Learning to Lead (p)ublic Schools

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Engaging multiple publics calls for a skill set that "stand[s] in stark opposition to the typical types of managerial and administrative habits characteristic of public schools today" (Knight Abowitz, 2011, p. 477). As instructors in two graduate level leadership preparation programs, we grapple with the tension between developing "managerial and administrative habits" and developing leaders who help people "to mobilize around particular problems related to young people and their schools" (p. 467). In this self-study, we explore how these differing discourses influence the work that we do and our ability to help our students learn to engage with multiple publics. Using a structured, collaborative model for our self-study (Patrizio, McNary & Ballock, 2011) that includes doing shared readings about curriculum leadership, studying artifacts from our practice, extending conversations with a series of reflective letters (Altman, 1982), and revisiting all of our data sources as an aggregate for analysis, we find that pressure to align our courses to the state and professional standards that govern our programs prioritizes a focus on managerial and administrative habits. Further, we find that our students' beliefs about curriculum leadership more closely align with a managerial and administrative perspective than one that includes multiple publics. Our findings echo Knight Abowitz's concerns about the types of skills leaders need, the extent to which we expose our students to them, and the mismatch between leadership that privileges a narrow understanding of curriculum and one that transcends any focus on outcomes and blends technical and political skills.

Introduction

School leadership matters more than ever (Darling-Hammond, Lapointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Mitgang, 2008). In fact, school leadership ranks second only to teaching as a school-related factor impacting student learning (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2010). Given this important fact, and starting from the assumption that we are not doing enough at present, how do we, as university educators, best prepare our students to become successful school leaders?

Critics (Hess & Kelly, 2007; Levine, 2005) of university-based leadership preparation programs argue that most programs do not meet the needs of today's schools and must place a greater emphasis on data management and personnel evaluation in order to attend to rising

accountability pressures. Their critique centers on the notion that most programs inadequately provide instruction in technical skills in the areas of data usage, research and leadership that leaders in current schools actually need. In contrast, recent work (Knight Abowitz, 2011) suggests that a critical role of educational leaders is to engage communities and enhance the democratic legitimacy of schools, and that schools of education inadequately equip future leaders with the political skills of communication, leadership and power-building. If we accept the premise that programs must improve, which skills should be prioritized by university preparation programs?

Ylimaki (2012) argues that in the field of curriculum studies, scant attention has been paid to leadership. Likewise, in the field of leadership, the study of curriculum has rarely paid attention to curriculum theory or curriculum politics. Thus, there is a missing link between curriculum and leadership in both fields' literature. Further, while curriculum "should be the product of ongoing argument" (Knight Abowitz, 2011, p. 471), the current accountability context minimizes opportunities for these arguments to occur, removing discussion about what should be in the curriculum from classrooms and communities. If we are to prepare high quality curriculum leaders, though, we must think both about the kinds of decisions for which we *must* prepare them as well as the kinds of decisions for which ultimately *hope* to prepare them. As we consider our teaching of aspiring leaders, we, too, attempt to negotiate this need for balance. In this paper, we examine the two different skill sets as they manifest in the Curriculum and Instructional Leadership courses we both teach; our own understandings of what we personally feel to be important; and what we perceive as our students' willingness to engage in either. In doing so, we seek to better understand our role as educators in leadership preparation programs, so that we might encourage students to consider the expertise of researchers and scholars, particularly the understanding of the purposes of schooling beyond those which "tether ourselves to the pole of use" (Breault, 2010, p. 293).

Examining this question, then, necessitates that we not only look at leadership but at the very conception of public schools. If schools are public, who makes decisions about them? While schools are viewed as a public good, the notion of what public means is not fully understood. Recent work exploring how to achieve public schools differentiates between two forms of public to facilitate understanding. Public (with a capital P) "calls upon notions of an inclusive sphere of individuals bearing rights and responsibilities, in which political decisions are guided by

