Assessment In Principal Preparation

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Assessment Experience:

- Director of the North Carolina Assessment and Development Center
- Director of the National Association of Secondary School Principal’s Assessment and Development Center
- Author of 5 Articles and Numerous Presentations on Assessment Methodology
Assessment In Principal Preparation

- Why do we do it?
- How do we do it?
- What have we done to make it better?
- How do we know it works?
- What have we learned?
“In God we Trust...everyone else needs to bring their data”

We need to know what out students can do at the beginning of their program. (They need to know too.)
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(Why we do it)

The Economist reported

“…there is growing anxiety in America about higher education. A degree has always been considered the key to a good job. But rising fees and increasing student debt, combined with shrinking financial and educational returns, are undermining at least the perception that university is a good investment.”

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Regional (Southern Association of Schools and Colleges SASC) and national accreditation (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation CAPE) require outcome measures that show program’s impact on candidate knowledge and skills as well as evidence of program continuous improvement.

Providing data and analysis on leadership skills is perceived as a value added part of our preparation program.
We use assessment methodology because it adds value for our candidates, meets accreditation expectations and provides data we need to prepare candidates.
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(How we do it.)

The objectives of the course are:

• to help candidates understand their leadership strengths and weaknesses at the beginning of the program,

• To provide a language of leadership that could be used throughout the program,

• To enable them to develop an informed leadership skills development plan and

• To teach them data driven analysis skills.
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Design components:

- In-Baskets and meeting simulations
- Partnership with ECU Medical School Clinical Practice Lab
  
  Trained role players, lab setting, etc.
- Candidates trained to assess written and video taped behaviors. (via Blackboard [www.ecu.edu](http://www.ecu.edu))
- Reports reviewed by trained peer and professor.
- Reports used to plan development for two year program.
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(How we have improved it)

Learning by doing:

We have added a well trained role player (teacher) through partnership with ECU Medical School.

Refined the training for assessing based on experiences (more feedback on early reports, more pressure on peer assessment, more simulation reality in lab, etc.)

Adjusting key behaviors based on repeated administrations.
A study was designed to look at our assessment course and answer questions about its value in an era of limited resource, declining enrollments, and across the board reductions.
The survey asked responders to rate (5 point scale) from strongly disagree to strongly agree how well the course met its objectives and has been useful to them.

Quantitative data collected indicated that over 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives had been met and that the course was an important part of their preparation.

Respondents were also provide opportunities to comment.
The Department of Educational Leadership at ECU continues to work to make our principal preparation program as effective as possible. For that reason, we need your help. LEED 6901, the first course you took in the MSA program, was designed to acquaint you with some leadership skills that are essential for effective school leadership. We also wanted to help you better understand how to use data to evaluate your leadership skills at the beginning of the program. We hoped you would develop a skills development plan which you would use throughout your MSA program to further develop your leadership skills.

Now we want to know how we did (are doing) and what you think about that experience. We want to know how useful the assessment, assessment report and the development you planned has been as you prepared for, and continue to grow, as a school leader.

- A short survey has been created in Survey Monkey at....
Of those who responded to the survey over 85% also included comments. Those comments provided insights into their feelings about their experience in the course.
Typical responses included the following:

“This is one of the most valuable classes in the program. Every administrator I speak to asks me if I have taken the course and its simulation yet. This is the last course that should be removed from the curriculum. “

“I learned a lot about myself during this course. I was able to see my actions and listen to myself. It was uncomfortable to experience but I am better because of it. You should not remove this course from the curriculum. “
“This class was so good!!!! It was hard work but worth it. I have never gone through anything like this before. The needs. I would make one suggestion....to warn people that have gone through the simulation to not say a word to someone about to go through the simulation. I have a friend that was warned and because of it was not himself in the simulation. I think he cheated himself of a better experience. I learned so much valuable info about myself. Please keep this course. class enabled me really look at my leadership skills ....”
The comments also include several helpful suggestions:

We learned the candidates want us to sit and discuss their assessment results individually.

We learned the skills are not being used in other program courses as we had originally intended.

Plans are already underway to make change based on this study and continue our improvement.
In this era of increased dependence on assessment and data, what were the limitations of this study?

Limited graduate response rate because of limited access to their e-mail addresses.

Validity and reliability are uncertain,

It is unknown what the non-responders think,

(Better ways of collecting this kind of data are needed.)
The ability to assess course impact, candidate learning, overall program effectiveness, and the impact of graduates on the students they teach and the schools lead is now a reality for education program faculty.
Assessment is the future. All data have limitations depending on validity, reliability and error of measure, but having and using data in educator preparation programs will be essential in the future (accreditation, customer satisfaction, etc.)

Formative assessment provides opportunities for focused learning in preparation that are not otherwise available to candidates. (Course focus, internship, developmental planning.)
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For additional information, samples of assessment materials, questions, etc., please contact Kermit Buckner at

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Publications


RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS


- *One State’s Efforts to Produce Teacher Leadership through Teacher and Principal Evaluation.* National Council of Professors of Educational Administrations Annual Convention, San Antonio, TX, August 2009.