 superintendents and 842 institutions) to a recent American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) study felt that preparation programs should include field work, case studies and role plays (The Wallace Foundation, 2016). Even though 97% respondents agreed these types of activities are important, only 60% of member institutions agreed that they actual complete these kinds of activities (The Wallace Foundation, 2016). ECU MSA program does provide field work experiences for his MSA students. Of 18 responses to the open ended question on the NCSSE Leadership Survey instrument and 3 follow

149

up interviews, 20 comments indicated perceptions of being prepared via field work and cases studies (hands on, facilitated learning and SLP). Comments such as the SLP process, "truly facilitated my learning" and "good modeling" corroborates that ECU MSA faculty has processes in places to provide meaningful field work experiences for their students.

Perceptions of Preparedness

This study has provided graduate perception data for ECU MSA faculty as they continue to seek ways to deliver the most effective instruction possible to meet the needs of its students. The overall findings indicated there was a .90 point increase from the pre-internship survey (mean 2.439) indicating "some" or "little practice" to a mean rating of 3.343 in the post-internship survey indicating better than "good" practice. There was also an increase of .67 on the post-graduation survey (3.104 mean rating) when compared to the pre internship survey, indicating better than "good". The Wallace Foundation (2013) has published more than seventy research reports and other publications on school leadership; as a result of these studies, five key practices have been identified in effective administrators: (1) Shaping a vision of academic success for all, (2) Creating a climate hospitable to education, (3) Cultivating leadership in others, (4) Improving Instruction, and (5) Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement. These key practices are widely used by administrative preparation programs across the United States, including North Carolina (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Murphy, 2001; Northhouse, 2013). The higher perceived preparedness of ECU MSA graduates after the internship is likely a direct result of the ECU MSA program faculty incorporation of the key features of exemplary programs as noted above.

Practical Applications of This Study

Program Internship Yields Positive Impact

       T-test results for each sub group: pre-post, post graduate; full time-part time and graduate year indicated significant differences exist in perceived preparedness between pre and post internship. This finding indicated that the format of the internship has an impact on the feeling of preparedness in the NCSSE instructional leadership standard. In a recent report: *Are SREB States making progress? Tapping, Preparing and Licensing School Leaders Who Can Influence Student Achievement*, SREB highlights conditions for Leadership Program Redesign. One of the key components was "Plan learning experiences in which leadership candidates apply research-based knowledge to (1) solve field-based problems, (2) concentrate on learning about core functions of the school, including instruction and student learning and (3) engage in internship experiences that are well-planned and integrated throughout the preparation program and that allow aspiring leaders to receive mentoring and practice skills with master leaders" (Jacobson, O'Neill, Fry, Hill, & Bottoms, 2002, p. 2). The MSA program at ECU incorporated the key themes stated in Jacobson's study, which could explain why the ECU MSA internship has a significant impact on graduates' perceived preparedness for instructional leadership. Table 44 outlines *t-test* results as well as p-values and degrees of freedom for each standard. The Pre and Post data set for each standard was run with a test for paired means while the other data sets used unequal variance tests. Areas highlighted in grey represent possible focus standards for ECU MSA faculty.

Perceptions Post-Graduation

       There was not a significant difference between post and graduate in each category of the NCSSE instructional leadership survey; however, the qualitative data yielded some minor