constitutional principles" (Knight Abowitz, 2011, p. 467), whereas public (with a lowercase p) as it relates to schools includes people who "mobilize around particular problems related to young people and their schools, and are best understood not simply as *the* Public but as potentially multiple publics" (p. 468). Developing schools that are held accountable to a shared understanding of education, in the form of standards and tests which measure the extent to which these standards are attained, in some ways prioritizes a focus on the Public while diminishing relations with the public(s), as there is increasingly little room for genuine debate about either the means or ends of public education. Indeed, as accountability pressures continue to deeply impact the work of school leaders, they "frequently attempt to 'manage' citizen engagement and contestation in ways that nip a nascent public in the bud" (Knight Abowitz, 2011, p. 476). Knight Abowitz (2011, p. 469) calls for school leaders to see as essential to their role the engagement of communities and the development of "publics for public schools." To do so, she argues that school leaders must enable the habits of communication, leadership and power-building in communities. In this self-study, we explore our role as faculty in this process by deeply examining how these differing discourses influence the work that we do, specifically around our teaching in the area of curriculum and instructional leadership, and our ability to help our students, as aspiring leaders, learn to engage with multiple publics. To do so, we address the following questions:

1. What are our beliefs about curriculum leadership?
2. How do we balance our attention to the technical and political facets of curriculum and instructional leadership in our syllabi?
3. How have our syllabi adapted to facilitate the balance we seek?

In this way, we hope contribute to a much-needed understanding of the curriculum of leadership preparation (Hess & Kelly, 2007; Kottkamp, 2011) and enter into the crucial conversations and scholarship that "reflect the tensions surrounding global politics, schools purpose, and the considerations and interruptions of power structures in society that shape and reshape the function of school" (Jacobson & Cyprès, 2012).

Review of the Literature

In spite of decades of research and practice, educational leadership preparation programs still sit at a crossroads, struggling to retain their core values about leadership for school

communities in light of pressures from universities, policymakers, and stakeholders to focus more closely on the important, but narrowly defined, goal of raising student achievement (Breault, 2010). Critics of educational leadership programs contend that leadership preparation programs must raise program standards and eliminate low performing programs (see Hess & Kelly, 2007; Levine, 2005) and that within programs more explicit emphasis needs to be placed on data management and personnel evaluation to attend to rising accountability pressures (Hess & Kelly, 2007). These emphatic calls for change occurred at the same time that many leadership programs undertook major curricular alignment according to professional standards, and succeeded in raising the quality and size of applicant pools (Young et al., 2005) while at the same time seeking more balance between technical skills and the types of relational skills needed to be successful leaders (Drago-Severson, Maslin-Ostrowski, & Hoffman, 2012).

Even as programs change to adapt to professional standards, scholars critical of the sharpened focus on the technical skills of leadership (Breault, 2010; Polizzi & Frick, 2012; Reitzug, 2010; Ylimaki, 2012) argue that the focus on professional aspects of leadership neglects other equally, if not more, important dimensions of leadership, particularly as they relate to moral vision, adult learning, and thoughtful, responsive leadership; (Breault, 2010; Drago-Severson, Maslin-Ostrowski, & Hoffman, 2012; Reitzug, 2010). Ultimately, this scholarly debate leaves those in educational leadership with many questions about balancing educational leadership course content so that it meets the needs of our nation's aspiring school leaders without sacrificing depth for breadth of the curriculum.

We examine this challenge as we find ourselves facing a struggle between preparing educational leadership students for today's schools (Hess & Kelly, 2007) and preparing them to lead with a vision of "schools as they might be" (Reitzug, 2010, p. 320). If school leaders are to "open the door for the school to make changes in society" (Jacobson & Cyprès, 2012), then preparation programs must balance the practical and the relational and political while incorporating principles of democracy and social justice into their programs. Part of this balance also requires "broader views of leadership, and more inclusive practices of informal leadership" (Knight Abowitz, 2011, p. 480).

Our research begins with reflection on the tensions described above. Ultimately, this reflection has led us to trouble the distinctions between instructional and curriculum leadership. It is in this distinction that we see in action the tension between the two skill sets. Most research

defines instructional leadership as a set of practices involving linkages between pedagogy and school improvement through changes in the "core technology of schooling" (Coldren & Spillane, 2007, p. 371). These practices include building level duties such as creating a school's vision or mission, curriculum duties such as planning and monitoring academics and instruction, and staff duties such as teacher supervision and professional development (Coldren & Spillane, 2007; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Marks & Printy, 2003; Robinson, 2010). Research in educational administration points to the importance of instructional leadership in schools, particularly in light of rising accountability pressures (Coldren & Spillane, 2007). Indeed, leadership in high performing schools is characterized by a focus on teaching and learning, leaders acting as instructional resources for teachers, and leaders becoming active participants in and leaders of teacher development (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). High quality instructional leadership, then, requires skills that enable school leaders to make discrete changes that improve student achievement. Such changes can be seen, measured and, ideally, scaled up from one school or district to another. These are the types of "managerial and administrative habits" about which Knight Abowitz speaks.

