A CASE STUDY: PERCEPTIONS OF THE INDUCTION PROCESS OF INTERN PRINCIPALS IN BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this inquiry was to use a qualitative case study approach to identify and document the effectiveness of the 2002-2003 principal induction program sponsored by Broward County Public School District as perceived by the participants. The results of this exploratory study will be useful to developers and designers of future principal induction programs. The chapter is organized as follows: (a) methods, (b) case study approach, (c) rigor of the study and generalizability of results, (d) ethical considerations, (e) setting, (f) sample, (g) data collection (h) document review and field notes, (i) the researcher (j) data analysis (k) reporting of the findings, and the (l) summary.

Qualitative research is a complex field of inquiry that draws on many diverse assumptions but embraces a few common characteristics and perspectives (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). It is a method of inductive exploration that strives to bring meaning, and understanding, and to increase learning through the lens of the researcher. Like quantitative research, the qualitative method is a systematic process that follows a deliberate and conscious process of making decisions. In contrast and at the same time, qualitative methodology is interpretative, holistic and contextual (Creswell, 2002; Kvale, 1996; Stake, 2000).

Qualitative research, according to Rossman and Rallis (2003), recognizes that an individual enters a context with a personal perspective that informs their actions which are shaped by perceptions. As a result, the qualitative method was used in this study because it enabled the researcher to explore the conceptual framework of induction as it
is experienced by a group of intern principals using guiding questions to gain deeper insights and understanding from their perspectives.

Qualitative research as a paradigm was used because of the iterative nature of the approach. This approach relies on logic that is multifaceted allowing the reasoning that is described to explore concepts that navigate from part to whole. This method was chosen because qualitative data is known for its virtue of openness, to transcend a common sense understanding (Kvale, 1996; Rossman & Rallis, 2003), and to be able to document chance happenings (Skinner, 1961) that lead to significant discoveries.

Case Study Approach

A case study approach was selected to collect data from candidates concerning the differences in perception held as interns participating in a district-provided intern principals’ program. Yin (1994) describes the case study as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23).

This qualitative case study focused on descriptions communicated to the researcher as candidates shared their experiences, perceptions, and perspectives about lived encounters (Kvale, 1996) during their intern training. According to Merriam (1998), and Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative research is useful in order to get a better understanding and to appreciate the holistic and intense information gained in a descriptive investigation. Lincoln and Guba proposed that the following research techniques—neutrality, persistent observation, thick descriptors, triangulation, theoretical sampling, audit trail, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, overlapping methods,
and reflective journaling should be applied when conducting qualitative research. In addition, they say that any one of these techniques, or when applied in combination, can be employed to determine themes and patterns in studies such as this one.

In depth interviewing is a noted characteristic of qualitative research according to Rubin and Rubin (1995), Rossman and Rallis (2003), and Gubrium & Holstein (2002). They describe the process as a social encounter with talk as the means for participants to share their worldview as the interviewer constructs meaning from the participant’s point of view. This study employs the use of a semi-structured open-ended interview technique that allows the participant to respond freely to fixed questions that are prefigured, ordered and presented to all participants. In this process it is important for the researcher-interviewer to convey an attitude of acceptance, respect, and value for all responses provided by the participants.

This study sought to gain descriptions of experiences, opinions, and perceptions using an open-ended written survey questionnaire administered to the whole population of 44 (minus the researcher). In addition to a semi-structured taped individual interview was administered to a sub-group of 6, a sample of convenience. All data gathered were coded to identify themes from participants’ lived experiences. Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggest that the naturalistic inquiry method is powerful when used in inductive analysis. The final sample of 29 questionnaires, 6 interviews, field notes and document analysis was used to facilitate triangulation (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) and to offer a meaningful and reasonable way of documenting knowledge.

The case study approach was also used as the design because it focused on the phenomena of professional and organizational socialization as they are integrated in an
induction program espoused to develop instructional leaders. Researchers, (e.g., Huberman, 1990; Kavle, 1996; Merriam, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2003), support the merits of the case study in descriptive research as a means to gain insights and to explore educational phenomena such as perceived values, and to be able to interpret and discover their intrinsic worth in the development of the participants. Brouwer and Krothagen (2005) state that qualitative reconstructions are applicable in the making of causal explanations and valid when quantitative relationships are elusive.

Snowden and Gorton (2002), say that case studies have been used in many areas of research particularly in field studies focused on real life situations, particularly for topics such as culture, change, organizational development, real life observations, and administrative and instructional leadership training units. They state that the case study approach is a worthwhile approach in revealing contextual information. Reeves (2004) agrees that the endurance of the case study as a technique is a particularly valuable method when applied in business, law, medicine and in educational settings. He adds that the case study approach allows for the consideration of issues and behaviors in a less sensitive environment and suggests that as a tool, it is a powerful learning device for students of realism. In this study the case study group is identified as the 2001-2003 principal interns in the Broward County Public School District.

Rigor of the Study and Generalizability of the Results

The researcher utilized a purposive case study design to explore the induction experiences of intern principals although according to published researchers (Hartley, 1994; Yin, 1994) case studies findings are not generalizable. It is widely accepted, however, (Creswell, 2002; Gubrium, & Holstein, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Merriam, 1988;
Rossman & Rallis, 2003), that qualitative research and case study findings provide opportunities to generate hypotheses and to build theories about relationships that may otherwise remain hidden. Reeves (2004) insists that the methodology of a case study is an asset in achieving realism, while it discards distractions of personalities and is able to provide a venue for professionals to synthesize experiences from multiple contexts in a compressed period of time. The case study brings to bear a rich variety of experiences and can be applied to the real issues occurring in schools (Reeves, 2004).

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research takes place in the real life setting and, according to Rossman and Rallis (2003), strives to maintain the same standards and quality as any other good research method while recognizing that the researcher’s lens, his or her world view, gender, age, sexual orientation, politics, and beliefs all affect the research project. In order to conduct research in an ethical manner, the qualitative researcher is required to pay attention to the following principles: participants are informed through consent, a letter explaining the research, a trust relationship is actively maintained, and high standards of ethical behaviors are expected on the part of the researcher throughout the design procedures and in decision making.

In this study, because the researcher was a participant member of the group being observed, it was necessary to institute extraordinary care throughout the process by adhering to the ethical standards and guideline (Anderson, 1990; Newman & Brown, 1996; Patton, 2002; Punch, 1994; Rossman & Rallis, 2003) to ensure the study met confidentiality, anonymity and avoided any exploitation.
The study followed the procedures outlined by Florida International University’s Division of Sponsored Research and Training Compliance Office (IRB) and Broward County Public School’s Department of Research Services in addition to following the ethical guidelines set by Rossman and Rallis (2003), in order to gain approval to initiate the study. Upon acceptance and approval by the University, the IRB (see Appendix A), and Broward County’s Research Department (see Appendix B), the researcher made every effort to abide by the ethical guidelines accepted in the field and remained aware of the potential dangers and pitfalls if professional and ethical standards were not followed. To ensure anonymity the researcher allowed flexibility of reporting. The participants had the opportunity to choose their method of returning their survey response by US mail, email or pony. No names were required, and each survey response and transcription of interview was assigned a coded identifying number. Subjects were directed in the instructions to return their response within a two-week period. They had the option to remain anonymous or not. They were also assured of the confidentiality of their input and the purpose of the study. They were also provided the researcher’s phone numbers and address if needed for questions, and were offered additional means to return the response for further anonymity.