Table 44

T-Tests of Means for Each NCSSE Instructional Leadership Standard

	2012-13 Pre – Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Post – Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Full-Part Pre t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Full-Part Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Full-Part Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Pre – Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Post – Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Full-Part Pre t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Full-Part Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Full-Part Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)
Standard 2.1	-8.60; 7.15E-13 (70)	0.33; 0.37 (28)	-2.72; 0.01 (38)	-1.19; 0.25 (22)	0.10; 0.92 (18)	-6.38; 1.32E-08 (61)	1.33; 1.70 (31)	-2.32; .03 (25)	-0.93; 0.36 (34)	0.62; 0.55 (9)
Standard 2.2	-8.20; 3.97E-12 (70)	-0.06; 0.48 (28)	-1.70; 0.10 (29)	-0.60; .56 (22)	0.65; 0.53 (11)	-8.26; 7.91E-12 (61)	2.06; 0.05 (31)	-1.32; 0.20 (27)	-0.79; 0.43 (31)	-0.31; 0.76 (13)
Standard 2.3	-8.39; 1.77E-12 (70)	-1.08; 0.29 (30)	-0.39; 0.70 (30)	0.77; 0.45 (25)	0.15; 0.89 (14)	-6.55; 6.84E-09 (61)	1.86; 0.07 (34)	-2.23; 0.03 (29)	-0.11; 0.92 (30)	0.84; 0.42 (10)
Standard 2.4	-7.81; 2.07E-11 (70)	0.17; 0.87 (24)	-2.17; 0.04 (25)	-0.50; 0.62 (27)	0.94; 0.36 (14)	-6.82; 2.38E-09 (61)	1.07; 0.29 (31)	-3.04; 0.00 (40)	-0.55; 0.59 (30)	0.91; 0.38 (12)
Standard 2.5	-10.86; 5.86E-17 (70)	1.05; 0.31 (24)	-1.98; 0.06 (25)	-2.83; 0.01 (26)	-1.26; 0.25 (7)	-8.05; 1.81E-11 (61)	1.79; 0.08 (30)	-1.78; 0.08 (40)	-1.61; 0.12 (28)	0.60; 0.56 (14)

Table 44 (continued)

	2012-13 Pre – Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Post – Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Full-Part Pre t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Full-Part Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Full-Part Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Pre – Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Post – Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Full-Part Pre t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Full-Part Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Full-Part Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)
Standard 2.6	-8.52; 1.03E-12 (70)	-0.26; 0.80 (26)	-2.37; 0.02 (32)	-1.05; 0.31 (20)	0.60; 0.57 (6)	-7.51; 1.66E-10 (60)	1.38; 0.18 (33)	-2.69; 0.01 (32)	-1.45; 0.16 (25)	0.50; 0.63 (12)
Standard 2.7	-9.76; 5.54E-15 (70)	1.68; 0.10 (28)	-1.13; 0.27 (25)	-0.24; 0.81 (25)	1.48; 0.16 (13)	-6.90; 1.83E-09 (60)	1.96; 0.06 (37)	-4.28; 0.00 (38)	-0.47; 0.64 (29)	-0.17; 0.87 (11)
Standard 2.8	-8.85; 2.50E-13 (70)	1.60; 0.12 (24)	-0.52; 0.61 (25)	0.52; 0.61 (23)	1.08; 0.30 (12)	-6.16; 3.4E-08 (60)	1.36; 0.18 (31)	-1.76; 0.09 (24)	-1.11; 0.28 (28)	0.29; 0.77 (14)
Standard 2.9	-8.41; 1.8E-12 (69)	-0.08; 0.93 (27)	-1.55; 0.13 (26)	-2.06; 0.05 (42)	0.85; 0.42 (9)	-6.21; 3E-08 (58)	1.78; 0.09 (30)	-1.70; 0.10 (24)	-1.21; 0.24 (28)	3.44; 0.00 (20)
Standard 2.10	-10.82; 9.7E-17 (68)	1.31; 0.20 (24)	-1.77; 0.09 (30)	0.66; 0.52 (28)	0.72; 0.49 (7)	-9.34; 1.5E-13 (59)	1.39; 0.17 (31)	-2.14; 0.04 (38)	-0.42; 0.68 (29)	1.21; 0.24 (17)
Standard 2.11	-7.81; 2.2E-11 (69)	0.94; 0.36 (21)	-0.49; 0.63 (27)	1.94; 0.06 (28)	0.79; 0.44 (16)	-10.13; 1.2E-14 (27)	2.37; 0.02 (29)	-0.59; 0.56 (33)	-0.24; 0.81 (27)	2.06; 0.05 (18)

Table 44 (continued)

