Duquesne University IDPEL Cohorts: A Laboratory for Leadership?

Phillip Diller

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DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY IDPEL COHORTS: A LABORATORY FOR LEADERSHIP?

by

Phillip Frey Diller

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education

Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders
School of Education
Duquesne University
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Abstract

This qualitative evaluation study examined the contribution of the Duquesne University Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders (IDPEL) cohort participation to the school leadership practices of IDPEL students. Participants in the research were members of the Pittsburgh IDPEL cohorts of 2000 and 2003, currently employed as school leaders, who changed jobs within one year of beginning their IDPEL coursework. In order to approximate longitudinal data regarding leadership behaviors, respondents were colleagues of the participants, both past and present. Respondents completed the *Leadership Practices Inventory – Observer* (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) describing the participants’ leadership behaviors. Responses from respondent colleagues were compiled and described. Results indicate no statistically significant quantitative change in leadership practices in terms of the *Leadership Practices Inventory – Observer*. IDPEL participants took part in semi-structured interviews to shed light on how cohort membership, particularly the IDPEL iteration of cohorts known as advisory groups, may have contributed to any changes in leadership practice in schools. Participants describe the IDPEL experience as having launched them on a trajectory of growth in leadership skills and confidence, leading to a deepened sense of mission and acceptance of greater career challenges. Cohort interactions with other students were described as a significant positive contributor to change in individual trajectories of growth.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Many universities have adopted the cohort model for their educational leadership programs. This development, coming as a response to research on adult learning (Barnett & Muse, 1993), emerging social trends affecting education (Horn, 2001), and criticism of existing leadership programs (National Commission on Educational Administration, 1987), also attempts to attract and retain working professionals as students while providing a learning context that mirrors workplace reality (Hatley, Arredondo, Donaldson, Short, & Updike, 1996).

However, evidence that the cohort structure contributes to the development of participants’ leadership skills is still lacking (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000). Despite theoretical indications that the cohort might provide a laboratory setting for practicing leadership skills (Henderson, 1995; Norris & Barnett, 1994), it is not known whether the cohort experience contributes to participants’ leadership practices.

This research inquired into the leadership development of participants in one cohort-based program, the Duquesne University Interdisciplinary Program for Educational Leaders, to evaluate the contribution of group experience to the development of individual leadership practices.

Framework: Cohorts

Three sources of pressure have contributed to the adoption of the cohort model. First, questions about the adequacy of leader preparation (Cunningham
& Burdick, 1999) along with demands for improved educational outcomes (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 1996), the dramatic turnover in top school officials anticipated in the 1990s (Natt, 2000), and the lack of highly-qualified candidates for top school administrator positions (Yerkes & Guaglianone, 1998), strongly influenced universities to reexamine their school leadership training programs.

Historically, effective schools research indicated that much of the responsibility for school improvement rested on school principals. As a consequence, significant attention shifted to the development of principals’ leadership capacities and, beginning in the mid-1980s, to the actual design of school leadership programs for leaders at all levels of school organizations (Horn, 2001). School leaders – principals, directors, superintendents - were to be prepared not to maintain the status quo in a system that appeared to be failing, but to transform schools into new institutions by empowering organizational members to implement and sustain innovation (Horn, 2001).

Concerns about the efficacy of contemporary school leader training prompted the University Council for Educational Administration, an organization then representing over fifty university-based educational leadership programs, to publish a report on the status of school leadership. The report, Leaders for America’s Schools (National Commission on Educational Administration, 1987) prompted consensus that leadership programs needed to be redesigned in order to meet the changing needs of schools. This debate encouraged the Danforth Foundation to sponsor non-traditional school leader preparation programs.
across the country. Through the Danforth Foundation’s Program for the Preparation of School Principals, over twenty universities received grants to locally develop administrator training programs within the Danforth framework (Milstein, 1992). Four key components were hallmarks of Danforth programs: collaboration between local school districts and universities featuring internships for participants, mentoring relationships with field-based practitioners, the encouragement of reflective practice, and the development of student cohorts (Milstein & associates, 1993).

The latter widely-implemented reform, the development of cohorts, featured groups of students who engage in the program of studies together and generally share a common set of classes and experiences. Building on the initial success of the Danforth program cohorts, other universities followed suit. By the late ‘90s, over 70 universities used a cohort model in their doctoral level educational administration programs (Hresko, 1998). Barnett et al. (2000), in their review of North American educational leadership programs, received responses from 141 universities using cohorts at some graduate level.

The second source of impetus propelling the development of school leadership cohort programs stemmed from investigations within other disciplines. Along with education, university programs in law, medicine, and business administration have all been criticized for their lack of relevance and practical application. The underlying assumption in each of these disciplines has been that personal, individual competence is the key to professional success. However, personal and organizational achievement has often been stalled by the
poor transfer of academic competencies to work contexts characterized by rich interdisciplinary relationships with clients, peers and colleagues (Hatley et al., 1996). More discussion of this important academic shift from individual competence to collegial competence will be found in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

Cohort programs are generally organized around reflective practice models, with students active participants in the process. As school leadership programs strive to prepare leaders for increasingly complex personnel, institutional and contextual realities, those programs that feature cohort groups may provide prospective school leaders both necessary curriculum content and necessary learning situations (Norris, Barnett, & Basom, 1996). Cohorts designed in this fashion strive to promote the formation of true groups capable of transferring knowledge of group process to future work settings (Caffarella & Barnett, 1997). It remains to be investigated whether or not cohort participation in and of itself is a component that contributes to students’ learning about group process.

The third source of pressure to develop cohorts has been more prosaic: the recruitment and retention of students in programs serves the financial and esteem needs of universities in an increasingly competitive market. Traditional graduate schools of education routinely fail to meet the needs of working professionals, who tend to have many outside commitments and little “campus directedness” (Hughes, 1983). Life for working professionals centers on work and family, and not on the random, itinerant community of university
classmates. Perhaps as a consequence, half of all doctoral candidates fail to complete their dissertations (Dorn & Papalewis, 1997). Cohorts may provide the group support and peer encouragement to propel students down the track to achievement of their degree (Dorn & Papalewis, 1997; Dorn, Papalewis, & Brown, 1995; Kochan, Reed, Twale, & Jones, 1999).

Institutional responses to these three areas of pressure may mask the potential of cohorts for leadership development. Some research has extended beyond the basic structural considerations of cohort organization to suggest the inherent benefits of cohort-based learning (e.g. Barnett & Caffarella, 1992; Basom & et al., 1995; Dorn et al., 1995; Norris & Barnett, 1994; Norris et al., 1996; Teitel, 1997; Yerkes, Basom, Norris, & Barnett, 1995). Norris and Barnett (1994) provide a conceptual framework for considering cohort benefits when they describe cohorts as laboratories where collaborative leadership can be practiced and refined.

However, Barnett et al. (2000) report that the university faculties they surveyed provide “scant evidence” that cohort participation has a direct effect on leadership practice. Indeed, some critics (e.g. Brent & Haller, 1998) question the benefit of any graduate training in educational administration, since very little anecdotal or research evidence indicates that school leadership programs make a difference in either leadership practice or student outcomes in the schools.

Studies of leadership programs using cohorts have evaluated programmatic designs (Gong, 1997; Tobias, 1998), group process (Colombel, 1995; Lawrence, 1996), and the development of conceptions of leadership among participants.
(Doolittle, 1996). It remains to be explored whether leadership skill development can be specifically attributed to experiences within the cohort group. The conceptual framework of the cohort-as-lab (Norris et al., 1996) remains to be examined in terms of cohort members’ leadership performance in the field (Barnett et al., 2000).

Is leadership value added to school leaders participating in a graduate cohort? Does cohort participation have a measurable or observable impact on leadership practice? More research is needed in this area.

Framework: The Duquesne University IDPEL Program

The Duquesne University School of Education’s first doctoral program - the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders (IDPEL) – began in 1993 to prepare participants for the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree. As the first cohort completed IDPEL’s coursework and practica, and began dissertation work, the next cohort was formed in 1996 and began study that summer. A third, smaller cohort began studies in the summer of 1998 as a cooperative arrangement with Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania. The third Pittsburgh cohort formed in the summer of 1999, the second Shippensburg cohort convened in the summer of 2001, and a new cohort and program site was established in the summer of 2002 as a cooperative arrangement with Mercyhurst College, in Erie, Pennsylvania. The fourth Pittsburgh cohort formed in summer, 2002, and the third Shippensburg cohort in July, 2004.

IDPEL is tailored to working professionals. A four-year schedule of sixty semester hours of study is offered. Daytime classes are held on weekdays and
Saturdays according to a schedule developed collaboratively by students and faculty. Summer sessions lasting eight non-consecutive days each are conducted during the first three years of cohort study. Graduates with public school experience and credentials are eligible for certification as school superintendents in Pennsylvania. Competencies to be developed during coursework are cross-referenced between Pennsylvania superintendency certification requirements, the 1993 General Professional Standards for the Superintendency, published by the American Association of School Administrators, and the unified set of national standards for the preparation of school administrators adopted in 2002 by the National Commission on the Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (NCATE) from standards developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (Murphy, 2003).

“The Mission of the Duquesne University Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders is to develop educators who will have the vision and the skills to move the American educational system to prominence in tomorrow’s world. This will be accomplished through an innovative partnership program linking competence and the learner, university faculty, practicing educational administrators, and community leaders” (Duquesne University, 1993).

As a professional development program, Duquesne’s IDPEL program is intended to enable practitioners to function as transformational educational
leaders by integrating theory, inquiry, leadership competencies and practice. The cohort structure is integral to the program design and delivery. Students take all coursework as a group for the entire three-year course sequence, regardless of prior graduate coursework or work experience.

Other aspects of the Duquesne IDPEL model personalize the program and support individual students. The university assigns a program director to the cohort to serve as administrator, as instructor of key courses and as liaison among faculty and students. Each cohort member recruits as a personal mentor an accomplished top-level school leader, usually possessing an earned doctorate. Mentors, after approval by the IDPEL program director, are responsible for guiding and verifying the student’s professional development, using a competency checklist linked both to course content and Pennsylvania competencies for school superintendents.

Additionally, cohort members are assigned to small advisory groups consisting of five to seven students and a faculty advisor. These advisory groups are a key component of IDPEL, and a unique feature of the Duquesne University cohort program. Advisory groups function as learning teams within the cohort, working together on projects and assignments during the three years of coursework. Mentors and advisors work together with each cohort member to customize course assignments to meet the individual’s current and future career development and research needs.

The program’s record of recruitment, retention and graduation of students is excellent: the applicant pool is large enough to allow selective recruitment,
issues unrelated to program factors account for the very few drop-outs, and over
90% of cohort members from the initial group have completed their
dissertations. Graduates of other cohorts, cohort members still involved in
coursework or dissertation work, advisors, mentors, and faculty form a Quality
Council for each cohort group. These representative groups meet to maintain
program quality by gathering at least once per semester to review progress
toward attainment of program goals, concerns, and procedural proposals.
Minutes from each meeting are distributed to all program stakeholders.

Framework: Assessing Leadership Development

Lashway (1999, p. 23) compares defining leadership to dissecting a
marshmallow – it can be done, but not precisely and “not without getting your
hands sticky.” Lashway describes leadership as a construct, something
recognized and celebrated, but something that cannot be distilled into a directly
observed or measured essence. The result is “dozens of theories and hundreds of
definitions” of leadership (p.24). Consequently, assessment of leadership
depends upon arrival at an operational definition of what “leadership” means
within any particular organization or context.

A foundational component of Duquesne University’s IDPEL is the
assertion that “Leadership skills can be developed” (Henderson, 1996, p. 3). In
order to assess the development of leadership skills, Duquesne University uses a
competency checklist. This indicates a construct of leadership as skills,
knowledge and behaviors that can be observed and described by a mentor. The
IDPEL competencies are based on the licensure standards for school
superintendents in Pennsylvania. These standards are also reflected in leadership competencies defined by the American Association of School Administrators (1993) and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders, which define school leadership in terms of knowledge, disposition and performances.

It might be possible to use these checklists to assess the developing competencies of participants, and consequently, the program’s impact on their leadership. However, since each participant seeks to fill in the checklist as a basic requirement for completion of the program curriculum, considerable self-bias could make for questionable validity. The competencies are also recorded “on-the-job” by the participant’s mentor, raising the possibility of varying degrees of rigor, and without the influence of the participants’ advisory group. Some other external assessment is needed to aid in assessing the contribution of the cohort to the participants’ leadership.

Bass (1996), Kouzes and Posner (2002), Schwahn and Spady (1998), and other leadership theorists suggest that leadership is defined by distinct components. When leaders demonstrate behaviors that comprise the constructs Kouzes, Posner, Schwahn and Bass describe, they are said to be transformational – that is, they enable followers to transcend their own interests in pursuit of the organization’s vision or mission. Some recent studies suggest that attempts at assessing the components of transformational leadership are imperfect. Carless (Carless, 1997, 1998; 2001) questions the discriminant validity of their measures,
but agrees that the assessments published by Kouzes, Posner and Bass do identify
the over-arching construct of leadership.

The Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) offers an
operationalized definition of leadership. As will be seen more completely in
Chapter 3, its usefulness as a developmental tool has been validated in many
different organizational contexts, including education (J. M. Kouzes & B. Z.
Posner, 2002). In the Kouzes and Posner model, five practices form a composite
of exemplary leadership:

1. Challenging the Process: leaders actively seek out new and different ways to
   improve the organization. They experiment and risk failure, seeing mistakes
   as opportunities for learning.

2. Inspiring a Shared Vision: leaders help to maintain focus on end results. They
   persuade followers to pursue a common dream. They describe an exciting
   future.

3. Enabling Others to Act: leaders engage others in collaborative teams based on
   trust and respect for the strengths of individuals. They help followers set high
   but achievable goals and celebrate successes.

4. Modeling the Way: leaders walk the talk. They practice the values they
   espouse. They set standards first for themselves and clear the paths for those
   who follow.

5. Encouraging the Heart: leaders give credit for success to individual
   contributors. They offer public recognition and give positive feedback
Kouzes and Posner (J. M. Kouzes & B. Posner, 2002) find that these five practices have been consistently demonstrated by effective leaders, regardless of age, experience, culture, gender, or position within an organization. Versions of the inventory have been developed and validated for use by managers, non-managers, college students and team members. Each instrument has both a self and observer version. For developmental purposes, participants complete the LPI-Self, and ask people familiar with their leadership practices to complete the LPI-Observer. Data from the self and observer forms can then be compiled and compared to offer participants developmental information about their leadership practices. The use of such information for 360 Degree Feedback is well-supported as a tool for leadership development (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1998).

Both of the key concepts briefly discussed in this overview – cohorts in higher education, and assessing leadership for schools – will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2. Two other foundational concepts that have contributed to the development of university cohort programs - characteristics of adult learning, and the contribution of group learning to individual development – will also be examined. Taken together, these four fields of inquiry form the foundation for this dissertation.

Problem Statement

Bogotch (2001) states that the past 40 years have not produced evidence to support educational leadership program reforms. Though more than 70 universities have embraced cohorts as a structural reform in their doctoral programs (Barnett et al., 2000), there is little empirical data to verify that the
cohort structure itself mediates participants’ leadership development and practice. Existing studies discussing benefits of cohorts in terms of the development of participants’ leadership skills and practices suggest a potential benefit. Barnett (2000) cites only one study (Leithwood, Jantzi, Coffin, & Wilson, 1996) that positively links graduates’ cohort experiences with school leadership practices. Leithwood et al. surveyed teachers who were led by graduates of programs that featured some iteration of cohort design and found “modest, but significant amount of variation in leader effectiveness explained by program characteristics” (1996, p. 339). Graduates of those programs valued the opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in circumstances similar to those they might face on-the-job. Cohorts groups and internships provided those opportunities.

Given the paucity of information in the literature about the contributions of cohort participation to professional practice, this study examined the cohort component of the Duquesne IDPEL program. Did the leadership practices of IDPEL participants change over their course of study? Stated in terms of program effect, could IDPEL cohort participation be seen to mediate professional performance?

Since this study sought to evaluate the longitudinal impact of three years of cohort membership on participants’ school leadership practices, participants were Duquesne University IDPEL students working in school leadership positions who changed jobs shortly before or just after beginning IDPEL coursework. Respondents were co-workers and colleagues of participants from
the participants’ previous and current schools. All respondents completed the Leadership Practices Inventory-Observer, Third Edition (Kouzes & Posner, 2003), which provides a valid and reliable description of participants’ leadership behaviors. Observation survey responses were compiled and described using quantitative methodologies to examine change in leadership practice. Semi-structured interviews with participants provided qualitative insights into the relationship between advisory group experiences, course content, on-the-job experiences, and on-the-job leadership changes.

**Significance of the Problem**

In response to pressure from a variety of sources, many universities have modified their educational leadership programs to feature cohort groups. These cohorts are seen as critical elements in promoting the development of leaders for future schools (Milstein & associates, 1993). Benefits of cohorts have been described in different ways, but some basic agreement emerges from research. Barnett (2000) summarizes three areas of benefit: 1) within program, where students’ academic performance and interpersonal relationships are positively affected; 2) on-the-job, where cohort members may capitalize on networks created during times when the cohort is actively engaged in coursework; and, 3) administrative benefits for the university resulting from stable enrollment. Additionally, cohorts are credited with providing participants with models of learning communities, featuring collaborative learning based on adult learning constructs – leading to what Horn (2001) describes as transformative change in participants’ own communities. This study assessed the development of
leadership behaviors associated with transformative change (Bass, 1996; Fields & Herold, 1997).

This study sought to explore the linkage between the cohort experience and the development of participants’ leadership skills. Through summative evaluation of the effectiveness of a specific program design feature with a specific group of participants in a specific graduate leadership program (Patton, 1990), p. 156), that is, by understanding what aspects of leadership skill development can be attributed to Duquesne University’s IDPEL cohort participation, this study may also shed light on the contribution to leadership practice of educational leadership cohorts at other universities, and to illuminate avenues for further study.

Research Questions

The questions addressed in this research examined the contribution of Duquesne University IDPEL cohort membership to the development of participants’ leadership practices.

- How do participants’ reported leadership practices change over the course of participation in IDPEL cohorts, as measured by the LPI-Observer (Kouzes and Posner, 1988) instrument?
- What are the perceptions of IDPEL participants employed as school leaders in terms of change in their leadership practices over the course of IDPEL participation?
• What are participants’ perceptions of cohort advisory group membership in terms of its contribution to change in field-based leadership practices?

Definition of Terms

The following are operational definitions for the purposes of this study.

Advisory groups - Within the Duquesne University IDPEL program, all cohort members are assigned to small groups consisting of five to seven students and a faculty advisor. Advisory groups coexist as learning teams within the cohort throughout the three-year program of studies, working together on projects and assignments. Some of the assignments receive collective grades, and some are graded individually, at the discretion of the instructor. The advisory groups will be the operational representation of the cohort in this study.

Cohort - Groups of students who engage in the program of studies together and share a common sequence of classes and course experiences.

Evaluation – Systematic data collection and analysis for the purpose of determining the worth of an educational practice. The focus of this dissertation is evaluation of the contribution of IDPEL cohort participation to the development of leadership practices.

Graduates – Participants in IDPEL cohorts who have completed all requirements for the Ed. D.

IDPEL – Duquesne University’s Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders, a four-year, sixty-semester hour cohort program culminating in the Doctor of Education (Ed. D.) degree. Cohorts operate at
Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, and at Mercyhurst College, Erie, Pennsylvania.

Leadership – Behaviors practiced by ordinary people which inspire followers to be committed to achieving the vision for an organization (J. M. Kouzes & B. Posner, 2002).

Non-graduates – For the purpose of this study, members of IDPEL cohorts who have completed coursework, but have not completed all requirements for graduation.

Participants – Members of IDPEL cohort groups who have changed jobs within a year of starting IDPEL coursework.

Respondents – Past and present co-workers of participants.

Summative Evaluation – Collection of data in order to describe the worth of a mature program or process (Krathwohl, 1998).

Limitations of the Study

This evaluation study explored the perceptions of participants in the Duquesne University IDPEL cohorts regarding the contribution of the cohort to the development of their leadership practices. It did not study the perceptions of participants in other graduate school cohorts.

Respondents were asked to describe the leadership skill practices of participants, or to report their observations of leadership practices among their classmates. No external assessment of leadership skills and practices by assessors completely disassociated from participants was undertaken.
Participants selected their own respondents from their past and current places of employment.

In order to assess the longitudinal development of participants’ leadership practices, this study used data from two different sets of respondents, past and present, for each participant. Same-source longitudinal assessment data for each participant does not exist.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature related to the impact of graduate school cohort structures on the skill development of school leaders. The first section describes the nature of leadership for schools. This helps the reader to understand the skills with which individuals who pursue school leadership positions are expected to be equipped. The next two sections examine the philosophical, psychological and pedagogical foundations of cohort design - adult learning and group learning. These sections provide the theoretical background that has contributed to the adoption of the cohort model in leadership programs across North America. The final section reviews the history and application of cohorts in school leadership programs. If IDPEL cohorts are a laboratory for the development of leadership, it is important to understand how cohorts have been seen to function, and to what ends.

Leadership in Schools

Though the results of leadership have been recognized and celebrated throughout human history, “leadership” has only appeared in the English language since the early 19th century (Bass, 1990). During the subsequent centuries, countless books, articles and research studies attempt to define the nature, skills, and effects of leadership. Much of this literature has focused on leadership in the private sector. Some authors see this as rather inconsequential to those who would study educational leadership, stating, for example, “the
qualities of leadership are similar whether your discipline is education, business,..., or any other field” (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003 p. 138).

In contrast, Lashway (1999) draws sharp distinctions between the realities of the public and private sectors, particularly between the world of business and the world of schools. School leaders, says Lashway, operate in an environment where profit is not a motive, where there is little consensus on what constitutes success, where every action is open to scrutiny by an increasingly demanding and diverse public, and where the near-monopoly enjoyed by public schools tends to diminish the competition that forces private enterprise to be prone to change.

In the introduction to their synthesis of leadership literature, Schwahn and Spady (1998) also observe that schools, and school leaders, traditionally have not been concerned by competition. They write that most of the literature on leadership and organizational change has focused on the private sector because that’s where the action has been: Business has required good leadership as a key to survival in the free marketplace.

Looking at “education through leadership eyes,” (C. Schwahn, personal communication, July, 2002) reveals schools poised to enter the same competitive arena as business. Schools as social institutions have survived dramatically unchanged for over a century. Society, having entered the Information Age, will not be content with schools offering Bureaucratic Age management, Industrial Age content, and an Agrarian Age calendar (Schwahn & Spady, 1998 p. 15). Pressure for change will come from many quarters of society. Leadership for
change in schools will come from Total Leaders (Schwahn & Spady, 1998) – possessed of the same skills as effective leaders in any arena.

Consequently, the subset of leadership literature that concerns itself most specifically with leadership for schools is essentially a representative sample of all leadership literature. That literature can be roughly divided into four broad conceptualizations (Lashway, 1999).

The first and historically most long-lived, is the study of leadership as personal traits and attributes. This conceptualization incorporates the gamut of ideas from the classical Great Man, revered for uniqueness and inimitability to the more modern constructs of psychological type profiling. For example, the Gallup Strengths Finder, an applicant assessment tool used by IDPEL to help organize advisory teams, seeks to identify personal “themes” by comparing the responses of interviewees to those of acknowledged leaders.

Gardner (1990) presents a substantial list of personal attributes, including physical vitality, stamina, intelligence, judgment-in-action, courage, confidence, and adaptability. Despite the assembly of an extensive list of these qualities, Gardner also cautions that not all attributes are observed in each leadership situation, and that the attributes required of a leader depend on the kind of leadership being exercised, the context and the nature of followers. Both a lack of distinction and a sense of overlap seem to emerge in the discussion of personal attributes and leadership competencies. It may be, as Gardner suggests, that the capacity to manage, decide and set priorities is both a personal attribute and a leadership skill. Ultimately, Gardner suggests that the level of interaction among
skills, attributes, and context is important to consider in identifying the elements of successful leadership.

The second school of leadership analysis concerns itself with the behavior and skills of leaders, the specific knowledge that leaders possess and how that knowledge is applied. As the literature of leadership study has evolved over the years, so too have perspectives on the critical skills or competencies that leaders need in order to be successful. Earlier definitions of leadership competencies emphasized managerial, coordinating, and organizing skills, while more recent definitions have focused on those skills needed to establish vision, clarify values, and enable followers. Vaille (1996) described this trend, identifying specific skill areas related to knowledge of self, human behavior, creativity and cultural understanding.

Much of the background for this discussion seems to have emerged from the debate over the differences between management and leadership, and the attendant skills of each. Authors such as Bennis (1989) and Covey (1989) have tended to demote the skills involved in management to a position of mere necessity, while elevating the skills of leadership to a position of noble purpose. Others, most notably Gardner (1990) and Bolman and Deal (1991), identified skills for both management and leadership and have described the two as having an integrated, interdependent relationship. This is clearly demonstrated in Gardner's analysis of leadership functions, in which managing is listed as one of the nine critical areas of competence which leaders must practice. Within this discussion, Gardner lists such skills as "planning and priority setting, organizing
and institution building, keeping the system functioning, agenda setting and decision making, and exercising political judgment" as essential management leadership skills (p. 14).

Another aspect of leadership behavior literature, concerns itself with the situations within which leaders must operate. “Situational leadership” concerns itself with the intersection between the demands of the context facing the leader – the human, economic, social, and political environment – and the leader’s behavior. Hoy and Miskel (1996) describe this as the combination of leader traits and the “properties of a situation” that have an impact on the leader’s effectiveness. The leader’s task is to assess the context and choose appropriate behaviors in order to be effective, which is, to meet organizational goals while keeping self and subordinates satisfied.