To make sure that participants felt comfortable in the interview sessions, the researcher was organized, punctual, prepared, and considerate to each participant’s circumstances, anticipating and accommodating their individual schedule as needed. Interviews were clearly focused and consisted of only questions relating to the research objective. Written permissions for the study were sought from each candidate before initiating the study. All participants received information outlining the process (see
Appendix D) including the time frame required, the feedback process, and the intent for the results and how they would be used. Participants were all informed of their right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time. The procedure was also disclosed to participants that returned surveys, taped interviews and any records or field notes pertaining to the group were kept in a locked box at my home (available only to me and my dissertation committee) for review, and would then be destroyed (after graduation). The researcher following the principles of good practice (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) of insight, sensitivity and thought ensured that participants were comfortable, that materials were sensitive to the participant’s political and emotional and professional needs, that candidates were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality, and that scheduled time frames would be honored. To meet the needs of the interviewees the researcher accommodated requests for flexibility in scheduling the meeting times and locations.

Setting

Broward County is the 6th largest public school district in the United States. It currently has 275,000 students enrolled in Kindergarten-12 grades with 47 high schools, 43 middle schools and 133 elementary schools (www.browardschools.com/) The district is divided into four geographic regions because of its size and to better meet the needs of the large student population. The district has a leadership hierarchy made up of the school board members and a superintendent with four-area superintendents who report to him. In Broward County principals are assigned to school sites and are held accountable for the performance of the students, staff, and facilities. At the high school level, a school typically has an enrollment of 2500-4000 students that determines the number of staff
and administrative members assigned to the site. Such a school could have one principal and 4-6 assistant principals depending on the enrollment. A middle school could have 1200-1700 students and three assistant principals assigned to the principal. At the elementary level, enrollment currently has a range of 650-1300 students with the assignment of one principal and one assistant principal.

Demographically Broward County has a diverse population with students representing 156 countries and 50 languages. According to the reports and documents developed by the Office of Research, Evaluation, Assessment and Boundaries (www.browardschools.com/) the following data represent the status of student population enrolled for the year 2003-2004. Over all, the total district’s student population demographics are as follows: Total = 266,272, Males =137,589, 51.67%; Females =128,683, 48.33%; White = 98,987, 37.18%; Black = 95,198, 35.75% Hispanics = 58,512, 21.97%; Asian = 7,821, 2.94%; Native American = 785, 0.29%; Multi-racial = 4,969, 1.87 %.

Sample

The Broward County Public School Leadership Developmental Program was chosen because of the size of the organization and the large number of participants accepted into the principal induction program annually. The induction training is designed to be a 2-year preparation program. Broward County’s intern group was selected as the purposive sample population due to its size, availability, and the opportunity to obtain the information for this study. The target population consisted of a heterogeneous group representing the three levels in public schools (elementary, middle
and high schools) as well as the varied social and racial ethnic backgrounds of the
district’s larger population.

The sample includes 44 participants who entered the program in 2001-2003: 11
Black Females, 3 Black Males, 20 White Females, 6 White Males, 1 Hispanic Female
and 2 Hispanic Males, and 1 Multi-racial Female, offering a multiethnic and diverse
population. To date, 18 have been appointed to principalships and 26 still remain un-
appointed as of September 2005. Guided by the literature review, an open-ended survey
questionnaire was utilized to assess the intern sample (43) population’s perceptions about
their success in achieving a principal leadership position. The semi-structured survey
was intended to assess participants’ perceptions about how success was achieved, and
gather attributions about success in the program, as measured by the descriptive
explanations of the interns experiences extrapolating lessons learned by the researcher
(Silverman, 1993). Taped interviews of 6 participants were used in addition to the
program documents to corroborate and triangulate the findings gathered from the survey
questionnaire.

Forty three (the researcher is the 44th subject) participants were given a brief
explanation of the study via First Class email (CAB) or the “pony”, the internal mail
system used within Broward County’s School District. The interns were requested to
respond via the same internal mail systems to indicate their willingness to participate in a
targeted focus group and to complete the survey questionnaire. Participants were given a
grace period of 2 weeks to complete and to return the survey.

A targeted sample of convenience consisting of six (2 elementary, 2 middle, 2
high school) graduates (3 assigned to a principal’s position and 3 unassigned) was
interviewed. Success in this case study was defined as having been appointed by the district to the position of principal. Opportunities were scheduled to meet with each participant to complete the open-ended, semi-structured interview designed to delve into the participant’s thinking as they shared perceptions that related to the review of literature and to the research questions (Silverman, 1993; Stake, 2000) based on the schedules and availability of the participants.

All participants were informed that each interview would last approximately 45 minutes and would be tape-recorded and transcribed immediately following the session. They were also informed that the survey questions were all pre-written and would be presented to each candidate in the same order. During the interviews, the researcher presented the questions in an open-ended manner and participants were prompted to elaborate on their responses to clarify or to deepen their description of experiences. At times, the interview appeared to be more like a conversation with the researcher using questions as a guide to keep the focus intact and to further develop relevant areas of inquiry (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Stake, 2000). The researcher was guided by the responses during the interview and was able to insert relevant questions as needed to clarify, deepen or extract more information from the participants. This technique allowed the participant to paint a picture of his or her experience, as it was perceived. It also allowed the researcher to gather a broader picture of the situation being described.

The Researcher

As the researcher, I was a member in the traditional group and expected to complete the program in 2-years. As was required by the program I met the application and selection criteria set by the Broward County for participating. My goal on entering
the program was to gain the knowledge and skills the program provided and to complete the program as was required for promotion to a principal’s position. My goal to become a principal was realized. I am currently an elementary school principal whose experiences in the induction program allowed me, as the researcher, to have first-hand and deep understanding of this study’s participants’ lived experiences and their perceptions.

Data Collection

The researcher followed a three-phase process in conducting the interview sessions. In phase one, the researcher provided an overview of the study and obtained a signed informed consent (see Appendix C). The process for tape recording and an explanation of ownership of the content was reviewed. In phase two, the researcher allowing the participant to elaborate presented questions, sharing their experiences and perceptions. The researcher was able to transition from one question to the next as needed to allow the participant to respond in a safe and comforting environment facilitating answers with rich details. From this phase, the researcher gathered data that were used to draw out themes and to construct meaning. For phase three, the interviewer brought closure to the session and thanked the candidate for participating. The researcher again reviewed the next steps of the research process including the record keeping and feedback procedures before departing.

In order to initiate the study the researcher was required to submit and obtain formal approvals on the case study proposal to the University’s IRB and Broward County Public School’s Research Department. On approval contact could be initiated with the participants. This process took a period of 6 weeks before the researcher was granted an approval status and could then make contact with the target sample. Copies of all
approval documents obtained from the IRB and Broward County Public Schools Research Department are included in the appendix. In addition, the following listed items were electronically mailed to all candidates:

1. A copy of the consent to participate (Appendix C)
2. A copy of a brief explanation of the research study (Appendix D)
3. A survey questionnaire consisting of 25 open-ended questions. (Appendix E)

After receiving approval to initiate the study all subjects were sent the questionnaire surveys via electronic mail with instructions for return. The researcher requested a return in a period of 2-weeks but had to make adjustments in the time frame because it was the last week of the school year and a time when all school administrative staff are inundated with deadlines. In addition to the time of year and usual hectic routines, this year, Broward School’s District required the administrative staff to attend a conference taking a majority of the principals and intern principals away from the district for 2-weeks immediately after school closed. As a result, no survey responses were returned for 3-weeks.

To accommodate unforeseen mishaps due to scheduling, the researcher followed up with a second request and reminders to the outstanding subjects via email. Allowing for the time of year and summer vacations, the researcher continued to make requests via email, in person at meetings, and via phone calls. Six weeks later only five had returned survey responses. The researcher continued to make requests by phone calls and in person at district level meetings to encourage timely response returns. In conversations with candidates, the reasons given to the researcher for not returning the surveys included not having the time and the fear of professional retaliation. They felt that the questions in
the survey required real thought, there were too many questions, and they feared their responses could be detrimental to their positions if answered honestly. The candidates also feared the possibility that their responses would be accessible to County personnel. They did not trust the district’s email system, and they had reservations about using the inter-office mail “pony” system. They were afraid others would somehow read their responses and this could affect their chances to gain a position of principal (if still unassigned) or their current position as principal since they were still “rookies,” (new principals in the system). They felt that they did not want to share their true experience if it could be held against them. They were afraid to return it even if their names were not included on the survey.