	2012-13 Pre – Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Post – Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Full-Part Pre t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Full-Part Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2012-13 Full-Part Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Pre – Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Post – Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Full-Part Pre t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Full-Part Post t-Stat; P-value (df)	2013-14 Full-Part Grad t-Stat; P-value (df)
Standard 2.12	-11.52; 6.1E-18 (68)	1.52; 0.14 (26)	0.62; 0.54 (39)	-0.36; 0.73 (23)	0.32; 0.75 (15)	-6.75; 4.1E-09 (57)	1.28; 0.21 (30)	-2.26; 0.03 (33)	0.61; 0.55 (27)	2.76; 0.01 (22)

findings. None of the comments on the open-ended question of the survey or the conversations held during limited interviews indicated a preparation for strategic allocation of funds. Because there were only 18 comments overall and only three interviews held, this finding may not be indicative of the ECU MSA program. While 85% (188 graduates) of the graduate population from 2012, 2013 and 2014 were located, only 38% (72) completed the survey in its entirety. The low response rate may have been related to the time work load of the administrator and/or time of year for the survey requests. This researcher suggests that ECU finds alternative ways to tap into graduate perception after employment in an administrative role.

Recommendations for ECU's Principal Preparation Program Improvement

Data collection and data analysis should be used for program improvement and program promotion. One example is to have fact sheets indicating the success of ECU's graduates and to also tell the public the impact of the program. A fact sheet (see Figure 5) to highlight graduate statistics will allow ECU faculty to continue to recruit and retain quality MSA candidates.

Completing such analysis of graduate perceptions can prove to be valuable for ECU as faculty members continue to revise the program to meet guidelines and needs of practicing administrators. One such way to possibly achieve this is to request permanent email addresses and phone numbers for a data base as part of an exit interview process with an explanation of the importance for feedback post-graduation. Utilization of graduate interns to collect data in a similar method as this researcher is suggested way to follow up with graduates after each year in cycles of three years. Once the data base is created, adding one year at a time will not be excessively labor intensive.

It is important to share results with the public that often criticize principal preparation. The state of education has been under heightened scrutiny in recent years. In addition to the

155

- Average of 73 ECU MSA graduates per year

- ECU MSA Graduates are employed in 36 counties across eastern and central NC

  o Majority of graduates employed in Wake and Pitt Counties

  o Graduates employed as far west as Mecklenburg County and as far east as Dare County

- ECU MSA Graduates employed at all levels of public education
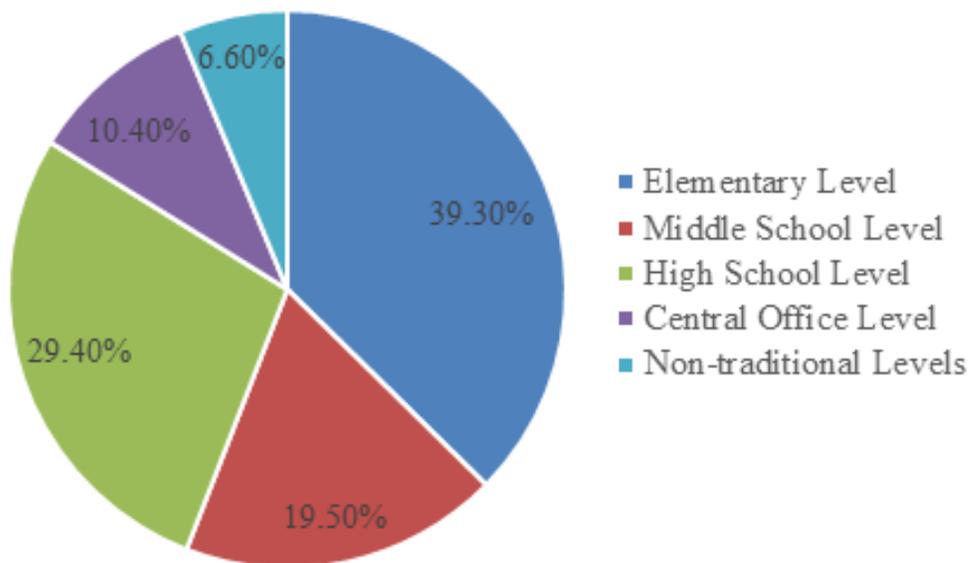
- o Elementary – 83 (39.3%)   o High – 62 (29.4%)

- o Middle – 41 (19.5%)   o Central Office – 22 (10.4%)

  o Non-traditional combination (i.e. K-8, 4-5, K -12) – 14 (6.6%)

- 60% of ECU MSA graduates are employed in administrative roles 1 year after graduation