Even so, while the focus on classroom instructional practices must be sharpened, successful school leaders must also attend to other issues that impact students and schools, particularly as they relate to the culture and other non-instructional aspects of curriculum (Leithwood et al., 2010). In some respects, curriculum leadership, like instructional leadership, can be understood as focusing the actions of leaders in schools to ensure high quality and effective teaching and learning for students (Glatthorn & Jailall, 2009; Macpherson & Brooker, 2000). However, curriculum leadership can be viewed as distinct from instructional leadership, "because the meaning of curriculum (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995) extends beyond teaching practice to the sociocultural and political aspects of educational content decisions: what is taught, to whom, and by whom" (Ylimaki, 2012, p. 305). Such leadership addresses the types of skills advocated by Knight Abowitz—communication, power-building and the development of democratic legitimacy—by using the curriculum not simply as a means of raising scores but as a space where schools can engage students, families and communities, indeed *multiple publics*, in a conversation about the improvement of society.

In our perception, the types of skills involved with instructional leadership focus only on the "taught" curriculum, or the formal curriculum that increasingly is associated with what gets

tested and measured. This taught curriculum is also increasingly decided not locally but in spaces far removed from real classrooms and communities (Knight Abowitz, 2011). In our view, curriculum leadership encompasses these skills but also works to move beyond them. Curriculum leadership can be more than monitoring and measuring; it is also a search for meaning that can be evidenced in a vibrant school learning culture. It is a dialogue between and across these multiple publics that seeks not just to raise achievement but to improve society. A strong curriculum, in this view, is one in which disparate viewpoints come together to forge community growth through debate. By extension, a strong curriculum leader is a person who can bring in these multiple publics to the conversation. In this reflection of our teaching, we have found that not only do we not do this to the extent that we would like, we are not sure how to, particularly in light of students' perceived needs and the very real need to raise student achievement.

While improved curricula in leadership preparation programs focus on the skills successful leaders need to supervise instruction, little if any attention is paid in the literature to the skills needed to lead curriculum with a focus on community-building and on engaging multiple publics in the political process of curriculum-making. We know little about how contemporary leaders can do this, and specifically how we, as educators in preparation programs, can facilitate students' understanding of how to do so. In an era when curriculum feels not like a process for creation but like a product for consumption, this challenge has overwhelmed us. Thus, as we engage in curriculum-making at the university level we seek to better understand, for our own purposes, exactly what quality leadership preparation is, while attempting to help our students find the skills not just to supervise the implementation of existing curricula in their future workplaces but to expand how they understand and use curriculum as leaders.

Methodology

Reforming graduate educational leadership programs "depend(s) on professors' becoming learners, examining our assumptions and behaviors, and changing ourselves before we (can) expect student changes" (Kottkamp , 2011, p.3). However, there is virtually no work in educational leadership that examines teaching in educational leadership from the classroom level, self-study perspective (Frick & Riley, 2010). It was with this in mind that we began our ongoing self-study of practice (LaBoskey, 2004) as educators of aspiring school leaders. The research

began with informal discussions about own curriculum-making processes. As Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 176) suggest, the research grew from a need to study "an issue in our practice, because an experience we have refuses to go away." Here, our experience was the challenge of balancing instruction of the technical and relational skills of curriculum leadership, without sacrificing depth for breadth. Our unease was often precipitated by encounters with students who were heavily influenced by the accountability context that pervades schools.

We followed a structured model for self-study (Patrizio, Ballock, McNary, 2011) to increase the rigor of our work. This involved doing shared readings about our topic, studying artifacts from our practice, extending face-to-face conversations with an epistolary dialogue (Altman, 1982), and revisiting all of our data sources as an aggregate for analysis. We work in geographically distant locations, and video conferenced on a weekly basis throughout the Spring 2012 semester.