The researcher reassured participants of her understanding of their concerns and reiterated that they could remain completely anonymous. Participants were reminded of the choice to send their return response to my home via US mail or email. This reminder and reassurance seemed to relieve some fears because within a week of the last meeting and conversations with the group the researcher received a steady flow of responses. The population consisted of 44 individuals including the researcher. The sample consisted of 29 interns who returned surveys and the 6 who were interviewed. The data collected included 29 survey responses, 3 refusals to participate, and 2 interns who were no longer county employees and had withdrawn from the program. Consequently, 10 candidates did not return a response, including the researcher who did not complete a survey.

The primary method and source of data collected were from the written survey response and interviews. Supplemental data included demographic data from the surveys and the district research and evaluation website, the 2001 and 2003 intern program
manuals, meeting notices, training and meeting agendas, my own research reflections and anecdotal data. The study occurred over a period of 4-months with three survey requests sent including reminders. The follow-up semi-structured open-ended guided interview session included six participants who were selected as a sample of convenience. To accommodate the participant, interviews were conducted and data collected at their convenience. The majority chose their school site with a minority selecting the researcher’s school site.

In order to construct meaning, the researcher used multiple data (surveys questionnaire, open-ended semi-structured interviews and a targeted focus group of convenience) for the analysis of the data. The data collection process involved triangulation, a qualitative methods technique designed (Brouwer & Krothagen, 2005; Snowden & Gorton, 2002) to validate the findings. The researcher organized the data from all sources into the overarching a priori constructs of professional and organizational socialization and instructional leadership. After organizing the data into categories under the three constructs the data was subdivided into the formal and informal characteristics of professional and organizational identified by Normore (2001). The data was then further narrowed into indicators, the themes derived from the data. Under professional socialization the formal indicators were used to derive the following themes from the data: qualification and eligibility, knowledge and skills, mentoring, experiences, and membership. The informal indicators were used to derive the following themes from the data: experiences and membership. The same procedure was applied to organizational socialization the second construct. The formal indicators were used to derive the following themes from the data: membership, interpersonal, leadership
development, cultural and self-motivated. The informal indicators were used to derive the following themes from the data: qualification and selection and cultural informational.

The researchers (Brouwer & Krothagen, 2005; Snowden & Gorton, 2002) support the belief that qualitative research focused on data gathered from description brings rich information that is useful to society. In fact researchers (e.g., Creswell, 2002; Gubrium, & Holstein, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Merriam, 1988; Rossman & Rallis, 2003) insist that qualitative reconstructions with triangulation are applicable methods used to verify interpretations and make causal explanations that generate tentative conclusions that can enrich further studies.

Document Review and Field Notes

The researcher as a participant in the induction program used the documents provided to all interns during the 2001-2003 Intern Principal’s Program as data in the analysis. These documents included a program manual, training handouts, tapes, and books on the topic of instructional leadership. In addition, the researcher was able to gather from the county a complete demographic listing of all the participants and their status as of September 2005 (Broward County Public Schools, Human Resource Development Department). These data sources were useful in the process of triangulation (Kvale, 1996; Merriam, 1996) to cross check the information gained during the interviews and from the surveys.

The researcher was also able to document participant experiences that were shared by using one of the most basic qualitative research techniques: observation in the form of field notes taken during the interviews. In addition the researcher as a
participant observer was able to corroborate participants’ data with her own experiences as an intern in the program. Merriam (1998) and Kvale (1996), say that participant observation in case studies are important sources of information and are usually referred to as fieldwork. As field notes, they include recorded details, direct quotes, descriptions, and observation comments made during the interviews.

Field notes were also recorded based on informal conversations with the participants and my personal reflections that provided insight into the induction program and espoused instructional leadership training process. In my relationship as a participant observer, I was open and honest with all participants about discussing my role in the study. All participants were aware of my dual role as a member of the group. Rossman and Rallis (2003) differentiate between the roles of participant-observer and observer-participant saying that in the latter the researcher is able to participate as a secondary, peripheral role where the former is actively involved in the events being observed as a primary participant. Rossman and Rallis (1996), define the participant observer role as a researcher who is immersed into the events or group being studied in order to seek the discovery of themes, to gain a better understanding, and be able to interpret the patterns from the insider’s view.

Data Analysis

Data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using the professional conversation method (Kvale, 1996). This method allowed me to interview the participants using the questions as a guide, allowing the content of the conversation to steer additional exploration. Using professional conversation as the method facilitated the participants and the researcher when there was a need to clarify or to seek greater details
to aid understanding, and to extend discussion as the interview progressed. The researcher used this method, because the purpose was to obtain descriptions of lived experiences of the interviewees with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena (Kvale, 1996). The interview had structure and a purpose. It was a conversation with careful questioning and listening for similarities, differences, and contrasts in order to better understand the participants’ perceptions. Topics were introduced through open-ended questions by the researcher who followed-up each answer with additional questions or clarifications. The researcher carefully controlled the development of inquiry as the questions guided the process and defined the situation (Kvale, 1996).

Having read all the responses, the researcher used recommended qualitative techniques to transcribe verbatim, condense, and categorize the contents of the surveys into emerging themes (i.e., Kvale, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 1993; Tesch, 1990; Wolcott, 1994). The data were organized into groups by sources: field notes, survey and interview responses and district documents. In order to capture the experiences, feelings, and perceptions as they were described, the next step in the qualitative analytical process was to look for and to identify patterns, coding the responses as they related to each question and construct under investigation. During the process of condensing and interpreting the data, I was constantly mindful and careful to retain the authenticity of the interviewee’s (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) understanding, structures and meaning. The researcher relied on the review of literature to serve as a resource guide to help maintain a high standard of qualitative research. It was helpful for the researcher to have these resources as reference tools in addition to revisiting the
constructs and the questions as the data was organized and reorganized narrowing the focus into subsets and categories.

Reporting of the Findings

Once understanding had evolved providing insights into the topic and I had the data organized into categories identifying (Kvale, 1996; Rossman & Rallis; 2003) the main and salient themes, it was necessary to sum up the responses in a systematic, rigorous, critical, creative and insightful (Patton, 1990) manner, documenting the complexities of the induction experiences. It was the researcher’s intent to present the data in the voice of the participants, and, in order to do that, it was decided to display the findings using narrative descriptions. The researcher intended to illustrate the privileged conversation, deeper understanding, true nature of the experiences through quotations and the (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) constructed knowledge gathered from the data. The data resulting from the case study were organized around the identified themes and research questions in addition to the comments from field notes that bring clarity and understanding from the participant’s perspective for the reader.

Summary

Chapter three described the qualitative case study methodology used by the researcher to conduct this study. A purposive sample was utilized to identify and to select candidates from an intact Broward County 2001-2003 intern leadership-training group. Multiple qualitative techniques - document review, survey questionnaire, and semi structured open-ended individual interviews (Patton, 1990) were employed to gather information from the subjects allowing them the opportunity to elaborate and to share their insights on their experiences as aspiring principals.
These methods allowed for a greater depth and richness to the findings and facilitated triangulation. The data were coded and interpreted, extracting formal and informal indicators of themes that were constructed (Kvale, 1996) to verify interpretations. A case study approach was implemented to bring about individual descriptions and interpretations from which to extrapolate a better understanding of the participants’ perceptions of their lived experiences. The findings are reported in Chapter four and are organized around the constructs professional socialization, organizational socialization, and instructional leadership identifying indicators of the three constructs.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The findings of this case study are presented and discussed as related to the literature to develop meaning in a holistic manner described by Hartley (1994), Kvale (1996), and Yin (1994). This chapter discusses the findings and attempts to interpret how the results relate to the literature and to the research questions. The researcher draws conclusions or lessons learned and present implications of leadership preparation for designing and implementing educational leadership induction programs. Finally, recommendations for practitioners, policy makers, and future research are proposed.