- On a Likert scale of 0 – 4 with 0=N/a,1= little, 2=some, 3=good and 4=strong, graduates perceptions of being prepared to be instructional leaders are "good"

Figure 5. ECU MSA 2012-2014 graduates fact sheet.

attention given to teachers, school leaders are also under the microscope as a means to improve

public schools (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood & Rhiel, 2003). The reauthorization of ESEA in

2010 reaffirmed the need to improve principal preparation programs (U.S. Department of

Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, 2010). This reauthorization

led to North Carolina passing S. L. 2007-0517 which required that NC institutions of higher

education revamp their school leadership preparation programs to meet revised NCSSES

standards for pre-service candidates by July 2009 (North Carolina General Assembly, 2015).

Following the revisions, a committee of educational leaders reviewed all sixteen University of

North Carolina (UNC) System MSA programs. The review of ECU's program resulted in several

requests for more information about a process to evaluate the MSA program over time by

evaluating graduates' impact on student learning (The University of North Carolina General

Administration, 2010).

One goal of the UNC system during its 2013-18 strategic planning cycle is to assess

student learning gains (East Carolina University, 2013). ECU is dedicated to providing the best,

most academically sound education possible for its students. Because of this commitment, it is

crucial that ongoing research occurs within degree programs to assess effectiveness during and

after program completion. This study provided evidence of graduate perceptions. These

perceptions may be used to share with the public the impact of their preparation to be

instructional leaders. From the study the following impact statements may be shared with the

various audiences.

Legislators that mandated the MSA program revision may want to know:

> Overall ECU MSA graduates responses indicate that they perceive to be prepared
>
> (77.73%) to become instructional leaders. Of the total graduate responses (696) to each

standard, 29 (4.17%) felt they had "little" preparation and 126 (18.10%) perceived they

had "some" preparation for instructional leadership.

Tax payers may want to know that:

ECU prepares educators who remain in eastern and central NC. Graduates (77.73%)

perceive they are prepared for the job of leading for instructional leadership in NC public

schools.

University administration may want to know that:

MSA 2012, 2013 and 2014 graduates are employed in 36 counties throughout eastern

and central NC. ECU MSA graduates are employed in various roles upon graduation with

48.57% of the respondents indicating transition to administrative roles immediately upon

graduation. An additional 11.43% enter administrative roles one year after graduation.

ECU MSA Faculty may want to know that:

Sampled graduates feel they have "good" preparation, on a Likert scale with "strong"

being the highest, to become instructional leaders in the districts in which they serve. One

area in which faculty may want to concentrate efforts is to provide consistency among

like courses with different instructors, especially the finance course. None of the open-

end comments allowed acknowledged feelings of being prepared to manage school

finance for instructional leadership. Standard 2.9 "practices effective instructional

leadership when he or she creates processes that ensure the strategic allocation and use of

resources to meet instructional goals and support teacher needs" is the lowest rated

standard with an overall mean rating of 2.89 ("some") for graduates overall. When

desegregated by full and part time graduate students, standards 2.4 (mean 2.74), 2.6

(mean 2.89), 2.8 (mean 2.82) and 2.9 (mean 2.82) are perceived to be less than "good" by

full time students, while only standard 2.9 (mean 2.93) and 2.11 (mean 2.72) are

perceived less than "good" by cohort students. All other standards were rated as "good"

(3.00) or better.

When recruiting students to enter the MSA program it is important to know that over

70% of the current demographic of students who enter and complete the ECU MSA is

white female.

Superintendents may want to know that:

 ECU's MSA program graduates feel they are prepared to be instructional leaders. ECU

SLP project is designed assist students in completing authentic activities during the

internship process.

Recommendations for Further Research

To determine the full impact of the revised ECU MSA program, replication of this study

should occur with graduates prior the ECU MSA program revisions. By doing so, ECU MSA

faculty will be able to determine which areas of the revised MSA program is having an impact

on gradate perceptions of preparations for leadership. Other aspects of these data could be

explored to determine differences among various groups such as discipline area, or race and

gender.

To facilitate this research process, ECU should investigate use of technology resources

that will aide in record keeping to track graduates.