Our project began by establishing a common body of literature to inform our research and develop common understandings about curriculum, leadership, and programs. We identified key readings, both in the methodology of self-study and in leadership preparation, that helped us to frame our conversations. For self-study, we read *Threading a Golden Chain: An Attempt to Find Our Identities as Teacher educators* (Lunenberg & Hamilton, 2008), *Developing as Teacher Educator-Researchers* (Patrizio, Ballock & McNary, 2011), and *A Self-Study on Preparing Future School Leaders* (Frick & Riley, 2010). For leadership preparation, we read *Resisting Fraagmentation: Calling for a Holistic Approach to Professional Practice and Preparation for Educational Leaders (*Drago-Severson, Maslin-Ostreowski, & Hoffman, 2012*); Tethering Oneself to the pole of utility: A Deweyan critique of recent shifts in leadership preparation* (Breault, 2010); *Learning to lead: What gets taught in principal preparation programs* (Hess & Kelly, 2007); and *Curriculum leadership in a conservative era* (Ylimaki, 2012). Finally, we both read *The Method of Currere* (Pinar, 1975) to deepen our thinking about using our own work and thinking as a site for study. These readings gave us a common framework from which to begin, although as we continued we individually delved further into both bodies of literature.

Ideas from these readings helped us to frame this research, and surfaced throughout the course of our discussions and writing. In the second step of our research, then, we decided to use our course syllabi as artifacts of practice. We chose two examples each. Corrie chose the two most recent syllabi, and Kami chose two recent consecutive syllabi from a program in which she

no longer teaches. We began by reviewing the earlier of the two syllabi for each course. We then generated a list of questions about the programmatic context, wrote each other letters of reflection in response, and discussed these writings during our meetings. After each section, we wrote letters to one another about the key ideas that had resonated with us during the dialogue. Later in the research, we began to look more closely at specific assignments in our course syllabi. Finally, we did a content analysis of the course syllabi (Patton, 2002), and a general thematic analysis (Boyaztis, 1998) of our responses to the literature, meeting notes, and reflective letters.

When conducting our general thematic analysis, we each read through the data sources and arrived at a list of themes. We then compared themes, and arrived at a common list of codes that accommodated both of our original lists. After this, we uploaded our data into Dedoose, a qualitative and mixed methods data analysis program. We individually coded the data and used Dedoose to generate tables showing us the number of our code co-occurrences, applications, and cross occurrences.

Findings

While our ongoing self-study examines the multi-layered challenge of teaching curriculum leadership to aspiring school leaders, this article focuses only on one aspect, that of our efforts to facilitate learning about the skills necessary to lead multiple publics at a point in time when many school leaders find themselves with an increasingly small voice in matters about curriculum in their schools. Related to this conversation—and crucially for this article--is the impact that this reality has on *our* curriculum as faculty. Do we minimize conversations about engaging multiple publics because students resist them? Or do we highlight these conversations, with the risk of losing a valuable learning experience for students? Our ongoing dialogue found us thinking deeply about what we teach and both why and how we teach it. Below, we share details of this reflection experience.

What are our beliefs about curriculum leadership?

Self-study research involves investigating the relationship between one's personal beliefs and experiences, the act of teaching, and students' beliefs and values. So we begin by acknowledging that our views about curriculum leadership are informed by our experiences as teachers in urban schools through the Teach For America program and by our scholarly

preparation, Corrie in Curriculum and Instruction and Kami in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Both of us taught at a time when standards did not fully drive instruction but were only beginning to shape the formation of curriculum, particularly at the department level where local and national content area standards were developing. Additionally, neither of us went through formal, university-based teacher training programs. Our understandings of curriculum leadership, then, have been shaped by our experience in P-12 classrooms but also, and in some ways to a greater extent, by our graduate school and early faculty experiences. When taken as an aggregate, Corrie summarized that we share a belief that curriculum is a process, not a product. She elaborates, explaining:

> [C]urriculum is a process, not a document. I believe curriculum cannot be prescribed. I believe curriculum is a constant negotiated struggle between stakeholders involved in schooling to best meet the needs of all students. I believe that curriculum is not something you can hold in your hand; it is an experience, a set of beliefs, a culture, a commitment. It is fluid not fixed.

Similarly, Kami explains her beliefs that curriculum is a social process. She reflects that, "social forces can influence curriculum design in many ways, eliciting issues of values, beliefs and assumptions", during the course of leadership.

Both of us also value relationship development as part of curriculum leadership. Kami writes that leadership involves developing "a systems level perspective of what happens in schools" because "while all that we do is and should be for students, the lived reality of life in schools is that we need to work together to make that happen." Likewise, Corrie reflects on her perception that her students view curriculum as something handed down to them rather than something they have a role in. Of her beliefs about the full potential of curriculum leaders, she writes, "they can work on creating an environment in which other aspects of the curriculum—relationships, work products, evidence of learning—go beyond the formal curriculum."