Situational leadership studies help to understand why certain leadership behaviors may produce results in one context but not in another. Sobehart (2000) illustrates this as a cube-within-a-box: any action represents the intersection of role competencies, leadership skills, and individual leadership style, all nested within political, environmental, regulatory, and intrapersonal influences. Burns (1978, p. 437) writes of this interaction as not a “network of sequential and cross-cutting forces, but a rich and pulsating stream of leadership-followership... flowing through the whole social process.” Some regulatory order is brought to these “unimaginably complex” interactions by the leader’s values, motives and purposes.
The fourth wave of leadership studies has concerned itself not so much with the leader as with the effects of leadership on followers. Leadership that elevates followers to “contributorship” (Williams & McCown, 1998), that raises work to extraordinary levels, is said to be transformational. The study of transformational leadership, or perhaps more accurately, the study of the contrast between transformational and transactional leadership, has provided much of the basis for leadership literature since Burns provided the labels in 1978 (Bass, 1990). Indeed, the measure of transformational leadership is often the goal of leadership assessment (Lashway, 1999).

Though no single definition of leadership is generally accepted in current literature (Bass, 1990), what is generally accepted is that the result of leadership is change, what Starratt (1993) describes as “organizational success.” William Spady (Schwahn & Spady, 1998) summarizes it succinctly: leaders initiate change, and leaders get results.

What these results should be for educational leaders was one concern of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), as it defined Standards for School Leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996). According to ISLLC, the results of leadership in schools are measured by improvement in student learning and the quality of teaching. Adopted as the basis for certification as a school leader in Pennsylvania, the ISLLC standards formed the basis for measuring the development of aspiring administrators in the Duquesne IDPEL program. Note that the ISLLC standards, in 2002, were merged with standards developed by the
National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) and the National Commission on the Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (NCATE). The unified standards are published by NPBEA (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002). IDPEL documents have been updated to reflect this change, although all of the initial beliefs and competencies outlined in IDPEL design documents are still reflected in the current NPBEA structure. It can be argued, and Duquesne’s recent admission, in 2004, to the University Council on Educational Administration would appear to validate the claim, that what was designed into IDPEL has been confirmed in the later NPBEA and NCATE documents.

The literature does not reveal a uniform set of specific abilities or knowledge, a definitive inventory, which "leaders-to-be" might use to signal arrival or attainment. However, recent literature indicates trends of thinking about the common categories of leadership competencies needed for the ever-changing workplace of schools. The ISLLC, for example, used as a framework for its standards the “knowledge, dispositions, and performances” needed by school leaders, framed in a “parsimonious model” intended to reflect the similarity in the central aspects of any school leadership role (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, p.7).

Discussions contrasting management and leadership, differentiating personal traits from leadership skills, and defining leadership as a learnable craft, produce a synthesis of thinking about the skills, abilities, traits, and knowledge that seem to be essential to leadership. Separating them into distinct boxes seems
less important than identifying their essence. To this end, various authors have synthesized leadership theory and research into taxonomies of leadership, both to describe how leadership looks in messy, day-to-day experience, and to allow for the assessment of individual’s leadership performance. Schwahn and Spady (1999) distilled five “performance domains” that comprise the leadership functions that are most commonly expressed in the literature.

- Authentic Leadership: To establish or clarify the fundamental purpose and values of the organization.
- Visionary Leadership: To create possibilities by focusing the organization on a preferred future.
- Cultural Leadership: To develop meaning and ownership for everyone in the organization.
- Service Leadership: To support empowered workers to accomplish the purpose and vision of the organization.
- Quality Leadership: To build continuous improvement strategies and capacities throughout the organization.

Certainly, different names and variations of these categories are used in the literature. For example, Bolman and Deal (1991) might view these categories within the context of the multiple frames of reference (structural, human resources, political, and symbolic) that they have created as a means of understanding organizational leadership.

Kouzes and Posner (J. M. Kouzes & B. Posner, 2002), propose another leadership model that reflects their synthesis of five key leadership practices:
- Challenging the Process: “Searching for opportunities and experimenting and taking risks.”
- Inspiring a Shared Vision: “Envisioning the future and enlisting the support of others.”
- Enabling Others to Act: “Fostering collaboration and strengthening others.”
- Modeling the Way: “Setting an example and planning small wins.”
- Encouraging the Heart: “Recognizing contributions and celebrating accomplishments.”

Kouzes and Posner have used their research to formulate an instrument, the Leadership Practices Inventory, widely used by organizations to help leaders develop their leadership practices. Kouzes and Posner have developed and promoted the use of the LPI as a component of 360-degree feedback. Known by different names (multi-rater feedback, upward feedback, full-circle evaluation), 360-degree feedback allows leaders to receive information about their performance from a variety of people with whom they work (Dyer, 2001). Reporters might be clients, subordinates, peers, supervisors; the premise is that feedback garnered from all perspectives is more objective and complete than that from a single source (Kouzes and Posner, 2002). Research comparing the validity of subordinate ratings of supervisor’s leadership behaviors to supervisors’ self-ratings has found that only ratings from subordinates correlated with other measures of leadership (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1998). Though there are some questions about the validity of using the LPI to discriminate between the five
behaviors, it is seen that the model describes an “over-arching construct of transformational leadership” (Carless, 2001).

Table 1 illustrates the parallels among the leadership standards originally defined by ISLLC, the competency standards for IDPEL participants defined by Duquesne University, and the leadership practices distilled by Kouzes and Posner. These standards, practices, and domains provide an operational definition of leadership – those things that leaders do and are for those who follow them. Given the fundamental agreement among these models of leadership practice, the five core competency areas that Kouzes and Posner describe can be seen to define the critical areas of knowledge and capability that leaders need to exercise and practice in order to be effective in educational settings. This definition, and the LPI measure designed to assess behavior that reflects the actualization of the defined behaviors, can be used as a structural schema to examine the leadership learning of IDPEL graduates. How the characteristics of adult learners in any discipline influence the design of leadership programs is the focus of the next section of this chapter.
Table 1.

*Typology of Leadership Tasks and Competencies*

|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by... | 1. Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning supported by the school community. | 5. Leadership and District Culture
8. Instructional Management |
| 2. Promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff. | 7. Curriculum Design, Implementation and Evaluation
8. Instructional Management | Enable Others To Act
- Foster collaboration
- Strengthen others
Encourage the Heart
- Recognize contributions
- Celebrate the values and victories |
| 3. Managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. | 3. Planning, Quality, and Organizational Problem-solving
4. Human Resources Management | Model the Way
- Set the example
- Align actions with values |
| 4. Collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources. | 6. Communication and Community Relations | Inspire a Shared Vision
- Envision the future
- Enlist others |
| 5. Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. | 1. Leadership, Values, and Ethics | Model the Way
- Find your voice
- Set the example |
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<th><strong>Challenge the Process</strong></th>
<th><strong>Inspire a Shared Vision</strong></th>
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<td><strong>6. Understanding,</strong></td>
<td>- Search for opportunities</td>
<td>- Envision the future: Be</td>
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<td><strong>responding to,</strong></td>
<td>- Experiment and take risks</td>
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| **7. Internship. The** | **IDPEL individual** |
| **internship provides** | **competency checklists** |
| **significant opportunities** | **cooperatively monitored** |
| **for candidates to synthesize and** | **by IDPEL faculty and** |
| **apply the knowledge and** | **individual mentors** |
| **practice and develop the** |                          |
| **skills identified in Standards** |                          |
| **1-6 through substantial,** |                          |
| **sustained, standards-based** |                          |
| **work in real settings, planned** |                          |
| **and guided cooperatively by** |                          |
| **the institution and school** |                          |
| **district personnel for** |                          |
| **graduate credit.** |                          |

**Adult Learning**

One criticism of school leadership programs that led to calls for systematic reform was the failure of traditional programs to utilize knowledge of how adults best learn (Kochan et al., 1999; Milstein & Krueger, 1997; Milstein & associates, 1993). After reviewing the literature pertaining to leadership for schools, it is also essential to this dissertation to understand how adults learn. This is particularly important to provide a framework for an examination of Duquesne IDPEL since IDPEL participants are adults choosing to pursue an advanced degree and eligibility for certification as school superintendents. Therefore, this section of the literature review addresses adult learning theory, including the needs and characteristics of adult learners, and, by extension, the
implications contributing to the utilization of the cohort model in educational leadership preparation programs.

It is immediately obvious to one who would investigate adult learning that the topic is vast and varied. A quick look at a small university’s library turned up over 1500 books, using “adult” and “learning” as the subject keys. Despite this, Brookfield (in Wilson & Hayes, 2000 p. 34) finds that “no unifying theory of adult learning or practice has emerged.”

The foundations for understanding adult learning lie in the generalized theories of all learning, which have evolved principally from the fields of education and psychology. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) contend models developed by Knowles and Mezirow serve to illustrate two of the most prominent branches of inquiry into the unique characteristics of adult learning.

Concerned that existing research emphasized the ends of adult education, Knowles (1978) proposed the adoption of a Dutch term, “Andragogy,” to capture the means and processes of adult learning. To contrast andragogy with pedagogy, which lumped adult learning together with the study of all learning, and specifically with children’s learning, Knowles described five assumptions about adult learners.

First, adults mature from dependence on others to self-direction. From a psychological point of view, adulthood begins when individuals perceive themselves to be essentially self-directing. Situations that minimize adults’ sense of self-direction or that engender feelings of dependence tend to foster resistance and resentment that ultimately interfere with learning. To minimize this
reaction, programs for adult learners may allow participants a significant range of choice in activities, and participation in making decisions affecting them (Knowles, 1984; Levine, 1989).

Second, as individuals mature they build a repertoire of experience that provides a profound resource for future learning. The adults in a program are a rich source of learning for one another, leading to utilization of instructional strategies that allow students to tap into their increasingly heterogeneous, diverse experiences (Knowles, 1978, 1984). The self-identity of adults also becomes tied to their own experience, rather than the identity of those upon whom they depended in childhood (Knowles, 1984).

Third, as individuals mature, what they learn is closely related to the developmental tasks they approach because of their social roles (Knowles, 1978, 1984). Learning and personal growth begins when the need to learn and grow comes from within (Levine). Consequently, learners drawn together in a common program may be at different stages, phases, and levels of development or need: paradoxically, “group growth” will most likely be attained through attention to individual needs (Levine).

Fourth, adults’ orientation to learning is problem-centered and practical. “The adult... comes into an educational activity largely because he is experiencing some inadequacy in coping with current life problems” (Knowles, 1978, p. 58). Adult learning perspectives move from future application to immediate application of knowledge (Merriam and Caffarella, p.272), or, from “banking” information to resolving “the way they exist in the world in which and with which
they find themselves” (Freire, 1970p. 71).

Fifth, internal factors are ultimately more motivating to adults than are external factors. Knowles (1984, p.12) noted that programs seeking to attract adult learners tend to emphasize “self-esteem, recognition, better quality of life, greater self-confidence, self-actualization...” as more potent motivators than better jobs and salaries.

This five-part model has been the predominant model of adult learning for 30 years. Despite concerns from subsequent researchers that the model may represent a set of best practices and not a theory of learning unique to adults, it is a model that helps to better understand adults as learners (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Tight, 1996). Indeed, Knowles’s work is frequently cited in the literature describing the design of cohort models in educational leadership programs.

The focus of the second strand of adult learning theory is on the end outcomes of adult learning, rather than the means. It is important to consider this body of transformative theory because much of the literature on the design and utilization of cohort programs emanates from aspirations to dramatically reform educational leadership programs in order to reshape the social landscape of schooling (Murphy, 2002). Horn (2001), for example, describes the potential of the cohort model to reform educational leadership programs as a means to promote positive change in society, and Hill (1995) projects that participation in educational leadership cohorts will lead to the replication of its benefits in administrative practice. This interest in the cohort as a vehicle for social change, as opposed to a vehicle for improving skills and acquiring new techniques, belies
a transformative model of adult learning.

In 1978, Mezirow began to systematically describe the process by which adults may be profoundly changed by learning (Merriam, 2001). Transformation theory “is intended to be a comprehensive, idealized, and universal model... of the structures, elements, and processes of adult learning (Mezirow, 1994, p. 222). As Cranton (2002 p. 64) writes, “At its core, transformative learning theory is elegantly simple.” Distilling decades of theories, models, and ideas about adult learning, Mezirow describes how adults, following a triggering event, may become aware of the limitations of their viewpoint. As individuals critically examine their views, and open themselves to alternatives, they may change their viewpoints, or frames of reference. If individuals change their understanding, they have transformed some part of how they make meaning of the world (Cranton, 2002). Transformative learning can be characterized as having a consciousness-raising quality, in which learners become aware of the sociocultural reality which shapes their lives and become capable of transforming that reality (Freire, 1970).

Mezirow (Mezirow, 1997,p. 5) writes, “Transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference.” Frames of reference have two components, habits of mind and a point of view. Points of view are predicated upon a habit of mind. Subject to reflection and new information, points of view are more malleable than a habit of mind, which is more deeply seated in cultural development. Critical reflection on a habit of mind and its associated points of view, often facilitated by discourse within a group, can lead
to what Paolo Freire (1970) called conscientization, understanding how unexamined acceptance of a frame of reference contributes to disenfranchisement and disempowerment. In common with Freire’s social-emancipatory model, Mezirow situates knowledge in the learner, where it is created and recreated in light of new experiences (Baumgartner, 2001). In contrast to simply adding new information or skills, transformational learning changes the way people understand themselves and their world (Baumgartner, 2001).