The purpose of the study was to describe and analyze the experiences of intern principals participating in Broward County’s 2001-2003 leadership development programs. This purposive group was selected for the study because they represented an intact group of candidates aspiring to become principals in the 6th largest school district in the United States. Broward County has implemented a principal induction program espoused to develop aspiring transformational instructional leaders to fulfill their institutional needs to improve student achievement and to meet the impending shortage of administrators (Bloom & Kravitz, 2001; Crowson, 2003; Hargraves & Fink, 2004) due to the imminent increased retirement rates.

Responses to Research Questions

This chapter is organized to convey responses to these questions. The last part of this chapter discusses recommendations for future study. In this chapter the findings are discussed as they relate to the research questions.
Research Question One

The first subsidiary research question asked, “How do interns define success?” Darling-Hammond (2001), and Major (1995), support the idea that success and failure have different meaning for different individuals and for a rationale for the success or lack of success in accomplishing a goal. For this reason, it can be inferred that measures of success and individual perceptions held by the interns in this study are relative to the individually defined value of the particular task or goal. Although the findings suggest that all the interns answered that becoming a principal was their primary goal for entering the program, they made it very clear that their success was not all the result of participation in the program but rather a combination of professional and organizational socialization, and instructional leadership. Success was not only measured by the act of finally achieving the position of principal, it was described by the participants as a measure of their cumulative personal and professional growth and achievement.

There were some candidates who defined success as measured through effective performance in their daily administrative tasks on the job. They said that achievement was success for them. They described achievement as the results of day-to-day hard work that comes from building a relationship with the faculty and staff, peers, and students in their community. One candidate said:

Success for me is obviously to make some positive changes that affect students, positive changes in your teachers, your staff, in the families’ lives; this was always a part of my definition of success. I certainly, if I had never become a principal, would have felt my career was successful. I owe any success to my inherent drive for more knowledge, my education, my organizational skills, and my years of practice as an assistant principal, and to my mentors.
The participants referred to the “inherent drive they exhibited as workers to be effective administrators,” the “love of their work”, and the “satisfaction they felt and the confirmation they received through performing what was seen as the routine transactional administrative tasks.” One candidate in the interview said, “My hard work and relentless drive to be an exceptional educator and principal was crucial to achieving success as a learner and as a principal.” Participants felt that although they were working towards the successful completion of their intern program and that they planned for a future position as principal, success was experienced every day. As administrators they had many opportunities to make positive changes that affected their students, the practice of teaching, and to build positive relationships among the faculty and staff as well as within the community.

They reported that as administrators they often have occasion to feel that special sense of accomplishment and success in their careers and personal interactions with the school community. They attributed this sense of satisfaction to the fact that they, as aspiring leaders, were in their positions because they were “turned on” by learning and wanted to make a difference in the development of students. As leaders their desire to be continuous learners in applying for this program was the force that would facilitate the journey from command and control manager (Speck, 1999) to the program’s espoused leadership style, becoming the instructional leader as defined by Glickman (2002). They described the instructional leader as one who is able to influence the school personnel and students and to develop the skills necessary to achieve that is a part of their daily routine. When asked to define instructional leadership and to describe how it influenced their perception of success as leaders, the participants were unclear and had difficulty defining
how their success was influenced by their perceptions of the role of instructional leader or their participation in the program. However, they were able to differentiate the organization’s espoused view of instructional leadership and their daily routine, the theory in use, that the organization uses to evaluate performance and success.

In response to defining perceptions of how the program influenced their success, the data indicated another commonality among the participants. Rebore (2003) agrees with the findings that indicated that interns believed their ability to work effectively as leaders depended on the preparation and development they had in prior experiences. They felt that their prior experiences allowed them to master the basic skills and knowledge needed to handle the unpredictable nature of the day-to-day activities that is the routine of leadership positions in schools.

The findings indicated that the outcome of the required training and practice by itself experienced during the process of leadership preparation was not sufficient to lead to any feelings of real success. The subjects felt that their years of experience and the time spent practicing as assistant principals before entry into the program were more influential in determining the degree of perceived success. In answering the question “How do interns define success?” the findings of the study are supported by Hix, Wall, and Frieler (2003), who agreed that successful performance is achieved over a period of time. It was also evident that time spent in practice was a critical factor in determining the individual’s perception of success based on his performance as well as his ability to achieve a principal position.
Research Question Two

The second research question addressed by the survey inquired, “How do interns perceive they can achieve success as principal leaders?” Researchers Brouwer and Korthgen (2005), support the study’s findings that the candidates’ success was related to their personal efforts to gain the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviors needed to master the tasks required of school administration. The findings support the research indicating that candidates who applied self-motivation and initiative felt that they were more likely to achieve their goal of become principal. As evidence to answer the question, one participant said:

I think success is intrinsic. I judge myself more harshly than others. I hate to disappoint myself with poor performance, and I try not to make the same mistakes twice. Success means learning something from every experience and having an open mind to reflect on most situations assessing what I did well and what I can do better next time. Success is knowing that I have positively impacted my student and staff that they are safe, there is learning going on and my teachers are teaching.

Some interns simply followed the program and focused on what they described as the development of a limited practical experience and theoretical study and for them it took more time to achieve success.

The data revealed that even though the program had two distinct espoused time frames associated with the ASAP group and the traditional group, belonging to the either group was not a predictor of time required to be assigned to a position thus completing the program. The candidates discovered that completing the program paired with getting a position, and that was the real conclusion of the program. Completion was not based on any specified level of mastery that resulted from participation. One participant said:
I got out of [the program] what I could. I didn’t make waves on what I didn’t like. [I] kept my mouth shut. When I was ready I got a job because I finished [the program]. I saw others getting jobs [in both] with out doing their time.

The study found that the role of the administrator is still seen as one filled with challenges and unpredictable tasks as the routine (Normore, 2001) and can be a deterrent or a benefit to growth depending on the individual’s ability to make adjustments to the daily needs of being on the job. Being an intern required the candidates to juggle two positions with high expectations in an already complex field. The candidates in a majority of the cases worked as interns accepting new job tasks added to their list of responsibilities and existing workload as assistant principals. Leithwood et al., (1992), state that this unpredictable routine becomes more difficult for the interns as they face the need to develop a new identity as the leader. Ronkowski and Iannacconne (1989) add that as aspiring leaders moving from assistant principal to principal they need to take on new roles and become more salient in the process of defining paths to success.

The study found that professional socialization processes were reported by participants and were experienced through formal activities such as attendance and participation in retreats and the quest for official documentation that was required by the state and the district (state certification requirements). There were also informal activities described that influenced the participant’s perception of success. The interns felt that these activities were the most influential factors that made a difference in completing their day-to-day hands on tasks required to do a good job.

The study found that a majority of the interns agreed that the informal activities: attending meetings, interacting with peers, networking with supervisors, having assigned mentors, having alternative site placements, being able to observe practicing principals,
and leaders in action were the characteristics that the interns felt were vital to the
development of their skills and knowledge. It also provided valued insights into the role
of the principal and instructional leader. These activities provided the opportunities for
socialization (Merton, 1963) and in turn helped to define their perception of success in a
complex social organization. They also required the participants to develop and
demonstrate a set of complex human inter-personal skills among themselves and within
the organization.