We have both, through our experience and studies, reached a common understanding of curriculum leadership. As Corrie synthesizes, a curriculum leader "is more like a steward, helping a school stay on a path to learning that represents the best interests of the students and helping teachers to remain committed to their core beliefs about what learning is, should be, can be." Kami, similarly, feels that "in a profession where humanity—and to a certain extent, developing human beings—is part of the work," curriculum leadership "is about understanding

the self and then the self-in-relation-to-others." It is from this nexus of our beliefs that we began to examine how our beliefs play out in our syllabi.

What tensions exist between curriculum and instructional leadership in our syllabi?

Even as we hold these beliefs about curriculum leadership dear, we grapple with enacting them in our classrooms. Corrie writes:

> I want to build a community of learners that think deeply and critically about their work. I want to develop leaders that push boundaries and challenge norms. At the same time, I find myself not pushing or challenging but rather conforming to the "program."

Kami, too, notes that

> [T]he first thing that strikes me … is that I make sacrifices in what I believe because of what I have come to know and understand about life in public schools. And there are times when I just have to grit my teeth and recognize that people are not ready to see things from another perspective (i.e. staunch content focused traditionalists) - and at that point, I personally have to shift my focus from the content to the larger overarching enduring understandings that I hope to develop - like how to critically analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the material in a logical way.

It is evident, then, that we are impacted by some of the same forces that impact our students—negotiating the role of standards on our programs, and discovering what it means to be held increasingly accountable to externally dictated definitions of what counts as curriculum, teaching and learning. Our words, "conforming" and "sacrifices," suggest that we associate this process with something unpleasant that occurs in the course of our work. We struggle with what we want to convey and how, concerned that we may not be exploring the correct content, as implied by program standards, with our students. Summarily, we share the experience of believing that decisions about what we teach often feels as though they are shaped by forces and bodies larger than ourselves.

Not surprisingly, internal accountability pressures, such as our own program accreditation processes and state generated teacher and leader evaluation systems, enter into our thinking

about what we should teach. Thus, just as teachers in PK-12 classrooms are influenced by standards, so, too, are we. Corrie found some benefit in the accreditation and standards alignment process. Because of the need for everyone involved in the program to submit their syllabi, new conversations were initiated between program members around what is taught and potential connections between courses for projects and assessments. Notes Corrie, "We have had several program meetings to begin this process of alignment and I feel that people are at least moving toward the same page." Kami's experience with aligning her curriculum to the work of her former program was less helpful. In her words, parts of her curriculum, specifically one of her major assignments in the Curriculum and Instructional Leadership course, was "mandated by NCATE." Because of the content material that needed to be covered for this project, Kami worried that the course was "a mile wide and an inch deep." In this instance, standards presented a challenge of balancing breadth and depth as she explored curriculum leadership with students.

These examples demonstrate how accountability pressures can impact what gets taught and the content that is used to teach it. At one level, they connect us with our students, while at another, they provide an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with colleagues. Ultimately, they can, and do, challenge us to balance depth and breadth during instruction. The tension between curriculum and instructional leaderships in our curricula, though, may best be exemplified by what we initially characterized as a theory-practice divide. Corrie noticed this divide in her first semester:

> I wanted to talk about the issues about curriculum in the current context and how, as leaders, they could work with their schools to create meaningful learning and teaching and challenge the present situation. They wanted to know how to walk into a new school, make sense of the curriculum the school was using, and give professional development. They wanted to know which curriculum was "best"— in a data-driven way.

Likewise, Kami explained her experience with this gap early on in our study, noting, "Toeing that line between curriculum theory and practice is a dance." She explains that in her work:

> I have to model what dialogue and well structured experiences/projects can do to promote learning...what it means to really focus on a student as a learner and what they know, instead of a textbook and what it says they should no. I figure – if I feel conflicted about teaching from a progressive, learner-centered orientation…

[then] what will THEY experience when THEY are acting as teacher

educators…which is part of what leaders are supposed to do.

Our beliefs about what we know to be true inform our teaching practices. For both of us, trying to figure out what, why, and how to teach curriculum leadership, meant wading through program requirements, personal beliefs, and student experiences. And ultimately, the dissatisfaction that we experienced was reflected in the shifting content of our course syllabi.

How have our syllabi adapted to navigate these tensions?