Transformational learning has been observed and described in many settings and situations. Merriam (2001, p.344) writes that transformational learning is currently “the most researched and written about topic in adult learning.” It has provided a theoretical basis for studies that feature cohorts in adult education (Sokol & Cranton, 1998), HIV-positive people (Courtenay, Merriam, & Reeves, 2000), Adult Basic Education programs (Drago-Severson & Berger, 2001), and nurses enrolled in post-RN programs (Callin, 1996). In each of these examples, the cohort members and faculty facilitators are seen to assist in providing a critical facilitative element of transformational learning, what Patricia Cranton (2002) describes as an “environment of challenge” under girded by “safety, support, and a sense of learner empowerment.”

The safe environment that Cranton describes is essential for one of the key elements of transformational learning – discourse. Rational discourse is a special kind of dialogue that learners use to examine and establish the validity of assumptions (Mezirow, 1994). As the critical element of communicative learning,
which Merizow describes as trying to understand what someone means, it is generally absent from what he calls instrumental learning – trying to control or manipulate the people or the empirical world (Mezirow, 1996). While both communicative and instrumental learning are elements of adult education, the latter is concerned with clearly defined learning outcomes; communicative learning is a group process intended to cultivate the learners’ collective ability to effect cultural and political change in social institutions and organizations (Merizow, 1994, p. 26).

Some recent studies have examined the possibility of group and organizational transformations (Baumgartner). More literature supports the role of the group in allowing individual transformative learning (Twale & Kochan, 2000). Cohort models in educational leadership programs, while fostering learning within the group, may not necessarily provide the type of learning that transfers to the work environment (Twale and Kochan). To understand how groups promote learning, it will be necessary to briefly examine the nature and function of groups, and of the one particular type of group, the higher education cohort.

*Group Learning*

Murphy (2002) defines one task of the “recultured” job of school administrators as providing empowering leadership, leading from within the social structure of schools through discourse. Another aspect of the recultured job of school leaders is to shift emphasis from management to learning (Murphy, 2002). From Mezirow’s Transformation Theory (1996), we understand that
discourse is the currency of communicative learning – that is learning what others mean when they communicate with you. Since the ideal conditions for discourse are also the ideal conditions for learning (Mezirow, 1996), it follows that leadership development programs which include discourse by design will assist in the learning of recultured school leaders.

By definition, for the purposes of this dissertation, cohorts are defined as groups of students who engage in a program of studies together and share a common set and sequence of classes and class experiences. To understand how the cohort model contributes to leadership practice, it is necessary to consider how learning takes place in intentional groups such as cohorts.

The use of small cohort groups is not confined to educational leadership programs. In a qualitative evaluation study using student focus groups and faculty surveys, Dennis (1998) describes how the use of small faculty-facilitated groups within a cohort of 72 first-year medical students assisted the students in making the difficult transition from undergraduate school to medical school. The impetus for creating the program parallels the adoption of cohorts in educational leadership: in response to greater demands for accountability, medical students need to develop communicative skills to balance the dehumanizing aspects and the academic rigor of their medical training. Though Dennis reports some shortcomings of the program, the respondents in the study found social and academic support (1998, p.9).

Kenneth Bruffee (1999) briefly describes a similar program at Harvard Medical School, designed to increase students’ diagnostic skills while developing
their ability to interact socially with colleagues and patients while addressing “complex, demanding, perhaps life-and-death issues” (p. 274). Bruffee’s description of the function of groups learning diagnostic judgment in medical school echoes Mezirow’s (1997) use of discourse in transformational learning: the students “talk one another out of their unshared biases and presuppositions... justifying their beliefs or ... acknowledging that their beliefs are socially unjustifiable and abandoning them” (p. 13).

Transformation theory offers one way to understand the contribution of social interaction to adult learning. The psychology of Lev Vygotsky offers another.

Perhaps Vygotsky’s most famous contribution to understanding learning is his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development. The ZPD is the distance between an individual’s independent and socially supported abilities: what one cannot learn or grasp alone, but can do with assistance from another person (Wertsch, 1991). The assistance that another person offers to help bridge the gap between doable and undoable is said to mediate the learning. To Vygotsky, mediation – a process “that abolishes and makes unnecessary several natural processes whose work is accomplished by the tool” – was the essence of his psychology (Cole & Wertsch, n.d.).

For example, Vygotsky observed young children pointing at objects. When parents would notice the gesture and pass the object to a child, the child learned that gesture “controlled” the object through the mediation of the parent. Eventually, through much repetition and reinforcement, children substitute
speech for the gesture of pointing, but understand that the path to and from the physically unreachable object passes through another person (Vygotsky, 1978).

Whether the object of desire is a shiny toy or a concept, a skill, an idea, or a task, the participation of other people mediates the broadening of the zone of proximal development. In groups, the ZPDs of the individual members overlap: each member of the group contributes something slightly different to mediate the learning process of other group members (Cole & Wertsch). Consequently, the collective ZPD is broad. There are many different directions that the group can take toward achievement of a learning outcome.

Vygotsky believed that social interaction is necessary to internalization of learning, that is, the movement of intellectual functions from social behavior to “intrapsychological”, mental tools (Vygotsky, 1978). “From infancy we learn through interaction with others. We are because of others” (Nicholl, 1998, Higher and lower mental functions, para. 3)

What we are, says Kenneth Bruffee, are members of groups seeking to become members of different groups. Bruffee calls the process of moving from one group to another reacculturation: members of a group known as teachers who wish to become school administrators must reacculturate to the group of principals, curriculum specialists, superintendents, and so on.

“Reacculturation involves giving up, modifying, or renegotiating the language, values, knowledge, mores, and so on that are constructed, established, and maintained by the community one is coming from, and becoming fluent instead in the language and so on of another community” (Bruffee, 1999, p.298).
To move from one group to another requires the mediation of a transition group, a community that people organize to reacculturate themselves (Bruffee, 1999). Transition groups, like cohorts, engaged in learning a new profession or in developing a new set of skills, can be said to reside in the zone of proximal development between the present and expert communities.

Bandura’s social learning theory explains this in another way. Social learning theory “posits that people learn from observing other people. By definition, such observations take place in a social setting” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 258). Or, as Bandura (1977, p. 22) wryly observes, “Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do.”

Within the discipline of psychology, behaviorists were the first to look at how people learned through observation. Bandura and other researchers looked beyond stimulus-response psychology to consider people’s interactions and cognitive processes. What observation does is to allow people to see the consequences of other people’s actions. In this way, observers gain some idea of what might happen as the result of acting one way or another. Observations are recorded in memory and serve as later models for behavior (Bandura, 1977). Social learning theory may help to explain both how and why the cohort can serve as a laboratory for learning (Yerkes et al., 1995): as a transition community (Bruffee, 1999) of potential leaders, coexisting and co-learning (Lawrence) through three years of coursework, many valuable leadership behaviors and opportunities can be modeled.
However, merely adding small groups to an otherwise unchanged course of study will not develop the fluency of knowledge that will ensure full reacculturation into a new community (Bruffee, 1999). Mezirow (1997) outlines the conditions necessary for effective learning in groups: participants share the same access to information, are free from coercive pressure to acquiesce to consensus, are free to take different roles in discourse, and practice active listening skills. When university cohorts integrate collaboration to function as transition communities, members move beyond co-existence to co-learning, the act of sharing the construction of knowledge. That, as we’ll see in the next section, is the promise and challenge of cohorts in educational leadership.

**Cohorts**

The conceptual framework for this dissertation stemmed from inquiries into the cohort models used by graduate schools of education. Here, and in the literature, knowledge about adult learning and group learning has been examined in light of the everyday realities facing school leaders. The response of many graduate schools of education has been to provide cohorts as “laboratories for leadership” (Yerkes et al., 1995).

What is known about cohorts in educational leadership? Cohorts are based on knowledge of group processing and adult learning theory (Barnett et al., 2000). As described by Merriam and Caffarella (1999), adult learners flourish in environments where they have control over their learning, maintain focus on problems relevant to their work, build strong peer relationships and pool their collective experience to enhance learning. Barnette and Muse (1993) speculate
that many participants in school leadership cohorts may find the collaborative structure attractive because of a personal preference for group work. Some of the cohesion and interdependence reported in cohorts (e.g. Teitel, 1997) may be due to the predisposition for collaboration that participants bring to the group.

The literature on cohorts reflects positive benefits to participants. Cohort graduates demonstrate strong academic performance (citations), manifest critical “reflection on practice” (Hill, 1995) and demonstrate enhanced group processing skills (Hill, 1995). Cohort students also tend to complete their studies at a higher rate than do students in traditional programs (Barnett et al., 2000). Dorn and Papalewis (1997) found that cohorts add much needed support to members trying to work full-time while earning their doctorates. Group support and peer encouragement were the most significant contributors to keeping students on track toward degree completion. Barnett et al., (2000) suggest that high persistence and graduation rates may result from the ability of cohort models to meet individual learning needs. Close student-faculty relationship, resulting from working together for extended periods, may facilitate this customization.

Echoing contemporary literature on adult learning, Geltner (1994) says that the cohort represents a collaborative learning community that not only changes the relationship between students and faculty, but also among students themselves. Students in cohorts experience leadership and followership, power and independence, while gaining skills needed to transform the workplace (Geltner, 1994, p.7 ).
These on-the-job benefits are the least-studied aspect of cohorts. Various researchers have shown that cohort members maintain professional and supportive contacts after completing their coursework (Hill, 1995) and indeed, some “close lifetime friendships are also forged as a result of these intensive interactions” (Milstein and Associates, 1993, p. 200). However, as Barnett et al. (2000) note, “our field needs empirical research documenting the effects of cohorts on our graduate’s professional skills and practices” (p. 259).

Most benefits reported in the literature are projected from students’ performance within the cohorts. Faculties surveyed by Barnett et al., (2000), described the students’ personal growth, and reflected the faculty members’ “sense” that students gained needed skills and knowledge. Survey respondents described cohort members’ enhanced group process skills, skills of delegation and consensus building and problem solving – all perceived to be critical components of effective leadership. Still, Barnett et al. were unable to determine from their survey of educational leadership faculties whether cohort participation has an actual impact on participants’ job performance.

The survey did reveal or reinforce several perceptions of disadvantage to cohort use. Several of these are structural and revolve around the rigidity of scheduling. Students may not drop out of the often-streamlined course sequence, nor enroll at any point other than the beginning. The collaborative learning environment purposefully created in cohorts changes the power relationships between faculty and students, a situation that can become problematic as attention shifts from academic performance to interpersonal development. As
Barnett et al. found, “issues regarding collegial support and cohesion may tend to dominate group discussions” (2000, p. 273).

The critical deficit in the literature on educational leadership cohorts is the lack of evidence that cohort preparation programs make a difference on actual leadership practice. Absent longitudinal studies demonstrating before and after skills and knowledge, or quasi-experimental designs comparing the performance of leaders receiving different kind of preparation programs, researchers “will continue to speculate about the value added” of cohort participation (Barnett et al., 2000). As will be seen in the next chapters, the investigation completed for this dissertation helps to answer this speculation.

Summary

This literature review has explored four major cornerstones of reform in educational leadership programs: reflection on leadership for schools, the nature of adult learning, the contributions of groups to adult learning, and cohorts as an organizing structure for leadership learning programs. The review has discussed how feedback to leaders from colleagues, clients and elective contributors (Williams & McCown, 1998) can provide an accurate assessment of the leaders’ on-the-job leadership behaviors. The review has explored the limitations of the existing literature on educational leadership cohorts. In the following chapter, this study presents a method for assessing the longitudinal development of leadership behaviors by participants in the Duquesne IDPEL program, and for determining the contribution of the cohort structure to that development.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In response to a call for research into the on-the-job effects of educational leadership training in cohorts (Barnett et al., 2000), this dissertation used a qualitative evaluation research design. Descriptive statistics explored longitudinal changes in the leadership behaviors of Duquesne University IDPEL cohort populations. Case studies of individual cohort members examined how participation in the Duquesne University doctoral cohort contributes to the development of educational leaders.

Research Design

Evaluation differs from other forms of research in that its purpose is not to develop theory, not to test hypotheses, but to guide decision making (Krathwohl, 1998; Patton, 1990, 2002). The information produced by an evaluation can be shared between two people – the evaluator and the client – or between the evaluator and larger groups of concerned individuals, or stakeholders (Krathwohl, 1998, p. 588). Those stakeholders might include the universities that have adopted cohorts in their graduate programs, students who are considering participation in cohort-based programs, whoever pays the tuition for those students, and so on.

More specifically, Duquesne University and its cooperating institutions invest considerable time, effort, and expense in organizing and maintaining its particular iteration of cohort design, the advisory group. While no comparison to
other universities’ cohort programs will be made as part of this evaluation, the contribution to leadership practice of IDPEL advisory groups, permanent small groups within the larger cohort, will be a focus of this study.

As seen in the previous chapters, various scholars have posited theories about the positive benefits of participation in cohort structure in graduate schools of educational leadership. Generally, graduate programs organizing students into cohorts have been well-received by students and faculties. In 2000, Barnett, et al. indicated that 141 North American universities were using cohorts. Though no studies have been done since that time to reassess that number (Barnett, personal communication, 2003), several other educational leadership programs are known to have been organized around cohorts since 2000. However, as Barnett and others have observed, there is little empirical evidence that participation in cohort-based educational leadership programs contributes to leadership practice in the field.