Although there were two induction groups in place during the 2001-2003 intern
principal program, most of the organizational socialization activities were experienced by
a majority of the participants. These activities included either the formal or informal
indicators as described in chapter four. The candidates, although placed into two
differently structured groups within the program (the traditional and the ASAP), were
provided commonality of experience of the formal and informal components (Owens,
1979) of organizational socialization. Both groups were given the opportunity to
experience and to learn more about the district’s leadership expectations through the
integration of established behavioral patterns by attending and participating in principal’s
meetings and by job shadowing in an alternative site from their home school for a period
of nine weeks.

Both groups were also involved in on-going workshops to increase their
knowledge of the current literature on leadership, which was intended to broaden their
views of the theoretical concepts as well as to develop their own leadership styles. Both
groups had access to new experiences (Bourdieu, 1993, cited in Slater, 1996; Feldman,
1989), but they indicated that they needed more time to understand the structured and
unstructured dispositions of the community in which they were placed. Slater (1996) describes this phenomenon as habitus, becoming a part of the group “getting a feel for the game.” The findings indicate that the program intended to provide self-assessment instruments to assist the development of new understandings and awareness about themselves and their leadership styles and to be aware of their areas of strength and weaknesses, and it provided opportunities for interns to participate in practice job interviews.

However, the participants felt that these activities were insufficient due to the limited time assigned for such activities and the lack of expertise available to interpret the assessments. As evidence one candidate said:

I honestly do not feel that the program made me a better educator. The assessments could have helped if they were interpreted for us. I owe my success today directly to my drive for achievement, my mentors and past principals.

A majority of the participants felt there were no formal processes in place to evaluate the individual’s mastery of the required skills, knowledge or completion of the program. Merely being in the program inferred acquisition of the skills and disposition required of principalship. The candidates referred to informal guidelines that were in place but felt that they were not implemented consistently. All the candidates referred to the mentoring process as a positive component of the program and gave credit to this component for providing informal opportunities for their organizational socialization offering prescriptive training opportunities intended to build commitment to organizational practices. These practices are supported by Reichers, Wanous, and Steele, 1998.
Although the mentoring component was seen as of a value by all, they also indicated that there was inconsistency as well due to the lack of a method in place to ensure a match between intern mentor and needed skill development. The mentoring component of the program got high marks for the variety and vast range of experiences available as a result of the chance for continual networking, social learning and the opportunity to build lasting relationships that were developed between the interns and their mentors as supported by Barrett, (2003), Greenfield, (1985), Lambert & Gardner, (2002), Merton, (1963), and Reyes, (2003). The findings suggest that since schools are unique settings it is critical to have the mentoring relationships paired in the apprentice or protégé model with the location and characteristics of both parties matching. Malone and Caddell (2000), agree that artificially constructed mentoring relationships can create more difficulties than benefits.

The candidates currently assigned as principals or still assigned as intern principals’ credit their success as administrators to the organizational socialization they experienced over the years of working in the district. They did not give credit to the program without referring to their prior experiences. One candidate said: “I have worked with good principals and bad and learned from both. My leadership style today is a direct result of those activities that I had as an assistant principal.” It was easier to define success than to achieve it for all the participants. They felt that the program played a small part in influencing their success by refining and fine-tuning their skills and knowledge. For example one participant said:

My views are aligned to the programs, my mentors and supervisors. I was lucky to have good experiences that are not the usual tale that was heard among the interns. The programs proposed these views and shared them through the
literature and guest speakers. I am not sure that all interns had the same experience as I did. Each site placement, supervisor and mentor brought to the relationship their own views and experiences. I am not sure that the relationships were closely monitored or even selected to make sure a particular view was shared.

Purposeful mentoring is recommended and is thought to develop advisory relationships, build positive relationships as supported by Lambert & Gardner (2002), and assisting aspiring administrators to experience and develop the necessary skills, knowledge, behaviors and values to become effective school leaders. This is supported by Bolman and Deal (1993), Bush and Coleman (1995), Coleman (1996), Crow and Mathews (1998), and Daresh (2001), all researchers who advocate mentoring as a valuable resource that provides the mentee with formal and informal opportunities for continued learning and growth connecting veterans with newcomers in practice. They support the findings of this study confirming that mentoring is a technique that builds a sense of connectedness and reduces the feelings of isolation associated with leadership (Barth, 1990). Mentoring is intended to promote the development of a novice to become reflective practitioners, to facilitate open and honest sharing feelings about their work, and promote the value and importance of their self-worth in a supportive environment.

The study revealed that although the interns appreciated the alternative site switch and valued the opportunity offered by the program, switching sites inherently led to more problems due to the fundamental uniqueness of each school site as described by Normore (2001), and this, added to brief periods of time available for each intern assigned to an alternative placement, giving them insufficient time in which to learn and to adjust to the demands and expectation of a new setting. They had no time to develop relationships with the students, parents and staff, or to get to know the underlying cultural values and
tradition that defined community. This inadequacy added to the difficulties experienced by participants. Leithwood et al. (1992), agrees with the candidates’ description of what they saw as social factors and functions of school culture that they felt influenced their organizational socialization. They credited these social factors, the school setting, the relationships with peers, mentors, supervisors and the formal and informal procedures and training that were required as a part of the induction program as influential social forces in their success to develop their leadership preparation as principals. They felt that their brief visit did not facilitate assimilation and influence their organizational socialization.

The literature review and this study indicated that schools are experiencing a paradigm change in leadership practice moving from the transactional to the transformational, exploring how to best meet the needs of students in a era of accountability and testing (Schlechty, 2001; Fullan, 2003). The candidates reported that Broward County as a district has chosen to focus their leadership preparation program on the path of becoming instructional leaders as a proactive stance in their effort to provide quality customer service in a time of change. The findings suggest that schools, like other organizations, are experiencing difficulty achieving the perceived organizational results relative to quality and satisfactory service performance. Furthermore, the study supports that leadership plays a critical role in influencing the perceived quality and value since it sets the directions and creates the values and goals of the organizational system as it continues to develop and to improve. According to Southworth and Du Quesnay (2005), schools are currently exploring attempts to define the success of leadership, the
role, experience, practice and what it looks like when instructional leadership is successfully achieved.

The candidates of this study revealed that they were also in the process of clarifying their differing levels of understanding, experience and conceptualization of what instructional leadership looks like and what it means in their roles as administrators in alignment with the findings by Soho (2005). A majority of the participants agreed that an instructional leader is focused on student achievement calling for transformation in the leader’s individual identity and performance as described by Gmelch (2000). The effective instructional leader employs assessment and evaluation in decision-making and works collaboratively as described by Glickman (2002). They are able to model and to establish a collaborative atmosphere for all and work to improve the processes and outcomes according to Goldring and Rallis (1993), with a keen eye on student achievement. But, for subjects in this study, and because this perspective is new to Broward County, this was not all a reality since their mentors and supervisors were in the learning process themselves. One participant summed up his perceptions of the program’s instructional focus by saying:

There should be more sharing of the actual day-to-day role of the principal instead of moving to transformational when we need to know how to actually apply some of the school board policies and union contracts. There should be more education of future principals in the very things principal actually struggle with, like audits, facilities construction, and maintenance hurdles. Perhaps there should more heads of departments present rather than reading books and discussing concepts.

To answer research question two, the findings indicated that the participants discovered that as members of the intern program they were able to gain access to a principal’s position. In addition they found that by applying themselves as self-motivated
workers who had valuable experiences in their knowledge and skills, they needed to do
the day-to-day routine as site-based administrators they could function effectively in the
position of principal. The findings reported a number of the participants gaining
principals’ positions before the expected duration (1 or 2 years) in the program. The
findings showed that the participants attributed their ability to access their goal of
becoming principal due to their prior experiences working with principal supervisors who
were good mentors. Their past experiences prepared them to effectively manage the
operational tasks required to effectively run a school.