An additional research option to supplement this study would be to interview successful

graduates as case studies and develop video stories to dig down on the impact of the ECU MSA

program in being an instructional leader. Further study to determine why part time students

perceive preparation to be better than full time students may be worth exploring.

To replicate this study, other NCSSE standards could be studied in order to determine perceived effectiveness of other components of the ECU MSA program.

To corroborate perception findings, from this study and similar studies other sources of data, such as the TWC survey and school EVAAS data, could be explored.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA
Please complete the following questions to help us ascertain your current educational position.

1. In what year did you graduate from the ECU MSA program?
        1. 2012
        2. 2013
        3. 2014

2. Were you a North Carolina Principal Fellow?
        1. Yes
        2. No

3. My current role in my district is:
        1. Teacher
        2. Assistant Principal
        3. Instructional Coach
        4. Principal
        5. District Level Administrator
        6. Other: Please specify _____

4. If applicable, when did you become a school administrator?
        1. Immediately after I graduated with my MSA
        2. 1 year after I graduated with my MSA
        3. 2 years after I graduated with my MSA
        4. 3 years after I graduated with my MSA
        5. I am not currently an administrator

5. How many years have you worked in your current district?
        1. 0 – 2
        2. 3 – 4
        3. 5 – 7
        4. 8 or more

6. Please select the district in which you are currently employed.
        (drop down menu of LEAs here)

7. My race is:
        1. Black
        2. White
        3. Hispanic
        4. Asian
        5. Other
        6. Prefer not to disclose

8. My gender is:
      1. Male
      2. Female
      3. Prefer not to disclose

Part II. This portion of the survey is designed to allow you the opportunity to examine your

instructional leadership practices, based on the North Carolina School Executive Instructional

Leadership Standard. Respond to each statement by reflecting on where you are at this moment

using the following rating scale:

1: little practice   2: some practice   3: good practice 4: strong practice 0: N/A

 I practice effective leadership when:

2.1 I focus on my own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals.

2.2 I create an environment of distributive leadership and teacher empowerment.

2.3 I demonstrate knowledge of 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment by leading or participating in meetings with teachers and parents where these topics are discussed, and/or hold frequent formal or informal conversations with students, staff and parents around these topics.

2.4 I ensure that there is an appropriate and logical alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program.

2.5 I create processes and schedules that facilitate the collaborative (team) design, sharing, evaluation, and archiving of rigorous, relevant and engaging instructional lessons that ensure students acquire essential knowledge.

2.6 I challenge staff to reflect deeply on and define what knowledge, skills and concepts are essential to the complete educational development of students.

2.7 I create processes for collecting and using student test data and other formative data from other sources for the improvement of instruction.

2.8 I create processes for identifying, benchmarking and providing students access to a variety of 21st century instructional tools (e.g., technology) and best practices for meeting diverse student needs.

2.9 I create processes that ensure the strategic allocation and use of resources to meet instructional goals and support teacher needs.

2.10 I create processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction.

2.11 I create processes that protect teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their instructional time.

2.12 I systematically and frequently observe in classrooms and engage in conversations with students about their learning.

Please provide any additional comments that you would like to share in regard to how you feel ECU could better prepare graduates to practice instructional leadership.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How well do you feel prepared to lead as a result of the ECU MSA program?

2. Did you complete SLPs? How did they contribute to your feelings of preparation for leadership after completion of your internship?

3. What are some institutional factors that affect instructional leadership practices beyond graduation from ECU's principal preparation program?

APPENDIX C: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office
4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** · **www.ecu.edu/irb**

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From:	Social/Behavioral IRB
To:	Jana Rawls
CC:	Marjorie Ringler
Date:	1/8/2016
Re:	UMCIRB 15-002221 Administrator Preparation and Instructional Leadership

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 1/7/2016 to 1/6/2017. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category # 6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Chapter 3 revised.docx	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Debriefing statement.docx	Debriefing Statement
interview cover letter.docx	Consent Forms
Interview Questions.docx	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Letters of Support.docx	Dataset Use Approval/Permission
SURVEY cover letter for IRB.docx	Consent Forms
SURVEY QUESTIONS.docx	Surveys and Questionnaires

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418