Patton (1990, p.123) writes that each evaluation is approached as a problem to be solved – and the evaluation design depends on one’s thinking about the problem, rather than an attempt to carefully follow a prescriptive model. Patton and Krathwohl agree that evaluation depends on triangulation “to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-method, single-observer, and single-theory studies” (Denzin, 1970). Triangulation is typically an attempt to seek corroboration from different sources, such as surveys and interviews, to shed light on social research questions (Creswell, 1998). No automatic convergence of quantitative and qualitative data was expected – but multiple
sources of information about the research problems increased the likelihood of credible, useful conclusions.

The specific questions that helped to evaluate the impact of IDPEL participation on leadership practice were:

1. How do the leadership practices of IDPEL participants, as defined by the Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) and reported by previous and current colleagues, change over participants’ course of study?

2. How do IDPEL participants perceive their leadership practices to have changed during their three-year course of studies?

3. What contributions to change in professional practice do IDPEL participants attribute to their IDPEL group experiences?

**Instrumentation**

To approximate longitudinal data, information about participants’ leadership behavior was collected from two different points in their careers: from coworkers who were associated with participants before or near the beginning of IDPEL coursework, and from coworkers associated with participants following completion of IDPEL coursework. Selection of an appropriate instrument to access different respondents’ opinions was critically important.

A variety of instruments were available to assess the leadership practices of individuals in school leadership positions. Leithwood and colleagues (1996) developed a 51-item survey to assess teachers’ perceptions of school leaders’ practices. Lashway (1999) describes 20 instruments, each of which can be used
by local districts to select and develop school leaders. Since this study sought to assess the longitudinal leadership development of individuals who may not have been employed as school leaders when they entered the cohort, an instrument assessing generic leadership behaviors was needed. Respondent coworkers were asked to complete the Leadership Practices Inventory – Observer, 3rd Edition (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

Kouzes and Posner synthesized their extensive interviews with leaders and managers into five leadership practices. As reviewed in Chapter 2, these practices are encouraging the heart, which indicates the leader's tendency to recognize the contribution of others; enabling others to act, which demonstrates the leader's skill in team-building and collaboration; modeling the way, which shows how the leader “walks the talk”; inspiring a shared vision, which demonstrates the leader’s commitment to making a difference; and challenging the process, which demonstrates the leader’s commitment to continuous improvement. These five practices are assessed via the Leadership Practices Inventory. Respondents rate the participant’s leadership by responding to 30 questions using a ten-point Likert scale. Higher values represent more frequent observation of a leadership behavior.

Since first published in 1988, researchers have used the LPI to measure and describe the leadership behaviors of over 350,000 individuals across different types of organizations, disciplines, ethnic backgrounds and cultures (Kouzes and Posner, 2002). The LPI has been extensively described and validated in the literature. Pearson (2001) writes that the LPI is “grounded in a solid
conceptual framework,...[and] has good psychometric properties.” Factor analysis has demonstrated five factors consistent with the five subscales of the instrument (Herold, 1993; Leong, 1995). Fields and Herold (1997) reproduced and confirmed the statistics and reliability estimates reported by Kouzes and Posner in 1993. Kouzes and Posner (2002) report reliability coefficients for the LPI-Observer between 0.88 and 0.92 across samples totaling 36,000 subjects.

Since scores on the LPI have consistently been associated with critical aspects of leadership and management (e.g. Fields, 1997; Carless, 2001), and since the LPI has been successfully used to assess the longitudinal development of school leaders in graduate programs (e.g. Brungardt, 1997) it was an appropriate, valid and reliable instrument for assessing participants’ leadership practices. Compiled response data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative methodology.

**Target Population and Sampling**

The target population for this study were members of the second and third (2000 and 2003) IDPEL cohorts currently working as school leaders. Those two cohorts were selected for study because both cohorts were of similar size, and both cohorts completed their coursework at the Duquesne Pittsburgh campus with the same core faculty. The first IDPEL cohort began its coursework more than a decade prior to this study, reducing the likelihood of accurate responses from participants’ prior coworkers. This researcher was a member of the first Duquesne cohort at Shippensburg University. This personal involvement might have caused bias in interpreting data from that cohort.
Procedures

This research consisted of two phases, a survey of observers to determine what changes occurred in the groups’ leadership practices, and individual case studies examining how cohort participation contributed to any change.

To complete the first phase, a review of alumni documents identified all IDPEL participants from two Pittsburgh cohorts, 2000 and 2003. In January, 2004, all cohort members were mailed a cover letter including introduction, description of the research and study procedures, informed consent forms and stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Participants needed to meet three criteria:

1. They must have changed jobs immediately prior to or within a year of beginning IDPEL coursework;
2. They must have completed their IDPEL coursework; and,
3. They must be employed as K-12 school leaders.

Five individuals who met the criteria for participation responded: David Blunt, the president of two Catholic high schools; Jean Niebla, an assistant high school principal; Chelsea York, the curriculum director of a suburban K-12 school district; Joni Blue, principal of a suburban middle school; and Zoe Oates, supervisor of special education for a large suburban school district. (Please note that personal and place names have been changed to protect participants’ identities.)

As suggested by Kouzes and Posner (2003), each participant provided the names of twenty observers, ten from the place they worked before completing IDPEL coursework, and ten from their current workplace. The lists were checked
to confirm that they were discrete, with no overlap between the places of employment. Letters of invitation, informed consent forms, a Leadership Practices Inventory - Observer (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) instrument, and self-addressed stamped envelopes were sent to each nominated observer beginning on February 11, 2004. Completed surveys began to return on February 28, 2004 and continued to arrive well into April, 2004.

Following the Kouzes and Posner protocols, any surveys with every LPI behavior coded exactly the same were discarded; Kouzes and Posner’s research indicates that such responses typify individuals’ personal assessment of leaders, rather than identifying leadership behaviors (Kouzes, 2003). Additionally, any surveys returned without informed consent forms were also discarded. In total, the usable response rate was 78%.

Ideally, all of this data would have been contemporaneous and part of a data bank for each participant. This type of feedback has been identified as an important means for connecting educational program content to the skills required in the workplace (Jennings, 1989). Such data did not exist for the IDPEL participants. Consequently, this information was collected post hoc to replicate longitudinal data.

Following collection of all LPI-Observer responses, usable observation forms were first analyzed using LPI software (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). That software provides a report for each participant, listing the five leadership constructs and assigning a score for each. Each leadership construct has six component behaviors that respondents were to assess according to the extent to
which the behavior was or is observed. Scores were derived for each of the five leadership constructs by summing the mean observer responses to each of the six component statements. (See Appendix J for the questions associated with each leadership practice.) The complete LPI database was exported as individual responses for descriptive analysis using SPSS for Windows 12.0. Independent \( t \)-test was selected as the appropriate descriptive statistic.

The data were analyzed for patterns of change. “Statistical data provide a succinct and parsimonious summary of major patterns, while case studies provide depth, detail, and individual meaning” (Patton, 1990, p. 17). The subsequent combination of descriptive data and individual stories provided balanced information about the impact of IDPEL cohort participation.

Case studies are particularly useful in evaluation when the intent is to capture differences in individual experiences within a particular program (Patton, 1990, p.54). These case studies were situated within the context of themes that emerged from surveying the entire group of observer respondents. Interviews with participants explored different perspectives on the question of how IDPEL participation contributes to change. Creswell (1998) suggests that within-case analysis, a detailed analysis of each individual case, should precede cross-case analysis, thematic analysis across the cases. Cross-case analysis is the “final interpretive phase,” when assertions about the meaning of the cases are made (Creswell, p. 63).

The LPI-Observer responses for each of the case study participants was the basis for semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A – Interview Questions).
The researcher examined the LPI-Observer responses with each participant. Using the LPI in this way accomplished two things. First, the LPI provided a common typology, or construct of leadership, around which to develop a conversation. As explored in Chapter 2, leadership is a phenomenon with a wide variety of meanings. Secondly, breaking the general construct of leadership into more specific classes of behavior provided opportunities to discuss specific behavioral changes which could more readily be coded.

The researcher presented the two sets of responses and asked a series of open-ended questions to explore how their intervening cohort and advisory group participation may have contributed to any change in coworkers’ responses. Participants were encouraged to tell the story of their cohort experience. Responses were taped and transcribed. The intent of the interviews was to consider participants’ perceptions of the contribution of their cohort study groups to any shift in LPI profiles. As described by Maykut and Morehouse (1996), the goal was to discover themes which emerged after close analysis, leading to understanding of the contribution of cohort membership to individual leadership development.

Transcripts and interpretation of interviews were shared with participants to verify the accuracy of interpretations. These “member checks” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 27), are a key component of validation in qualitative inquiry. Interview data, along with field notes, were systematically analyzed. Krathwohl (1998) summarizes the process of analysis as having three phases which occur simultaneously but with shifting emphasis as the analysis progresses:
Observing – coming to the data for the first time, “the only time you come to that particular set fresh” (Krathwohl, p. 309). Key activities are reading, memoing, recording initial impressions, and beginning to look for patterns and themes;
- Coding – labeling themes and testing fit, recoding as necessary;
- Interpretation – synthesizing and organizing conclusions. This will be conducted participant by participant before seeking to combine participant data to form general conclusions. Krathwohl strongly suggests the use of matrices and other graphic organizers to facilitate spotting trends, missing data, and negative data (p. 316). Along with memos, these also provide an “audit trail” to provide a record of the process.

This qualitative evaluation examined the contribution of Duquesne IDPEL cohort participation to the school leadership practices of participants. The study was conducted in two phases: data collection and analysis describe collective changes in leadership practices of participants as observed by colleagues; in-depth, semi-structured interviews with representative cohort members help to understand how changes occur on an individual basis. As shown in the next chapter, combined results of these two phases extend our understanding of the role of cohort participation, and particularly the IDPEL iteration of cohorts, the advisory group, in the development of school leadership.
CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the contribution of Duquesne University IDPEL cohort participation to the development of professional practices of school leaders. In order to understand how IDPEL participation might influence change over time, while also evaluating the contribution of IDPEL program features to any change, the decision was made to divide the study into two phases.

Phase One Results

The first phase was designed to answer the first research question by describing how the leadership practices of IDPEL participants, as reported by previous and current colleagues, change over participants’ course of study.

As shown in Table 2, Change In LPI-Observer Means Pre- and Post-IDPEL, review of the LPI responses indicates that there is a negative change in observed leadership behavior for all participants across all five leadership practices identified by Kouzes and Posner. In this table, “pre” represents data from respondents who know the participant at their pre-IDPEL workplace; “post” summarizes data from respondent observers where the participant is currently employed.
Independent sample $t$-test analysis of these results show that changes in the five leadership practices for only one of the five participants were statistically significant ($p=0.05$).

Consequently, the answer to the first research question is that there is no indication of positive change in the leadership practices of these particular IDPEL participants, as defined by the Leadership Practices Inventory and reported by previous and current colleagues. However, this quantitative description was the first phase of this evaluation. Participant Jean Niebla described beginning to work on her doctorate “thinking it was academic and that was it.” Like other participants in the study, she went on to work for “four years on the level of the heart as well as the level of the mind.” Phase Two explored the qualitative aspects of the participants’ IDPEL experience.
Table 2

*Change In LPI-Observer Means Pre- and Post-IDPEL*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Five Leadership Practices</th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MTW</td>
<td>ISV</td>
<td>CTP</td>
<td>EOA</td>
<td>ETH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blunt</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.75</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>48.29</td>
<td>51.43</td>
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<td>-8.21</td>
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<td>.012**</td>
<td>0.04**</td>
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**p=0.05

Leadership Practice | Abbreviation
Modeling the Way     | MTW
Inspire a Shared Vision | ISV
Challenge the Process | CTP
Enable Others to Act  | EOA
Encourage the Heart   | ETH

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Phase Two Results

Qualitative interviews conducted with the five individual participants over a two-week period in May and June, 2004, quickly suggest why positive change in leadership practices may not be noted. Before reviewing this qualitative data and moving to propose answers to the second and third research questions, the five participants and their work situations need to be introduced to the reader.

David Blunt, a priest, is president of two Catholic high schools in suburban/rural Pennsylvania. As president of the schools he is responsible for the overall operation of the buildings, the budget, alumni and public relations, and meeting with the advisory councils. Principals at each school report to him. By way of illustration, he found that he was more able to relate his role to those of public school superintendents and central office administrators during his IDPEL coursework. He has been involved with Greenfield Catholic, the larger of the two schools, for over twelve years as a religious teacher, chaplain, administrator and president. The observers providing pre-IDPEL data for Father Blunt are members of that school community.

A few years ago, following the unpopular decision by Diocesan leadership to remove the president of Adolphus Catholic High School, Father Blunt also volunteered to take responsibility for that position. That smaller school is located about 30 miles distant from Greenfield and according to Blunt has always seen itself like the “stepchild” of the larger, more urban school. Observers providing post-IDPEL data are members of the Adolphus community.
Like Father Blunt, Jean Niebla completed her doctorate as a member of the Duquesne IDPEL cohort of 2003. For many years, Jean had been a teacher and staff development specialist. After beginning IDPEL, Jean became the successful principal of a large elementary school in a different rural district. Her pre-IDPEL observers are members of that elementary school community. District reorganization caused Jean to be furloughed. After protracted legal negotiations, Jean was placed in the first available position as assistant principal at the district’s high school. Jean’s post-IDPEL observers are colleagues and coworkers at that high school.