The findings also indicated that the participants anticipated that participating in
the program would add to their knowledge base and to develop their skills as instructional
leaders as was espoused. A majority of the participants felt that they did not acquire the
level of knowledge they expected because the program’s leaders and mentors themselves
were not proficient in their own right as instructional leaders. Therefore, the program was
unable to meet the participants’ expectations of growing as instructional leaders resulting
in frustration developing among the group.

The findings described the participants as individuals who were self-motivated,
driven to find ways and means to achieve the position of principal. To demonstrate their
eligibility for the principalship, the participants had mastered the first step, intern
membership, and were determined to show above satisfactory performance in their daily
routines, to improve student achievement and to continue to build relationships with their
students, faculty and staff and the school’s community, the areas as measured by the
County’s APPAS evaluation system.
Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978), agree that when there is incongruence between the espoused value of the program’s goal to develop instructional leaders and the theory in use where transactional tasks are the routine practice (budgets, discipline, facilities etc.) frustration develops and the County’s goal of instructional leadership could not be successfully achieved as was reported by the findings. The study also found that a majority of the participants achieved principal positions but did not perceive their gaining the position as achieving success as Instructional leaders.

Research Question Three

Research question three asked, “Are there differences among interns who perceive themselves as successful in gaining positions of principal leadership and those who do not?” As a whole the participants felt that they had gained positions of principal but had varied responses for instructional principal leaders. Those who saw themselves as instructional leaders reported feeling more successful and more effective in their daily routines. They attributed this perception to their past experiences and mentoring relationships. The data showed that 20 interns of the 29 who participated in this study achieved the position of principal. However, the data also showed that there was a wide range in the numbers of years of administrative experience prior to internship. The principals who had less years and less opportunity with effective mentors who modeled instructional leadership characteristics felt less effective. One participant during the interview said:

As a principal I feel very competent because of the years I worked in the field as an assistant principal. I guess I have done everything that is required by staff in the school system. I have also been around long enough to know the difference between fads and what’s good for students. I believe that helps me to make good decisions and to keep my school running effectively. The other factor that I owe
my success to is my past principals. They were very good role models for me. They were mentoring us before it was fashionable. They were just good teachers.

They all agreed that the mentoring component was a valued element of the design and was worthwhile in their professional and organizational socialization. Another commonality was the positive value they attributed to the peer networking aspects of membership in the program. All the interns credited their prior relationships with site supervisors and their individual administrative practice as assistant principals as the most influential factor in their success.

The findings showed that the interns who had been assigned as principals responded that the instructional leadership component of the program was also a factor that influenced how they felt as principal leaders. They all agreed that although the program provided some benefits that enhanced their knowledge and skills they could not give complete credit for their success to their participation as interns. They all reported the same perceptions of inconsistencies in the program design and lived experiences. A majority of the interns reported a perception of the lack of organization they felt in the program’s implementation, such as repeated changes in program leadership and canceled meeting dates.

The candidates who have not been assigned were not clear as to the reasons why they had not been assigned to the position of principal. In the interview one participant said:

My prior perceptions were formed from experiences in a number of different school levels with differing leadership styles and school settings. After many attempts to get into the intern program unsuccessfully, I thought I would never be allowed to fulfill my strong desire to become a principal. The criteria set by the
county seemed to be unclear and I did not fit in their view. I was surprised to be accepted after moving to my last position.

Candidates provided a variety of reasons to which they attribute their feelings of dissatisfaction regarding their experiences. They reported that their prior perceptions were formed from their experiences in a number of different school levels and settings with many prior supervisors and principals who had differing leadership styles. They thought that these prior varied experiences would serve as a means to promote and to level the playing field on their way up the career ladder. All prior training, they believed, along with the criteria for acceptance into the program, would give each intern an equal opportunity to advance. However, for some interns, after many unsuccessful attempts to get into the intern program, they had developed feelings of frustration and disappointment and, at times, they were even fearful that they would never be allowed to fulfill their strong desire to become principals.

The participants felt that the criteria for the intern program, the process set by the county that they believed would lead to principalship, was unclear. The participants reported feelings of frustration because the criteria that was outlined by the county as they perceived it, to be a “fit” to be selected for the intern program, was not congruent with the views of their school site supervisors. Candidates had difficulty meeting that “fit” in the district’s view of what a future leader looked like even though they were recipients of effective evaluations consistently, year after year.

For some candidates being selected for the intern program was described as a surprise even when they had extensive work experience on the job spent as administrators. Participants explained their perceptions of unpredictability and lack of
trust in following the required program guidelines “to make the fit” because they were aware of many interns who had minimal years on the job and limited experiences who made the cut.

The findings suggest that although the unassigned candidates have feelings of frustration they are hopeful that they will eventually have the opportunity to gain the principal’s position that they desire. The participants reported having feelings that were more alike than different among all the candidates, those who had been assigned to the position of principal and those who were not yet assigned. They reported experiencing similar feelings of frustration and disappointments when they realized that the program was not, as espoused, designed to meet their need to provide additional skills to prepare them to be principals. They were frustrated as a result of their realization that membership was the theory in use that determined readiness and principal assignment.

*Primary Research Question*

The primary research question asked, “How do the perceptions and beliefs of success held by intern principals influence achieving a position of principal?” The study revealed that there was no difference in achieving the goal of principal dependent upon their perception of performance elements, prior abilities, time spent as administrators, and experiences with prior supervising principals held by the interns. They did state that after the fact time spent in the program was independent of written and espoused perceptions and beliefs. According to Slater (1996), the relationship between beliefs, capabilities, and behaviors is the alignment of self-efficacy and expectations. The candidates participating in this study all believed that their mandated participation in the intern program was the first step on the path towards achieving their goal to become principals.
Every organization has certain procedural induction norms that are used to define success.

In this study, the organization, Broward County Public School District, is no different. The findings of the study documented that the interns all had the understanding that the path to success i.e., gaining a principal’s position, required entry into the program. But they found out it was not necessarily completion that assured success. It was their belief up front that without taking this route they had no chance of achieving the role of a school principal. In Broward County there was a common understanding that there were formal and informal components set in place that had to be achieved in order to travel the path to becoming a school principal. This pathway to leadership was developed by the candidates through their personal accomplishments and daily on the job experiences that are described in the list of formal and informal characteristics of professional and organizational socialization presented in chapter four.

All the participants indicated that they had a common belief system (Weindling & Early, 1995) prior to being accepted into the principal internship program that continued until their experience in the program. In the interview one participant said:

I would like to see the program be more consistent. For example I had so many changes in leadership I am not sure they had the same mind set or vision for the intent of the program. The program is not laid out so that you can know what’s coming or what you need to do to master it. We had some interns who got jobs the first day. They did not even show up for the kick-off. They got jobs. It is political you know.

To complete you could leave at any time one-day, one-month, and one-year. And if an intern got a job in the first week, does that mean that he is as prepared as the person who spent the whole two years? I don’t understand that you know. I guess that’s why I believe it is your own responsibility to learn and to grow through your own practice on the job. Don’t get me wrong; I think the theory was important. But the practice is what gets you through the day as a principal.
After achieving the first step of becoming an intern principal, the participants felt that their perceptions of what the program espoused as its intent was not consistent with their lived experiences. Participants reported that the program needed to be more consistent in following the program’s outline provided in the syllabus that was received. The program should have standards of expectation that are required from each participant in the program. These standards, the participants felt, would guide the theory in use to determine satisfactory performance and duration, and to establish criteria for mastery and completion required for all. They wanted to see a program built around a vision, a consistent mindset within the program’s leadership; a program that exhibited and followed comprehensible directions and procedures based on the organizational espoused values.

