

# Implications From UCEA

## A Brief History of Leadership Preparation



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In 2009, the *Handbook of Research on the Education of School Leaders* was published by UCEA. The chapter discussed in this issue of *Implications*, introduces a conceptual model (see page 2) for describing the different kinds of knowledge and the interactions among technical knowledge, artistry, and individual and collective valuation. Specifically, *An Historical Review of Research and Development Activities Pertaining to the Preparation of School Leaders*, examines the primary building blocks of professional preparation, the history of their use in educational leadership, and evidence regarding the relative importance and utility of these building blocks in the development of competent practitioners.

### Five Concepts Depict Preparation

Standardizing and categorizing the components of preparation allows for longitudinal comparisons. Moreover, identifying specific variable components permits the accumulation of empirical evidence about their efficacy. We propose that the following five concepts can be used to describe what practitioner preparation looks like in any given profession at any given time: (a) induction, (b) curriculum, (c) structure, (d) delivery, and (e) field components. Our chapter explores and integrates research that has been conducted under each of these concepts in the field of educational leadership.

### Primary Contextual And Agency Influences

Among significant contextual factors are economic and societal globalization, technological advances that have revolutionized communication and where education takes place, the shift from government control toward market control of education, and the changing demographics in the United States. Systematic investigation of the context of leadership preparation in general has been lacking, which is especially troubling when external conditions are rapidly changing and are having an increasingly significant impact on educational institutions.

Agency factors are identified primarily as organizations or institutions intended to stabilize or change how school leaders are prepared, such as universities as host institutions, school districts as consumers, federal and state governments, and professional and philanthropic organizations. Our argument is that fluctuations in the degree to which school leadership preparation emphasizes technical knowledge or practice knowledge are the consequence of a complex array of these contextual and agency factors.

### Troubling Knowledge Gaps

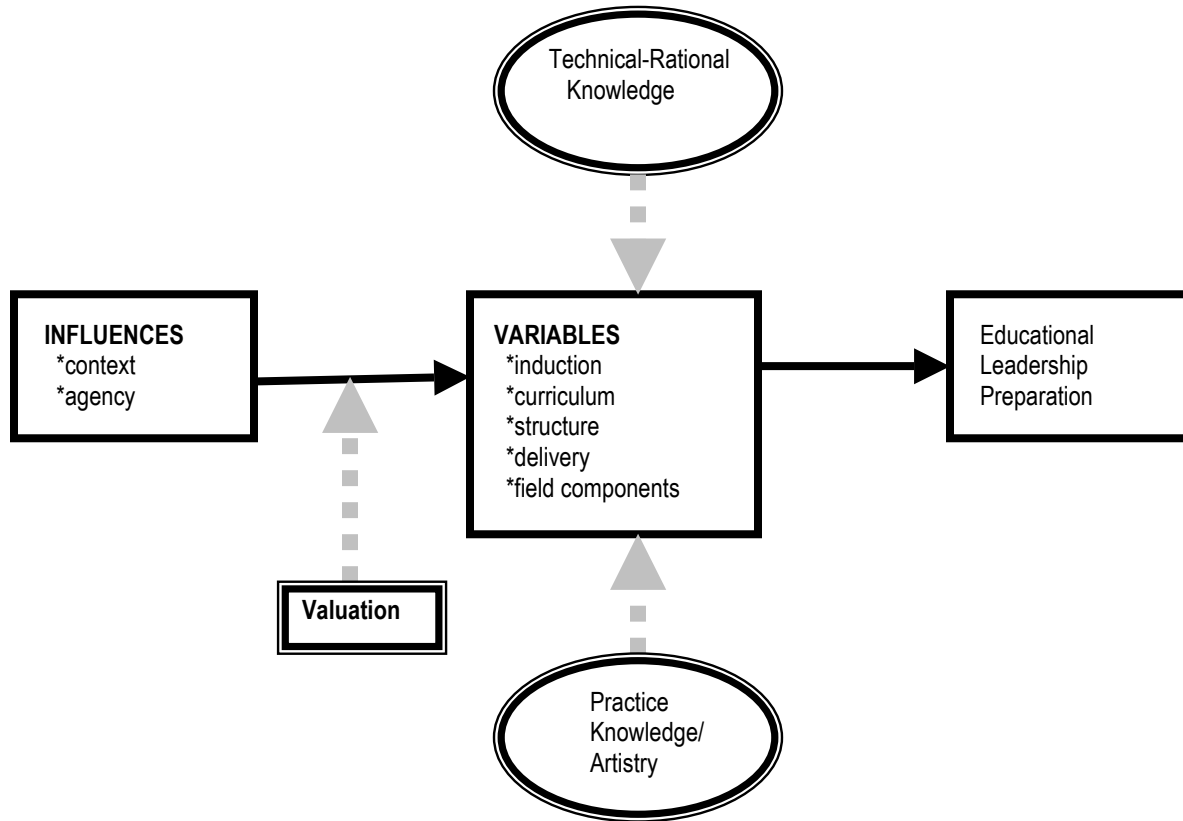
A review of research reveals more gaps than it does answers to questions regarding what constitutes best practice in preparing school leaders. Despite recent attention devoted to preparation program reform and the commitment of many institutions to rebuild their programs, significant changes have been modest.

Topics particularly in need of systematic research include: the characteristics of educational leadership students and faculty members, the structure and content of preparation programs across institutions, the effects of standards-based accountability, the effects of preparation programs on success as school leaders, the efficacy of administrative licensure requirements, and the merits of various alternative approaches to prepare school leaders.

### Implications for Future Research

These gaps may function as a suggested research agenda aimed at the systemic and incremental improvement of educational leadership preparation programs and the schools their graduates lead. Our field is at a crossroads, and we need credible research on leadership preparation to guide decisions that will affect generations to come.

## Model of Educational Leadership Preparation Formation



This issue of *Implications* was developed by Martha M. McCarthy, Indiana University and Patrick B. Forsyth, University of Oklahoma

### Reference

McCarthy, M., & Forsyth, P. B. (2009). An Historical Review of Research and Development Activities Pertaining to the Preparation of School Leaders. In M. D. Young, G. Crow, J. Murphy, and R. Ogawa (Eds.), *The Handbook of Research on the Education of School Leaders*. Newberry Park, CA: SAGE.



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