Chelsea York was a member of the Duquesne IDPEL cohort of 2000. Chelsea was employed by a large Intermediate Unit, a Pennsylvania cooperative school services organization serving school districts in three counties, for 31 years. She began as a teacher’s aide and worked her way through “everything except driving buses and the truck.” Before leaving the Intermediate Unit, Chelsea was Assistant Director of Special Education. Observers providing pre-IDPEL feedback are from this Intermediate Unit.

Chelsea is currently the Director of Curriculum for the Corinth Area Schools, a small suburban school district. She is the first person to hold that position in her district, and believes that in most districts the job description and work that she does would be accomplished by an Assistant Superintendent, a job title that is not used locally. Despite the recommendations of the administration, some members of the local school board have considered eliminating her position: having done without a curriculum director for many years, they do not
understand that much of her work is mandated by new state regulations. Post-IDPEL observations were received from members of the Corinth Area district.

Joni Blue completed coursework for her doctorate in 2002, but has not yet completed her dissertation. Joni is the principal of Box Canyon Middle School in the Box Canyon School District, located in a working-class river town where steel and coal industries once reigned. When Joni came to IDPEL, she was assistant high school principal in a different, more rural school district. She describes that school as supportive, “with a lot of experienced people that really took an interest in helping me become a really good principal.” People from that district are the source of Joni’s pre-IDPEL observations.

Joni has been an administrator in Box Canyon for three years. She describes Box Canyon, the source of her post-data, as significantly different:

This district is very corrupt. School board members are convicted felons. Board members have threatened my life... My office was broken into; files were taken. I had teachers that weren’t teaching. Teachers were assaulting students... I’ve had to have an attorney a couple of times to get (board members) to leave me alone.

When the fifth participant, Zoe Oates, began her IDPEL coursework she was Associate Director of Special Education in a geographically large rural district. That district, Lance Area, had what she describes as a welcoming administrative team, receptive to the demands of special education. Colleagues and coworkers in Lance Area provide Zoe’s pre-data. Prior to finishing her doctoral coursework, Zoe moved to East Monongahela School District, to take an
equivalent supervisory position. Post-data come from East Monongahela observers. Zoe describes East Monongahela as having the same number of students as Lance Area, but being more diverse, more suburban, with “more savvy parents” who demand more services and attention for their children’s needs.

In order to explore how these IDPEL participants perceive their leadership practices to have changed during their three-year course of studies and what contributions to change in professional practice they attribute to their IDPEL group experiences, each of the five participants was interviewed privately in a location of their choice. Interviews were semi-structured, built around the interview questions listed in Chapter Three. During each interview, an individualized selection of LPI items reflecting change from pre- to post-IDPEL was presented to the participant. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Post-interview analysis began with listening to the tapes while reading the transcriptions several times. This was done to become immersed in the experiences of the participants to help this researcher “be in” their worlds (Moustakas, 1995) and to suspend his own biases stemming from experience in a different IDPEL cohort. While listening, key notes were jotted and key words underlined, which evolved into a set of codes, or labels for the statements made during interviews. Codes were then pooled to define patterns that were shared across the five interview cases (Coffey & Atkinson). These patterns of response were labeled Explanation, Trajectory, and Contribution.
Explanation stems from the participants' review of the LPI results. None of the participants expressed surprise that LPI data had “gone down” or shown little change between pre- and post-observation. When reviewing the LPI data, several participants questioned a “halo effect” stemming from the fact that they are no longer present in the lives of the pre-IDPEL observers on a daily basis. As Zoe Oates laughed, “I’m not there in their faces anymore!”

Each participant left or maintained a legacy of success and friendships in their pre-IDPEL environment. They had spent time in their previous assignments and adopted practices that met the needs of their co-workers and colleagues. As Jean Niebla described it,

When I was there (in the pre-IDPEL assignment) I had a much more free reign to communicate with the staff. I called my newsletters “Niebla News” and I feel frustrated that this is not happening now at the high school level because I think it helped to connect me to the staff. And, I used to do frequent, at least monthly, faculty meetings and the new principal’s only done two.

Zoe Oates offered this typical explanation:

I think first the people at Lance Area were people that I had a 5-year relationship with. Whereas I’ve only been here a year and a half and it takes some time to do some relationship building, for people to really understand what you’re all about.

In addition to situational changes experienced by participants, a structural feature of the survey instrument may have contributed to diminishing reports
from observers. Observers using the LPI are to use a ten-point rating scale to answer the question, “How frequently does this person engage in the behavior described” (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Directions ask the observer to describe the extent to which the person actually engages in the behavior. Furthermore, if a particular statement does not apply, “it’s probably because you don’t see or experience the behavior. That means this person does not frequently engage in the behavior, at least around you. In that case, assign a rating of 3 or lower” (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

A review of the response forms indicates that many observers, both in the pre- and post-IDPEL groups did not closely follow these directions, rendering the responses unusable. Comments added to the papers included statements like, “This rating reflects the person and not the program you’re evaluating,” on an unusable rating form that was edited to add a score of zero. In many instances, it appears that observers were indeed “rating the person” by subjectively indicating their feelings about the individual, rather than providing objective feedback by describing the frequency with which the person engages in the listed behaviors. Consequently, there appears to be limited discriminant validity in this application of the LPI, both among the five leadership practices and between the pre- and post-IDPEL administrations.

What IDPEL represented to these five participants was developing the skills and mission to take on new challenges. However, as they took on new challenges, the comfort of their respondents seems to have diminished.
Sometimes, the decisions that lead to the participants’ arrival contributed to the tension. David Blunt describes his relationship with his new community:

They had a president and he left that position, and basically his leaving that position was not looked upon favorably by the faculty. So I was sort of... I looked like the man who shot Santa Claus. It’s been a challenge.

The label for the second pattern, *Trajectory*, is borrowed from the interview with Chelsea York: “I’m a Vygotskian. I truly believe that we are on a trajectory and that what happens to us experientially affects that trajectory of our development.”

Each of the participants provides significant description of personal change over the course of his or her IDPEL studies. Indeed, participants report a causal relationship between growth and mission. As participants grew in confidence and skills, both technical and social, they report developing a stronger sense of mission and willingness to accept workplace challenges. A simple figure illustrates the trajectory reported by participants:
As Zoe Oates described the linkage,

IDPEL helped to give me the confidence to seek out more challenging kinds of opportunities. I felt that I had more knowledge, more information and I knew more about how to be a leader. I have more tools in my little bag of tricks related to how I can bring about some change or get people to do things that I may not have had in the past.

As a consequence, Oates, like the other participants, moved to another job where she perceived the challenge and potential rewards to be greater.

Several participants cited the impact of specific class texts on career decisions. Joni Blue said,
Because of that book I read, *Savage Inequalities*, (Kozol, 1991), I thought that I really needed to make a difference. (My previous district) had everything. I’m from this area. I went to elementary school and my parents still live in the area and I wanted to make a difference. I really did. Consequently, she took the job in Box Canyon, a high-risk school district with greater needs and fewer resources. Each of the five participants describes the utilization of skills and resources to carry on in new positions, whether the challenge was one they sought, or one that was imposed, as in the case of Jean Niebla: “Had it (the furlough) happened before IDPEL, I wouldn’t be an administrator.”

While the emergent themes of Growth and Mission provide an answer to Research Question Two, Research Question Three is best answered from within the pattern of data labeled *Contributors*. This data set describes the influences on trajectory – the pattern and result of personal change while participating in the Duquesne IDPEL.

Five contributing factors were identified by the participants as exerting influence on trajectory: experience, IDPEL content, IDPEL instructors, the IDPEL cohort, and their IDPEL advisory groups. These influences on trajectory could contribute at different times or simultaneously, with different degrees of power.
The influencing factor experience had two components, the work experience gained while simultaneously studying for the doctorate, and the individual experiences that shaped participants before entering doctoral studies.
For Chelsea York, the fact that her father was a Duquesne alumnus was significant.

I started to think, ‘Hey, I could have the Big D ring,’ because that is what we always called my dad’s ring... So my beginning was an assurance that I would get to the end, but my ending was based on the reason I began, and that was my father.

Father Blunt, Joan Niebla and Joni Blue described the application of IDPEL coursework to make sense of and to manage challenges and disappointments that occurred in their workplaces while they were enrolled. In some instances, workplace challenges became the topic of coursework or class discussions, further entwining the influence of experience and course content.

Father Blunt was specific about the influence of IDPEL content and classroom theory to his practice as he added responsibility for Adolphus School to his resume:

When I had the initial meeting to say that I’m going to be in this role, I basically looked at my experience at IDPEL to ask, “What do I want to be my initial impression upon this faculty?” I think I took that point very seriously. I deliberately created like an outline of what to say and at the heart of that was basically, “You know I’m here with you. We’re going to respect certainly what this schools represented but together we are going to make this school what it is.” Anytime I have seen someone pick up on that philosophy (of shared responsibility) in a faculty meeting or even socially, I made it a point to acknowledge their work as well as their
efforts. I think IDPEL has made me more sensitive or more attuned, perhaps, conscious (of) what that does to build esteem in another colleague. I used to say, “Well, that’s their job,” whereas now I think IDPEL made me realize that you want to not only nurture but reinforce behaviors that further the mission of the school. (That is) the whole idea about a clear philosophy of leadership. I know that I brought that into Adolphus (from IDPEL). Any time the faculty meets, any time I’ve had interaction, I’ve never wavered. They know that there are certain principles and standards that have been established.

Several of the participants cited the specific contribution to growth of individual IDPEL instructors, faculty, advisory group leaders, and mentors. These individuals provided not only instruction, but also personal support and guidance. Jean Niebla described how the personal responses from the program director, Dr. Helen Sobehart, gave her direction as she struggled at work. Others described the influence of their statistics professors, who emphasized the use of statistical analysis in on-the-job decision-making. All described a sense of legacy with faculty, the knowledge that they feel welcome to call upon their former professors for guidance or assistance.

Though important, the influence of experience, course content and instructors on the growth trajectory of participants can be anticipated for any graduate program in leadership. Research Question Three asks about the influence on trajectory of two critical aspects of IDPEL, cohort structure and advisory groups. Henderson (1995) cited the desire of IDPEL program designers
to engage cohort members in the work of leadership “and not to simply describe leadership theory while being immersed in didactic, non-involving practices antithetical to effective leadership behavior” (p. 127). A community of scholars, evidenced in the cohort and advisory groups, was to be a cornerstone of IDPEL (Henderson, 1994).

From the perspective of the participants in this research, the group aspects of IDPEL were indeed the most significant contributors to their individual growth. While each pointed to the influences on trajectory of experience, instruction and content, experiences in groups were meaningful contributors to trajectory while actively engaged in coursework and memorable upon reflection some years later. However, the five participants found value in different aspects of the group components of IDPEL. These aspects can be represented as Whole Cohort, Blending, and Advisory Group.

For some, the significant experiences were in the cohort-as-a-whole. Small groups were perceived as being essentially convenience groupings for the purposes of distributing assignments and advising loads. The cohort offered a secure group within which to form alliances and seek out expertise. Nonetheless, the contributions were invaluable, as illustrated by Zoe Oates:

By being in a cohort of 35 people with everyone striving to be a leader in some way, all very strong personalities, that program taught you how to listen to different points of view. Because, other people had passion about what they were saying and so it gave you that opportunity to hear from a number of different perspectives.
Chelsea York echoed the idea:

The cohort really provided me the opportunity to sit along side people who had greater knowledge than me and to move a step ahead of where I was in my own learning, even though I didn’t step as far as they (were) but I was able to move with them in my learning because of their knowledge and their skills and abilities.

For some individuals, the stress of small group work evolved from the expectation of collaboration, the idea of blending work for an assignment and then allowing the group’s work to speak for each individual. As Chelsea York stated, “When the collaboration was over the group still spoke for you. I don’t always agree that the group represents the individual’s learning.”

The preference of some individuals would have been to allow groups to collect informally around expertise, interest, and common intent. Instead, for these participants, awareness emerged over time that they had been assigned to groups according to their perceived strengths and weaknesses. The decision-making rationale used to assign advisory groups appears to have been obscure to these participants, leading them to second-guess the program administrators and even to request assignment to different advisory groups.

Blending is the label assigned to the pattern of data representing comfort moving between the cohort-as-a-whole and the small advisory group. In retrospect, David Blunt describes learning from both the cohort and the advisory group:
Learning was more evident when we were more focused on an assignment, a cooperative project within the advisory group. However, when the general class met and had input from an instructor I certainly have very clear memories... of learning with the other members of the Cohort at large.

Value was added to individual learning by moving between the advisory group and the entire cohort. This was especially evident to David Blunt as small group assignments were presented to the larger group:

Any time you would do an assignment or do a presentation you always felt as though it was our presentation. It wasn’t just mine. I just think that whole idea, that then when you get feedback from the Cohort or the lead instructor or whoever, that you realize “wow, this is just not me!” It was important for everyone to have been recognized for those efforts.