Therefore the participants reported experiencing incongruence between the espoused leadership program’s plan and the theory in use that was practiced through their daily-lived experiences in the program (Argyris & Schon, 1978). The participants felt that the program lacked a structured system in place to provide effective and practical two-way feedback. Goleman, Boyatzis, and Mckee (2002), say that there are three levels within an organization and all three (the individual, the group and the organization) deserve continuous feedback to be able to make adjustments and to monitor progress. Having a systematic means to facilitate effective two-way feedback would provide interns and the program facilitators the opportunity for thorough explanations, both academic and corrective, that would facilitate quality improvement and effective performance that was needed for goal achievement.
Although the interns came from different school locations and had different backgrounds and experiences, prior to the program they had similar responses in describing their expectations. They felt that they were all privileged as assistant principals to be eligible to participate in a process that would open doors for their promotion. They felt that now that they were identified as interns they were one step away from realizing their goal. The believed that the journey ahead leading to principalship, although full of challenges, was also the pathway they needed to fulfill their aspirations. Their common belief that the long term benefits would far out-weigh the difficulties of becoming a principal was one of the driving forces that helped participants to forge ahead through legal requirements, state and district mandated guidelines, all required to apply for a principal position. The participants voluntarily participated with the implicit knowledge that the formal requirements to demonstrate the possession of current certification in educational leadership, a master’s degree, and a minimum period of experience served as a highly effective assistant principal, were necessary in order to reach their espoused goal to be eligible for a principal position as described in the documents and formal process described in Broward County’s HRMD, Leadership Development Manual (2001, 2003). Yet, responses such as the following excerpt from a survey indicate an example of incongruence between the espoused beliefs and the written and documented process and the actual route to success of achieving a position that was in fact variable.

Though I feel that the end result of the program is a strong pool of qualified individuals who are ready to become principals, I do feel that a lot of it is due to the actual content of the various leadership programs and experience prior to this program. I feel that these programs provide the right ingredients of networking and mentoring and a few of the classes are helpful if we have no experience in
that particular area but it virtually stops there. The extended process usually weeds out the weak and probably less effective leaders. Therefore that explains why the end result of this program is a strong pool of candidates.

The formal professional and organizational socialization components that the interns experienced during the program, according to Reeves (2004), and Brody et al., (2003), were established components that should provide a systematic leadership development process evidenced by the outlined description in the program guide provided by the district (HRMD Plan Leadership Development Manual, 2001, 2003). This systematic plan, according to the interns, was the design that the program would follow to promote them. The interns believed that this leadership preparation plan, when followed in addition to their successful performance on the job, would be the route towards success. They had faith that this plan would be successful because they had prior training experiences in the district where a similar format was used. They had been promoted from teacher leader through the LEAD program to assistant principal, successfully mastering the IAP program and had no reason to believe that this leadership program would not follow the same route to the principalship.

By participating in this process of preparation the interns hoped to experience and develop their skills as intern principals. This opportunity was one of the selling factors that were espoused by the district and the administrative personnel who were in charge of the program. The district’s plan and design was shared with perspective intern candidates through the meetings advertised to attract participants. The interns felt that they were promised the opportunity to be able to avail themselves of the necessary opportunities to develop their skills and to be socialized as principals.
The program provided the interns opportunities to continue their professional and organizational socialization experiences by observing practicing principals and attending and participating in district leadership meetings. In addition, they were assigned to retired and practicing principals to be mentored and groomed as leaders. They, as interns, had the chance to explore alternative school site placements and to work closely with a Professional Development Team (PDT). The District assigned each intern a Professional Development Team with the intent of providing ongoing support and training to meet the expectations of the new leadership role (Chirichello, 2001, 2004; Ehrich et al., 2004; Fullan, 2002; Lambert, 1998; Normore, 2001, 2002).

The interviews and surveys revealed that in theory the participants believed that the district’s written and espoused induction plan and design met their perceived expectations. The formal procedures required demonstrating their eligibility and performance to get into the program, and the interns were expected to demonstrate other components as candidates in preparation for leadership positions. They were instructed via program administrators and program agendas that in order to reach their goal to become effective leaders, they were required to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge base and skills specific to their home school educational setting. It was necessary for them to further develop their abilities to communicate and to share information effectively with peers, staff, students, and the wider community. By improving their interpersonal skills they would enhance their ability to work in a social setting that often requires administrators to be the role model, the supervisor, and the teacher for a wide range of personnel.
Conclusions

In conclusion, the findings of the study revealed that a better understanding of leadership could be fostered through induction processes of administrators involved in professional development if, up front, espoused values and theories-in-use are aligned. In order to successfully reach their goal, induction programs need to reflect on best practices, the congruence of their espoused values and their theories-in-use, and to provide professional and organizational opportunities to develop characteristics consistent with their vision. Since Broward County is focused on developing instructional leadership with a transformational leadership style, it is important to listen to the candidates and to offer program opportunities to foster professional growth and development through mentoring, site shadowing and coaching, clarification of the administrator’s role, data analysis, curriculum implementation and student achievement.

The study revealed that new members need sufficient time to understand and to analyze the organizational culture in order to develop the appropriate desired success of membership according to Schein (1992). Additionally, Schmuck (1971) states that norms and consistency afford the organization and the individual a common set of expectations, reasoning, attitudes, and the understanding of purpose that guide their dispositions and behaviors. It is widely accepted in the literature (e.g., Hart, 1993; Slater, 1996; Guy, 1985) that organizational socialization changes behavior and constructs and interprets what is perceived as reality. Slater (1996) adds that the relationship between beliefs, capabilities, and behaviors is the alignment between self-efficacy and expectations. Therefore, to be effective, individuals and organizations must align their actions, expectations, and beliefs if goals are to be achieved. The data in this
study confirmed that individual participants needed to develop a fit into their environment, to develop “a feel for the game” within the organizations in order to perceive success.

Finally, this study provides support for the belief held by some (Normore, 2001; Guy, 1985) that individuals find truth in their unique perspective based on their individual experiences. One candidate said:

My situation is very unique in that my organizational socialization has been somewhat seamless because I became principal in an environment where I was the Assistant Principal. Perhaps if I had walked into a new situation I would have drawn on the experiences of the program. I am not sure that I can honestly say that my participation in the organized program contributed at all to my organizational or professional socialization as a principal leader.

In addition, the findings also indicate that individuals would benefit from programs that were developed to meet the need of individuals instead of a one-size-fits-all approach. This case study provides data that according to Reeves (2004) brings to the forefront a rich variety of experiences and perceptions that can be applied to the real issues occurring in schools.

Recommendations for Practice

The necessity to have competent and qualified administrators in schools is an area that will always have vacancies and room for continued improvement in the educational organization’s practice. Broward County Public School and other districts and their community have the responsibility to fill these positions with personnel who are ready, willing and able to provide quality service to meet their students’ needs. This study described the responses revealed by participants who shared their perceptions and beliefs after they participated in a principal preparation program. The following
recommendations are made to improve the induction processes implemented by school
districts and are intended to influence policy to provide and guide a better understanding
of the individual’s needs as they are preparing to become successful school leaders of
tomorrow.

Mentors

Select assigned mentors based on their expertise and candidate needs. All the
candidates commented that they benefited from their relationship with their mentors.
They added that having a mentor was one of the most influential factors in their success.
However, it was also clearly stated that when mentors were assigned based on the
candidate’s areas of strength and weakness and a best fit was selected, the benefits were
greater. Therefore, it is recommended that induction programs apply some selection and
placement criteria when assigning mentors.