In light of our growing understanding of curriculum leadership, we have both continued to refine our course curricula and to make decisions about the balance between teaching our own relational beliefs with the need to provide students with tangible, technical skills. Ultimately, it is this discomfort—between what want we "want" to teach and what we feel we "need" to teach that has challenged us to think deeply about our syllabi. After two years of study, we have come to see our work as part of the learning process inherent in curriculum leadership. Described below are the ways in which we have changed our syllabi to make sense of the complexity in our work.

As we have explained, both of us believe that high-quality curriculum leadership relies upon strong relationships and a perspective of curriculum as process. We realized through this research that we are both striving to model this learning process for our own students. Kami enacts this in her courses through the use of collaborative dialogue. She describes herself as lecturing very little, and spends one journal entry detailing the ways that she teaches aspiring leaders how to engage in high quality dialogue. In this excerpt, she explains how she teaches relational skills of process through exploration of the construct of curriculum:

I always start by having a graded discussion with students. We discuss, as a group, the qualities of quality dialogues. And then I ask them, "What is curriculum?" and don't say a word while they suss it out as a group for about 45 minutes. They come up with a lot of different ideas…many of which revolve around scope and sequence documents or curriculum binders that districts have given them. At least one person introduces the idea of diversity, and someone will get at something that relates to democracy.

In this way, she facilitates the students' understanding that curriculum is a political and communal process.

Corrie also tries to use group work in her projects to show the challenges of including multiple voices into curriculum making. The final course project in her first syllabus required students to return to a school site they visited over the summer and speak with a variety of stakeholders about their understandings of curriculum. In light of this self study, she articulates plans to changed this assignment, explaining:

> I am already planning on deepening my curriculum analysis project to be more expansive…For the final project, however, I'm thinking about having the students work with the paired school to identify a curriculum challenge and then, based on the readings and coursework, develop a range of solutions/strategies which they can then share with the school.

Corrie seeks to enact a more short-term process-oriented activity into her course, to promote a more contextualized understanding of the public engagement process.

Indeed, we have found that two years later, we have changed many of the projects in our curriculum leadership courses to rely on the social processes of groups and each individual's personal experiences to inform the products and dialogue. We continue to wrestle with a sense of unease about the efficacy of our efforts. Corrie explains:

> I struggle with the role that my students feel they play in curriculum as a process. Most of them feel—believe—that curriculum is not something they have a role in. Curriculum, to them, is handed down, something done to them. I want them to leave my class feeling that they have a role in curriculum. They may not get to choose what the taught curriculum is in their schools, especially if they work in one of our city schools which use a very scripted curriculum package. They can, however, work in creating an environment in which other aspects of the curriculum—relationships, work products, evidence of learning—go beyond the formal curriculum. As I move forward in teaching this course, it is this part that I most fervently wish to emphasize.

Kami faces the challenge of finding examples of P-12 environments that approach curriculum-as-process, and:

> Project based learning and service learning are underutilized as models for curriculum …The factory model of education doesn't apply to the American workplace anymore…so why are we following it? There are places where progressive education happens - but I have never been able to find a way to show these to students.

As we move forward in our curriculum planning, we are still experimenting with how to model our understanding of curriculum for our students.

Our reflections, letters, and conversations document strong beliefs in the moral, critical, and relational dimensions of leadership. Infusing these dimensions into our written curriculum has been difficult for us. Indeed, we have been impacted by university and school accountability in our own courses to such an extent that we are left decrying, alongside Breault (2010) the sentiment that "it is no longer acceptable to look at social or political contexts when wrestling with issues of student achievement" (Breault, 2010, p. 298). We, too, struggle with the difference between enacting curriculum leadership and instructional leadership.

Discussion

We acknowledge that our vantage as pre-tenure, early-career faculty influences our perspective in this self-study. New faculty development is often oriented towards promotion and tenure (Reybold, 2005; Reybold & Alamia, 2008), and our reflections (while only partially included here) reflect that student evaluations and collegial perceptions influenced some of our thinking about curriculum and instructional leadership as we enacted our courses. Conflict between internal motivations, reality, and others' expectations are also hallmarks of this early career phase for new faculty (Reybold, 2005), so the tensions that we describe experiencing in our findings are, in some ways, not surprising.