In fact, as explained by Zoe Oates, experience within the advisory group defined the cohort:

The cohort experience related to having to work with six people on projects. It wasn’t me going off on my own and creating something on my own. I had to learn to sometimes be a leader and sometimes be a follower but work within that specific advisory group for those projects. Again it’s helping everyone within that cohort to grow and develop together. It is more or less bringing everyone along together.

(When thinking about IDPEL) I probably imagine more my advisory group because I worked closest with them but I did have support
from other folks in the larger cohort as well and I knew that I could go any one....I felt comfortable going to any one of them in anything I need to do and hope they felt the same way. If they had a question about (my area of expertise) or maybe it wasn’t even really related to IDPEL they were able to use the network. I thought I had 36 people that I could pick up the phone and call at any point in time but that advisory group they became like my family because we spent so much time together.

That sense of family reverberates in the data from those who align IDPEL memory and benefit with their advisory groups. Advisory groups were a source of satisfying personal relationships and professional development. For example, work within the groups offered the opportunity to develop intimate knowledge of the others’ expertise. Zoe Oates describes this phenomenon:

I learned more about school psychology (from a school psychologist in the group). I learned more about what it was like to be a human resources director. I learned more about what it was like to be a principal and I learned more about what it is like to be an instructor at a college... So it evolved beyond the coursework or the projects we had to do.

The life experiences that happened concurrently with IDPEL coursework were also shared, celebrated, and mourned with the advisory groups. Job changes, marriages, births, deaths: all of the participants marked on those events within their advisory groups. While, in retrospect, the cohort-as-a-whole might be recalled as a good source for networking, the closeness of advisory groups and how well they worked together remains a key memory for several participants.
Summary

The key issue underlying this dissertation study concerns the contribution of group work to professional practice. Whether in the larger cohort, in small groups, or in moving between the two, these participants clearly mark a positive influence of group participation on their professional trajectories. In terms of learning, contact between group members often outweighed content. As Jean Niebla related, her advisory group taught her to successfully complete a project with diverse individuals. This was tested when called upon to work in a convenience group on a specific assignment, with individuals who did not immediately cooperate. She described the result, “I don’t remember what the content was, but I’ll never forget the interaction. We had to pull out everything we learned about conflict resolution,” in order to complete the project. For Joni Blue, that skill transfers to work in schools.

For this advisory group to work, all of us had to be really patient and tolerant, and you know I had never had to do anything like that before. It got so bad that (program director) Helen Sobehart had to call us all in and have a specialist come in and work with us because there was so much friction. But it was a good learning experience because in any job that you do you’re more than likely going to have to deal with friction like that.

The rich pools of data provided by these participants revealed themes of growth and mission. The data demonstrated that growth in skills and confidence led to clarification of mission and acceptance of challenges in careers and within the workplace. The personal line of growth can be viewed as a trajectory,
influenced by experience, IDPEL content, IDPEL faculty, and the contributions of both the cohort and small advisory groups.

Pursuit of a doctorate is a point on an individual trajectory of growth. For these five participants, the end of collaborative coursework marked the end of shared experience and the beginning of individual work on the dissertation, the final phase in pursuit of the doctorate. Leaving the security of regular meetings was a challenge, part of a process perhaps best understood in metaphoric terms as a heroic journey. This journey will be explored in the following chapter.
Figure 3.

Result of Qualitative Data Analysis

Growth in skills and confidence. Clarification of Mission and acceptance of challenges in career or workplace

Influences on Trajectory:
- Experience
- IDPEL Content
- IDPEL Instructors
- IDPEL Cohorts
- IDPEL Advisory Groups
  - Whole Cohort
  - Blending
  - Advisory Group
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Introduction

“Qualitative methods are often used in evaluations because they tell the program’s story by capturing and communicating the participants’ stories” (Patton, 2002, p.10).

Since the earliest days of the Duquesne IDPEL, the process of working toward program completion has been described as “The Journey to the Doctorate” (Kinsey & Sheahan, 1996). The five participants in this study were all involved in the journey, and contributed their stories to the evolving story of Duquesne University’s doctoral program in educational leadership. Their individual stories represent growth in confidence and skills leading to a deepened sense of mission and acceptance of greater challenges in their careers. Changes to their trajectories of growth were influenced by their experiences outside the program, their university faculty, course content, and their interactions with other students as cohort and advisory group members.

Beyond describing and seeking to understand the journey these particular participants undertook, this evaluation study seeks to contribute to understanding of how IDPEL cohort and advisory group participation contributes to the growth of educational leadership skills. Does the grouping of students pursuing the doctorate as a cohort offer a laboratory for leadership?

Based upon the responses of these five participants, the simple answer is “Yes.” For these five individuals, the group contributed to their development of
leadership skills and to their confidence that they could make a difference in their schools and school districts.

Care must be taken to understand that this qualitative evaluation does not suggest that educational leadership programs which do not involve intentional groups of students fail to provide opportunities for skill development. No comparison between IDPEL and any other doctoral program in educational leadership was undertaken. In fact, no descriptive or analytical statistical proof is offered to demonstrate in empirical terms that participation in cohort or advisory groups makes a difference in the development of participants’ skills and knowledge. Finally, this study does not claim to demonstrate that there is any relationship between these school administrators’ development and the achievement of students in their school and organizations (See, for example, Leithwood et al., 1996).

A Model

What this study does provide is evidence that work in the leadership laboratory is a bittersweet journey best shared with others. As seen in Chapter 2, an explanation of why this is true might be found in social psychology and linguistics. Wells (2000) provides a model, “The Spiral of Knowing,” that describes how humans construct knowledge and develop understanding. In Wells’s spiral, engagement in activity provides experience, the foundation for knowledge and understanding. Information is added to experience from external sources, either directly through observation or through oral or recorded language. Information-enriched experience is then transformed through
“knowledge building... the sort of dialogue I have been calling ‘progressive discourse.’” This sort of dialogue is focused on answering questions that arise from shared inquiry or shared practice, or aspects of an individual’s particular question or problem within that inquiry. The result is understanding, the fourth step in the cycle. The spiral effect is developed by linking cycles: understanding attained through knowledge-building upon information about experience provides the basis for the next cycle.

Wells, like Vygotsky (1978), Bandura (1977), and Bruffee (1999) find the critical component of this spiral to be the dialogue contributing to knowledge-building. As Wells describes the work of dialogue, individual participants add to the meaning of others as they build their own understanding “through the constructive and creative effort... (that)... is required to listen responsively and critically to the contributions of others” (2000). The cohort and the advisory group first provide tools for building knowledge and then become tools for building knowledge, tools that are manipulated and modified by each group during the course of the doctoral program. Ilyenkov (1974) described this type of activity that “directly masters the object,” in this case the distributed leadership of a group, as “compelling us to reckon with it more than with words or with ‘schemas’ that ‘visualize’ those words”. The cohort is a collective activity system, that is, a collaboration between individuals doing different tasks, but oriented toward the same purpose, bound by a set of accepted rules of conduct (Engeström, n.d.).
A Metaphor

Wells’s spiral expands on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 to provide a model of how and why purposeful group activity in the cohort contributes to individual leadership development. What the IDPEL journey entails can be described by a metaphor from myth and literature, The Hero’s Journey. The initiate on the journey to the doctorate leaves the condition in which s/he was living and, through a series of challenges and in the company of others, is transformed into a more skilled and knowledgeable expert, bearing a new degree as a mark of new status within the community. Drawing upon a paradigm that predates psychology, Brown and Moffett (1999), describe these stages in the quest:

- Breakdown and the Call: the journey begins with the realization that only fundamental change, effort or sacrifice will suffice to provide solutions. Here, initiates “put on the mask” like the Lone Ranger, by becoming doctoral students.

- Descent into Chaos: Like entering the Haunted Forest, IDPEL participants take on the journey without knowing the way to balance work, living, loving, and caring with coursework.

- The Heroic Quest: In pursuit of the doctorate, the initiate must undergo a series of challenges. Each course, each professor, each new assignment builds skill and confidence toward admission to scholarly ranks.
- **Gurus and Alliances**: The cohort group is the necessary source of mentoring, aid, support and knowledge-building.

- **Trials, Tests, and Initiations**: Here, the IDPEL participant must “slay the dragon” by completing the dissertation. By and large, this work is done alone, as the ultimate academic test.

- **Insight and Transformation**: This is the point where participants, as newly minted Doctors of Education, rededicate themselves to living and working in the world with new skills and knowledge, until the next journey.

*Figure 4.*

*Brown and Moffett (1999) illustrate the Hero’s Journey as a cycle.*
While this cycle – drawn from epic literature – is used by the authors as a metaphor to illustrate the engagement of educators in bringing about systemic change, with a modification it also serves as a metaphor for the experiences of study participants within IDPEL.

One journey – the IDPEL doctoral quest, with all its component parts – is nested within another journey; the simultaneous quest to live and work as practicing educators, colleagues, brothers, spouses, children, and parents. The participants in this study describe the co-existence and co-experience of these journeys, and marvel at the mediating influence of the dual experiences. In reality, the boundaries between the functions are thin: one journey feeds and informs the other.

The energy created by these nested journeys radiates contributor experiences for colleagues and co-workers of participants. Participants describe their roles in supporting the trajectories of other people, helping to create learning communities, large and small, in their schools and districts. The IDPEL experience of interwoven influence on trajectory is replicated as participants contribute to, or “launch” the growth of people outside of IDPEL. As the task of the hero in epic literature is to return home to provide leadership of the community, the task of the educational leader is to create conditions for sustaining change in schools (Lambert, 2003).

The pattern of contribution to growth within IDPEL may be represented as a series of interwoven individual experiences (See Figure 5). In this illustration, the trajectory of each participant is influenced by the contributions of experience,
IDPEL course content and instructors, and large and small group experiences, and also by the experience of another individual. These discrete individual experiences then contribute to participants’ workplaces (See Figure 6). Here, the potentiality of launching is seen. The effect contributing to growth enables the development of another, perhaps across a degree of separation. This model depicts how a leader>IDPEL participant, elevated by the co-experience with another cohort member, in turn elevates co-workers.

Figure 5.

*Interwoven individual experiences within the cohort.*
The contribution of IDPEL cohort experiences to the workplace.

The mechanism for this transmittal is explained in the mediation psychology of Vygotsky as described by Wells, in Activity Theory (see, for example, Engeström, n.d.) and transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978).

Considering the emotional impact on IDPEL founders of a presentation by an IDPEL advisory group at Oxford University, Sobehart (2001) describes the transmittal of transformational leadership from one organizational “generation” to the next as transcendent leadership, which “bursts the power” (p. 47) by leaving a mark across time and space. In this regard, the laboratory for
leadership is seen as effective when practice in the cohort setting is replicated in
practice in other settings where participants are members.

When this occurs, Sobehart (2001) describes the effect as having taken
“transformational leadership one step beyond, in the truest spiritual sense, (to)
engage in relationships which inspire, uplift, and fill the soul” (p. 46). Fry (2003)
refers to this transcendental extension of the leader into social groups as
extending the spirit of the leader, and enabling the development of participants.
In describing a causal leadership model for organizational transformation,
*Spiritual Leadership*, Fry describes the “confluence” of two major trends – the
search for meaning in the workplace, and the need for value-based, ethical
leadership. Fry finds the model to be inclusive of other modern theories that seek
to describe leadership for learning organizations. However, he calls for “research
on several fronts... to establish the validity of spiritual leadership theory before it
should be widely applied as a model of organizational/professional development
to foster systemic change and transformation” (p. 721).

As a Catholic university committed to the development of heart, mind, and
spirit, Duquesne University’s IDPEL is ideally situated to further explore the
development of spiritual leadership theory. The participants in this present
research describe expanding individual potential, first in the cohort and then
through others to obtaining organizational goals in the workplace. Along with
the following suggestions for future research, further evaluation focused upon the
impact of IDPEL participation on transcendent spiritual leadership practices

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would be invaluable to understanding the full nature of the contribution of IDPEL to organizational outcomes in the field.

**A Map: Implication and Direction for Future Research**

Qualitative evaluation reveals rich affirmation of the IDPEL experience not revealed in the descriptive quantitative phase of the investigation. For the participants in this study, IDPEL, including the structural components of cohort and advisory groups, has been an important contributor to their professional and personal growth and development. This study demonstrates the importance of methodological and data triangulation in summative evaluation (Patton, 2002). Without the qualitative perspective of the participants, it would have seemed readily apparent that no growth in leadership could be attributed to IDPEL. In their responses to interview questions, the participants revealed the concept of trajectory – a path of growth and development – and identified the positive contribution of IDPEL cohort and advisory groups to that line. The participants acknowledged and explained the decreasing recognition of their leadership in their post-IDPEL workplaces as a reaction to the recency of their accession to their positions, and as resistance to their roles as change agents.