Research supports the uses of purposeful mentoring and believes program
developers need to continue to develop advisory and positive relationships with experts
(Lambert & Gardner, 2002) who can help aspiring administrators experience and develop
the necessary skills, knowledge, behaviors and values to become effective school leaders
(Bolman & Deal, 1993; Bush & Coleman 1995; Coleman 1996; Crow & Mathews, 1998;
Daresh, 2001; Dukes, 2000; Goddard, 1997; Hargraves & Fullan 2000; Hudson, 1999). In
addition it is also recommended that once mentors are selected that they are required to
participate in some training or orientation program to ensure that their experiences are
aligned to the espoused philosophy and intent of the program.

Programs

Provide programs to meet individual needs and not a one-size-fits-all program.
The study found that many participants felt that the program did not meet their individual needs because the content provided was too general to the topic whether it was literature based, practical discussion, or presentations by experts. The participants felt that they learned more from hands on opportunities and opportunities where the information was designed to be specific to job requirements. They wanted learning opportunities that were more practical than theoretical in nature. One of the benefits that no longer exist in Broward is the ASAP, the accelerated program designed to meet the needs of the individual aspiring educational leader with a specific focus area, such as technology, and which had a reduced time frame required for completion. The participants reported in their interviews and survey their desire to have a leadership development program that would meet the needs of individual candidates and the uniqueness of individual school sites. The interns who participated in the ASAP group felt that combining the best practices of the ASAP and the traditional programs would offer candidates the flexibility to develop their own distinctive needs.

**Placements**

Provide more opportunity for varied site alternative placements. This opportunity provides for the development of a broader view of leadership styles, practice skills and knowledge; and it gives participants the opportunity to work in other settings, demographic groupings, academic levels and culture. It gives the aspiring principal hands on practical experiences to improve their means of developing as a transformational, instructional leader ready to lead in a culture of change.

**Guidelines**

Implement consistent guidelines to assess and document program mastery.
This will encourage future aspiring candidates to participate knowing the district has in place a theory in use and espoused values that are aligned as described by Argyris and Schon (1974; 1978). It will reduce the perceptions that politics, who you know, and ethnicity play a greater role in gaining a position than competency, completion and experience. In addition this recommendation would have a profound effect on increasing the potential applicant pool that is now limited by these perceptions.

Assessment

Make more use of self-assessment tools to better guide the program design. The candidates felt the use of the tools were beneficial but could have been more helpful if they were interpreted with the help of experts and then applied to meet the needs of the individual. In an educational setting assessment tools are expected to be used to develop an individual improvement plan designed to support growth and development. The program should utilize the results of these measures to facilitate improved development if they are going to require participants to complete assessment measures.

Feedback

Employ a constructive two-way feedback system with focused prescriptive interventions. Constructive feedback, as described by Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (1996), would offer all participants in the program the opportunity to discuss in a safe learning environment “what is working and what is not” focusing on the formal and informal role and performance expectations of interns, mentors, and leadership supervisors. Providing effective feedback opportunities for the program leaders and mentors as well as the participants to reflect on their experiences, opportunities and depth of learning should be emphasized. Having such feedback opportunities, according to
Argyris and Schon (1978), would ensure the alignment between the espoused intents of the program and the practical lived experiences felt by the interns. As Argyris and Schon suggested, the opportunity for two-way feedback, a double loop system, would also increase consistency in program leadership, mentor selection, and sustainability of the vision and leadership alignment to district goals.

**Collaboration**

Build collaborative relationships. Leadership induction programs should prepare aspiring principals to learn what they need to know in order to serve the staff, their students, and the community as a part of the district. The goal of the program and the candidates must be aligned to work in collaborative relationships with the district to meet the goals and needs of the student and to realize that each school site is a unique micro-organization within its own culture, identity, and needs. This study points out the need for program designers to be aware of the needs of participants and the social factors that influence their perceptions as site-based leaders. Furthermore, district program developers need to ensure program alignment and to continuously monitor progress to successfully provide future instructional leaders for Broward County. Program developers need to focus their efforts on achieving these elements so that future leaders will be professionally socialized to embrace the organizational goals and meet their own site-based needs.

**Recommendations for Future Study**

The following are recommendations for further study of induction programs and participants in these programs. During the 2001-2003 school years, Broward County Public School District participated in a pilot induction program with Palm Beach County
and Dade County, the two neighboring school districts. The selection and program
criteria for participation were based on individuals demonstrating technological literacy
and a willingness to participate in a program that was delivered online. The participants
of this current study perceived characteristics of both this program and the traditional one
as desirable and undesirable. It would be beneficial for Broward County to implement a
longitudinal study to follow participants of the 2001-2003 intern group to explore
differences in program and participant success, if any, depending on participation in the
ASAP group compared to the traditional group.

Broward County requires aspiring principals to participate in the traditional intern
principal training program in order to be eligible for assignment to the position of
principal. This study identified that participants perceived a lack of consistency in the
personnel delivering the program, the program’s vision, and in following the espoused
criteria to determine mastery and completion. For this reason a second recommendation
is to implement a study to compare past induction program designs to see which are most
effective in preparing school leaders.

The principal induction program of 2001-2003 provided participants an option to
participate in two distinctly different programs. Further study is recommended to
compare program designs and perceived success by interns who participated in their
school district leadership development program in the Tri-County area: Broward, Palm
Beach, and Dade Counties in South Florida in order to generalize results and to pool best
practices.

This study supports the accepted fact that there is an impending crisis in filling
administrative positions in education. One of the factors that influence the lack of
adequate school leadership personnel is the uniqueness of school sites. In order to better prepare aspiring leaders and to approximate the unique “fit” that exists in schools, further, research is recommended. A study should be undertaken to determine what criteria for selection of interns best produce candidates who would best fit the organizational and site-based needs.

Defining the role of instructional leadership was one of the areas that the participants of this study had difficulty explaining. They all agreed that the role, the expectations and practice were unclear even though they were expected to perform as instructional leaders. To better prepare future leaders, the implementation of a study to clarify and better define the role of the instructional leader is recommended.

Summary

This study was undertaken to gain a more holistic approach, and not only to describe and analyze what is, but what might be in terms of perceptions of intern principals (Gay & Airasian, 1996). It is logical that the results gained by identifying what newly appointed principals and those who have not yet been appointed perceive as the means to achieve success as a result of their participation in an induction process as being valuable to program improvement. The results gained must be of interest to the educational institutions and their induction program developers who are concerned with meeting the needs of their inductees and facilitating future effective programs.

The study supported the understanding that professional socialization (Bennis, 1985; Merton, 1963) involves the processes by which administration learns the skills, knowledge, and dispositions required to perform their roles in an effective manner. This socialization process is the means by which new learning is acquired and membership
developed based on a pattern of basic assumptions that are discovered. Through socialization, the newcomers are able to develop the skills needed to cope, to adapt, and to integrate the internal and external skills needed to perceive, think, and act in the acceptable and valued ways relative to the group of membership. The findings revealed a picture of how important it is to understand the vital roles the three constructs play as they work together in the induction process and how perceptions of success function as integral components in the formation of the knowledge, skills and values of the practice individuals seek to achieve throughout their professional and organizational socialization.

If induction programs are neglected, intern participants will be affected negatively in their efforts to gain the needed knowledge, skills and socialization required to perform effectively in their new position as professionals (Sparks, 2004). Leadership development needs to cause improvement in the educational working conditions and the teaching profession, and increase student achievement and facilitate the development of future quality principals within the organization. Collins (2001) found great leaders are shaped by the organizational culture that is created to measure their success determined by the numbers of future effective leaders who are developed by the organization. This results in promoting continual growth of their personnel and positively affects their work.

Consequently it is imperative for school districts and program designers to explore prospective intern perceptions of the components of professional socialization, organizational socialization, and instructional leadership and to understand the vital interrelated function they play. Finally, it is hoped that this study will pave the way for more in-depth analysis of programs designed to prepare future principals and the role their perceptions play in the induction process to influence their success. Such inquiry
will inform program developers as they create induction programs to prepare competent and qualified administrators.