However, self-study research is intended to promote "the transformation of self from unexamined to examined" (Lighthall, 2004, p. 219), and the early stages of this transformation are also apparent in our findings. We reframe our tensions as we begin to live our curriculum as a process of dialogical engagement, and modify our courses to include activities that will allow students to do the same. If program improvement in educational leadership is predicated on educational leaders becoming critically reflective practitioners, as Kottkamp suggests (2011), then the self-study methodology presents as useful for these purposes. Self-study research, like

ours, is grounded in the place where the "identity and integrity come together" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 161-2). Our findings illustrate how examining this intersection can be a useful exercise that influences faculty learning, program design and course development.

Leadership education has a history of shifting to meet the demands of socio-political influences, like NCLB (Breault, 2010). To put this in terms of curriculum and instructional leadership, we found that our programmatic struggles were similar to the struggles leadership students face in schools. We felt pressured to align to the standards that governed our programs and to students' wants to obtain skills of instruction. These pressures come from the multiple publics that influence our work: students, whose comments to us formally and informally suggested that they wanted more skills than ideas; colleagues, who struggle with us to align courses with programmatic accreditation standards; society, increasingly subjected to to market-driven forces of accountability; and ourselves, pre-tenure faculty members trying to balance breadth and depth of course content with the challenge of working with adult learners.

Alternately considering artifacts of our practice, scholarship, and our own beliefs and values as part of the self-study research has reified our beliefs that leadership and learning are processes and must be approached as such. The input-output model of learning, as exemplified in the managerial approach to leadership, falls far short of the needs of today's aspiring school leaders (Breault, 2010). Program standards can be used as outcomes indicators, but they were created with the same, often forgotten, original intention of content area standards in P-12 schools – to be used as guidelines that inform teaching, learning, and programmatic development.

A second implication of our work concerns our students' experiences with curriculum leadership. A task for us going forward is to continue to work with our colleagues to infuse process oriented thinking that attends to the diverse voices of the students, teachers, parents, and community members that teach and learn in schools near and far. Such thinking represents true curriculum leadership, transcends any focus on outcomes and disciplinary boundaries, and blends practical skills with educational leadership theory. Processes can be used to integrate the construct of curriculum through educational leadership programs, instead of restricting dialogue about instruction to the "curriculum course." Indeed, one of our most powerful realizations is that a process-oriented approach to educational leadership courses can facilitate the balance of depth and breadth of content.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly for this paper, we realize more than ever the challenge—and importance—of working with our students to make their leadership practices more inclusive. We have learned from our students the extent to which they feel unable or unprepared to make curriculum decisions. Indeed, as curriculum making has become what the students perceive as a district-level responsibility, our students wonder, at the beginning of our courses, what exactly being a curriculum leader means. They seem to understand and value the traditional instructional leader roles—evaluation, supervision and professional development, to name a few—but they cannot vocalize what it means to make curriculum, and want for experience with group process. It is precisely this emergent understanding of democratic participation that makes it even more complex to facilitate educational leaders' learning about the publics who can and should be included in the process of curriculum decision-making. Our students themselves feel, at times, voiceless. We have learned through this self-study the necessity of creating course spaces where they can exercise that voice, that modelling our beliefs and values for around multiple publics requires walking our talk. These teachings need to be explicit, political, and above all, public. It is towards this goal that we continue to strive.

Conclusion

In this self-study of our courses in curriculum and instructional leadership for aspiring school leaders, we have attempted to link our own challenges with understanding and teaching curriculum leadership, as we view it, to students in a context that favors the more skills-oriented knowledge of instructional leadership. Further, we have tried to show that we, as faculty members, are continuously learning how to facilitate students' understanding of participation in multiple publics. We have opened our syllabi to examination by both ourselves and here, by our colleagues in the field. This process of self-examination and change, as Kottkamp (2011) urges, is important before we can expect similar changes in our students.

Our work shows the challenges that we face to meet the expectations of our students and our programs while remaining true to our own beliefs about curriculum leadership and its potential for democratic leadership in all schools. We are not alone in this challenge; scholars and leaders alike are uncertain about what either curriculum or instructional leadership actually mean in practice (Leithwood et al., 2010) and have been for quite some time (Breault, 2010). Thus, we examine these challenges through exploration of our beliefs about curriculum

leadership, reflections on our syllabi, and discussion about how we have, and continue to, adapt our syllabi and our own curriculum to prepare our students not just for today's schools but for the schools of the future (Reitzug, 2010). This research is critical as we continue to learn the impact of leaders on schools, as they engage the challenges of balancing depth and breadth.

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