This leads to discussion of another important direction for future evaluation of IDPEL and other educational leadership programs. As Leithwood, Riedlinger, Bauer and Jantzi (2003) note, evaluations such as this one, while describing participants’ perceptions about a program’s contribution to their work, do not positively answer questions about the programs’ effects on practice in schools. This study shows that IDPEL participants attribute positive changes
in leadership to participation in the cohort and advisory groups, but does not provide the quantitative evidence sought by some critics of leadership programs (Hess, 2003; McCarthy, 2002). Whether or not and how the contribution to leadership practices of programmatic features such as cohorts and advisory groups can be assessed quantitatively is a challenging question (McCarthy, 2002). Echoing field theory applied to social systems (Wheatly, 1999), Leithwood et al. conclude in their assessment of the effect of a leadership development program on student achievement, “plausible evidence of effect” may be the appropriate standard of evidence for determining benefit, since “certainty of effects is an unrealistic standard for program evaluations” (Leithwood et al., 2003). True longitudinal data regarding the leadership practices of participants is needed to assess the impact of program components of IDPEL and other leadership programs. This study demonstrates that multiphase inquiry collecting different types of data can be an effective evaluation research methodology.

Finally, in an effort to recreate longitudinal data about leadership practices, this study only invited participation from individuals who had changed jobs. Further longitudinal research needs to be conducted *in situ*, to determine how the leadership practices of participants in IDPEL or other graduate programs evolve over time as perceived by colleagues and coworkers who remain with them for the duration. If the ultimate goal of a heroic journey is to return home, to empower one’s people, evolving leadership may best be identified and described by those who continue to consent to be led.


graduate students. Unpublished dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park.


APPENDIX A

Interview Questions
Interview Questions

1. Describe how you came to IDPEL.
2. Describe your cohort.
3. Tell me about your advisory group.
4. Tell me about the place you worked prior to IDPEL.
5. Tell me about the place you work now.
6. (Review 360 evaluation/LPI feedback from pre-IDPEL employment)
7. (Review 360 evaluation/LPI feedback from post-IDPEL employment)
8. How would you describe the difference (if any) in 360/LPI feedback?
9. Describe how your IDPEL experience has contributed to any change in the pre and post-IDPEL 360 feedback.
10. How would you describe the contribution of your IDPEL experience to your leadership practice?
11. Describe how your experience with the entire cohort has contributed to any change in the pre and post-IDPEL 360 feedback.
12. How would you describe the contribution of the entire cohort to your leadership practice?
13. Describe how your advisory group experience has contributed to any change in the pre and post-IDPEL 360 feedback.
14. How would you describe the contribution of your advisory group to your leadership practice?
APPENDIX B

Research Design
Research Design

Survey Phase

- Identify IDPEL cohort members working as school leaders
- Identify members who changed jobs
- Send invitation to participate, informed consent
- Identify 3 – 4 observers per cohort member, from both previous and present job locations
- Receive postal addresses and email addresses of observers
- Mail invitations to participate and informed consent
- Compile email addresses of all observers
- Send online LPI to all observers
- Receive data
- Data analysis and summation

Case Studies

- Identify representative individuals for case study interviews
- Send invitation to participate, informed consent
- Conduct semi-structured interviews
- Data transcription and analysis, intra-case
- Member checks

More interviews?

Inter-case analysis

Summation
APPENDIX C

Sample Letter to Participants
Sample Letter to Participants

date

Address

Dear

My IDPEL dissertation seeks to evaluate the contribution of IDPEL participation to school leadership practice.

I need your help to complete this project.

I am looking for members of the Pittsburgh ’00 and Pittsburgh ’03 cohorts who meet three criteria:

1. Who are working as school leaders;
2. Who changed jobs within one year, either before or after, of beginning IDPEL coursework; and
3. Who are willing to identify three to five co-workers from both the previous and current workplaces who might be willing to take 15 minutes to complete a survey describing your on-the-job leadership practices.

I am compiling data describing how leadership practices of IDPEL cohort members change over time – hence the need for names of people you worked with in the past, and those you work with now. Following the compilation and analysis of that data, I will be looking for a few individuals to provide me with in-depth qualitative information about cohort and advisory group experiences.

That, however, is getting ahead of myself: do you meet the three criteria above? Can you identify a few co-workers from your past and present places of employment? If so, please look to the remainder of the packet. If not, thanks for your consideration.

Please call me at 717-477-1123, x 3025, or email pfdill@ship.edu with any questions.

Sincerely,

Phillip Diller
IDPEL ’02 at Shippensburg
APPENDIX D

Instructions for Potential Study Participants
Instructions for Potential Study Participants

If you can answer “yes” to all three of these questions, you can participate in this study

1. Are you working as a school leader: district administration, supervisors, principals, assistant principals?
2. Did you change jobs within one year, either before or after, of beginning IDPEL coursework?
3. Are you willing to identify three to five co-workers from both the previous and current workplaces who might be willing to take 15 minutes to complete a survey describing your on-the-job leadership practices?

Good!

Please read the attached informed consent form on Duquesne letterhead, sign it, and return it to me along with the list below:

Co-workers from my previous place of employment:

Name                        Contact address

(These should be supervisors, subordinates – anyone who could frankly describe your leadership practices. I will be sending them a letter, an informed consent form, and a very brief Leadership Practices Inventory, which should only take 8 – 14 minutes to complete. That’s it! Their responses will be anonymous, and only reported as part of composite data)

Co-workers from my current place of employment:

Name                        Contact address

Please return this form along with the informed consent form in the SASE.
APPENDIX E

Sample Letter to Respondent
[Your present/former coworker (merge name)] has nominated you to describe his/her leadership behaviors.

This survey, the Leadership Practices Inventory, takes between 8 and 14 minutes to complete.

With (merge name) in mind, please take 8-14 minutes right now to complete the survey. Return it along with the attached Informed Consent form (on Duquesne letterhead) to me in the attached SASE.

Your response will help us to better understand how group participation during graduate study in educational leadership translates into practice on the job. As such, you are providing a very valuable service to leadership development knowledge. The information you provide will be kept anonymous – it will be compiled with other responses, not to evaluate your co-worker, but to evaluate the Duquesne University program in which he/she participated.

Many thanks for your prompt attention.

Should you have any questions, please call me at 717-477-1123, x3025, or email pfdill@ship.edu.

Sincerely,

Phillip Diller
APPENDIX F

Sample Consent for Participants, Phase I
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY – PARTICIPANT, Phase I

TITLE: Duquesne University IDPEL: A Laboratory for Leadership?

INVESTIGATOR: Phillip Diller
222 North Prince Street
Shippensburg, PA  17257
Phone: 717-477-1123 x 3025
Home: 717-532-9144
Email: pfdill@comcast.net

ADVISOR: Dr. Helen Sobehart
Duquesne University
Phone: 416-396-4525

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Ed.D. degree in educational leadership at Duquesne University. All funding is the responsibility of the investigator.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate the contribution of IDPEL cohort participation to the on-the-job leadership practices of school leaders.

This is the only request that will be made of you during this phase of the study: several participants may be invited to consent to further qualitative interviews.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: You will provide the names of individuals from your current and previous places of employment who will subsequently be invited to anonymously provide descriptions of your leadership behaviors by completing the 30-item Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes and Posner, 2003). Response data from current and previous coworkers will be compiled and will not be reported.
individually. It is possible that the respondents you name will seek to discuss the instrument with you and or others: this is the only risk to you. The only benefit to you will be the opportunity to contribute to knowledge of leadership development and the improvement of IDPEL.

**COMPENSATION:** You will not be compensated for your participation. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you. An envelope is provided for return of your response to the investigator.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Your name will appear on the research instruments (LPI) to be completed by coworkers whom you nominate to describe your leadership practices. However, no identity will be made in the data analysis. All written materials and consent forms will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home. Your response(s) will only appear in descriptive data summaries. All materials will be destroyed at the completion of the research.

**RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:** You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS:** A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT:** I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board (412-396-6326).

Participant’s Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Researcher’s Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

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APPENDIX G

Sample Consent for Observers
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY – OBSERVER, Phase I

TITLE: Duquesne University IDPEL: A Laboratory for Leadership?

INVESTIGATOR: Phillip Diller
222 North Prince Street
Shippensburg, PA 17257
Phone: 717-477-1123 x 3025
Home: 717-532-9144
Email: pfdill@comcast.net

ADVISOR: Dr. Helen Sobehart
Duquesne University
Phone: 416-396-4525

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Ed.D. degree in educational leadership at Duquesne University. All funding is the responsibility of the investigator.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate the contribution of IDPEL cohort participation to the on-the-job leadership practices of school leaders.

This is the only request that will be made of you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: You will anonymously provide information about the leadership behavior of a current or previous coworker by completing the 30-item Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes and Posner, 2003). Response data will be compiled and will not be reported individually. It is possible that the participant coworker will seek to discuss the instrument with you. This is the only risk to you. The only benefit to you will be the opportunity to contribute to
knowledge of leadership development and the improvement of IDPEL.

COMPENSATION: You will not be compensated for your participation. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you. A stamped envelope is provided for return of your response to the investigator.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your name will not appear on the research instruments (LPI). Furthermore, no identity will be made in the data analysis. All written materials and consent forms will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home. Your response(s) will only appear in descriptive data summaries. All materials will be destroyed at the completion of the research.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT: I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board (412-396-6326).

Participant’s Signature __________________________
Date __________________________

Researcher’s Signature __________________________
Date __________________________
APPENDIX H

Sample Consent for Participants, Phase II
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY – PARTICIPANT, Phase II

TITLE: Duquesne University IDPEL: A Laboratory for Leadership?

INVESTIGATOR: Phillip Diller
222 North Prince Street
Shippensburg, PA 17257
Phone: 717-477-1123 x 3025
Home: 717-532-9144
Email: pfdill@comcast.net

ADVISOR: Dr. Helen Sobehart
Duquesne University
Phone: 416-396-4525

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Ed.D. degree in educational leadership at Duquesne University. All funding is the responsibility of the investigator.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to further participate in a research project that seeks to investigate the contribution of IDPEL cohort participation to the on-the-job leadership practices of school leaders.

This is the final request that will be made of you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: You will participate in semi-structured interview(s) with the principal investigator. The interview(s) will be audio taped and transcribed for analysis. As part of the interview, you will review anonymous, composite feedback from current and previous coworkers. This confidential 360-degree feedback may or may not be of benefit to you, however, there is no risk associated with it. The only benefit to you will be the opportunity to contribute to knowledge of leadership development and the improvement of IDPEL.
COMPENSATION: You will not be compensated for your participation. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you. An envelope is provided for return of your response to the investigator.

CONFIDENTIALITY: No individual identification will be made in the data analysis and review. All written materials, audiotapes, working transcripts, and consent forms will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home. When tapes are transcribed, all personal identifiers of you as well as anyone you talk about will be deleted. Your response(s) may be reported anonymously in interview summaries: your identity and the identities of your present and previous employers will be protected. All materials will be destroyed at the completion of the research.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT: I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board (412-396-6326).

___________________________________  ___________________________
Participant’s Signature    Date

___________________________________  ___________________________
Researcher’s Signature    Date
APPENDIX I

Leadership Practice by *LPI-Observer* Items
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Practice</th>
<th>LPI-Observer Item Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the Heart</td>
<td>5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K

*LPI-Observer* (Kouzes and Posner, 2003)
INSTRUCTIONS
You are being asked by the person whose name appears at the top of the next page to assess his or her leadership behaviors. Below the person’s name you will find thirty statements describing various leadership behaviors. Please read each statement carefully, and using the RATING SCALE on the right, ask yourself:

“How frequently does this person engage in the behavior described?”

When selecting your response to each statement:

- Be realistic about the extent to which this person actually engages in the behavior.
- Be as honest and accurate as you can be.
- DO NOT answer in terms of how you would like to see this person behave or in terms of how you think he or she should behave.
- DO answer in terms of how this person typically behaves on most days, on most projects, and with most people.
- Be thoughtful about your responses. For example, giving this person 10s on all items is most likely not an accurate description of his or her behavior. Similarly, giving someone all 1s or all 5s is most likely not an accurate description either. Most people will do some things more or less often than they do other things.
- If you feel that a statement does not apply, it’s probably because you don’t see or experience the behavior. That means this person does not frequently engage in the behavior, at least around you. In that case, assign a rating of 3 or lower.

For each statement, decide on a response and then record the corresponding number in the box to the right of the statement. After you have responded to all thirty statements, go back through the LPI one more time to make sure you have responded to each statement. Every statement must have a rating.

The RATING SCALE runs from 1 to 10. Choose the number that best applies to each statement.

1 = Almost Never
2 = Rarely
3 = Seldom
4 = Once in a While
5 = Occasionally
6 = Sometimes
7 = Fairly Often
8 = Usually
9 = Very Frequently
10 = Almost Always

When you have completed the LPI-Observer, please return it to:


Thank you.

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Name of Leader: 

I (the Observer) am this leader’s (Check one): ☐ Manager ☐ Direct Report ☐ Co-Worker ☐ Other

To what extent does this leader typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement.

He or She:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Seeks out challenging opportunities that test he/she own skills and abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Praises people for a job well done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Spends time and energy making certain that the people he/she works with adhere to the principles and standards that we have agreed on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Actively listens to diverse points of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Follows through on promises and commitments he/she makes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Treats others with dignity and respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Asks “What can we learn?” when things don’t go as expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Supports the decisions that people make on their own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Paints the &quot;big picture&quot; of what we aspire to accomplish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Makes certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Experiments and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Gives the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix L

Permission to use *LPI-Observer*