The Political Sense of Urgency for Educational Leadership Preparation Programs to Show Impact Data

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Higher education today is confronted with increasing marketization and aggressive regulation of the public sector. In an attempt to address these challenging issues, public universities are undergoing unprecedented change, particularly Colleges of Education. Redesigning educational leadership preparation programs, working in partnership with local school districts, and embedding field work are just some of the strategies that Colleges of Education have implemented to address these challenges. Now some states are requiring their public institutions to justify their educational leadership preparation programs' existence by showing the difference their program makes to their graduates and to the field. This article first discusses the reasons why educational leadership preparation programs need to show performance, value, and impact with a specific focus on Florida. Second, the article questions whether program faculty currently has the capacity to gather program impact data. Finally, the article describes strategies that program faculty can implement in order to develop robust impact statements.

The importance of clearly defining what successful learning or performance looks like has become increasingly evident during the past decade. Without a doubt, the better one understands what excellence looks like, the greater one's chances are for achieving—or surpassing—that standard. (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2011)

Program impact is an outcome measurement, "a systematic way to assess the extent to which a program has achieved its intended results. The main questions addressed are: What has changed in the lives of individuals, families, organizations or the community as a result of this program? Has this program made a difference? How are the lives of program participants better as a result of the program?" (The Evaluation Forum, 2000, p. 9)

Introduction

Higher education has become "market-obsessed," competing for students in a world where university marketing predominates, and where considerable effort is focused on ensuring that the product is perceived as superior to any other in the field. In 2003 David Kirp suggested that higher education as a market commodity is measured by student input (i.e., what students bring into the program) such as GRE scores, years of experience in the field, and job titles that imply success in the field. This process replicates the way the private market rewards firms with profits when they produce and sell units of the required quality. But this quantitative data tells a future purchaser of the program little about quality or consumer experience. In order to help the student consumer and to make the institutional choice less opaque, there are calls for increased accountability and improved assessment reverberating throughout all levels of higher education (Lydell, 2008; Pounder, 2011).

Historically, the assessment of student outcomes for graduate education has been limited (Lydell, 2008). But in the last decade graduate education has begun to operate in an international context and it is therefore important that universities benchmark their programs in a global environment. Recently, educational leadership faculty have been forced to examine "what goes on" within their graduate programs and, more specifically, what outcomes for students this education yields (Lydell, 2008) in an attempt to both ensure and market program effectiveness and quality. In fact, the most recent newsletter from Division A, American Education Research Association (AERA, Spring, 2013), Learning and Teaching in Educational Leadership Special interest Group highlighted the importance of program evaluation in the international arena by focusing on "Linking Administrator Preparation Programs to Student Outcomes," asking whether this is a "quixotic quest."

The focus of this paper, however, is program value and impact, not program evaluation. Program impact is increasingly important in the growing marketplace of higher education, particularly for public institutions delivering programs that address standards and criteria required by their state. In Article IX, Section 7(a), the Florida Constitution, establishes a system of governance for the State University System of Florida (11 public universities) "in order to achieve excellence through teaching students, advancing research and providing public service for the benefit of Florida's citizens, their communities and economies." One of the responsibilities of the Board of Governors is "avoiding wasteful duplication of facilities or

programs." To this end the State University System of Florida Strategic Plan 2012–2025, created by the Board of Governors, emphasizes three critical areas: Excellence, Productivity, and Strategic Priorities for a Knowledge Economy. Under the category of teaching and learning the governors highlight (a) strengthening the quality and reputation of academic programs and universities; (b) increasing degree productivity and program efficiency; and (c) increasing the number of degrees awarded in STEM and other areas of strategic emphasis. The governors state that "some unproductive academic programs are being re-tooled or terminated" (p. 7). The term "unproductive," is concerning depending on the lens being used (e.g., efficiency, contribution to the workforce, contribution to research and development, or contribution to a specific discipline or field).

Also in Florida, Senate Bill 1664 passed by the House (YEAS 110 NAYS 7) was presented to the Governor for signing, June 3rd, 2013. An issue of concern for educational leadership faculty is the fact that the bill states that a person with experience in "executive management," and a pass on the Florida Educational Leadership Exam (FELE) is eligible to obtain a temporary principal license with the proviso that they are mentored for three years. The proposer of the bill (Senator John Legg) believes this is in line with Florida's commitment to education choice. This further emphasizes the increasing need for university preparation programs to be able to show their impact in the field.

If all programs in public universities in Florida are being evaluated in the same manner, and if the role of the community/state colleges continues to move into areas that were previously the domain of universities (i.e., four year undergraduate degrees, teacher preparation), it is imperative that a university be able to show how a specific program can be differentiated from that in another public institution. This can be achieved by clearly articulating the value and impact of the program on the graduating individual, the educational field, school districts served, schools, and student achievement. If a university's program in Florida is unable to show impact, they may be viewed as "unproductive," making the program vulnerable to closure.

Faculty in educational leadership programs need to develop the capacity to evaluate the impact of their preparation programs and, as a field, develop a more sophisticated understanding of the preparation approaches that contribute to the school improvement work of graduates who become educational leaders (UCEA website). A search of marketing materials for educational leadership preparation programs finds frequent use of the term "impact," with a usual reference to program graduates making an impact in the field. Far too frequently, self-reported perceptions of administrators and teachers, accounts of program graduates' employment patterns, and in some cases reported measurements of student outcomes in schools led by program graduates are used to illustrate impact. However, objective causal linkages between program features and particular leadership behaviors and their effects on organizational dynamics, teacher practices, and targeted student outcomes remain opaque (Orr, 2011). Data on time-to-degree indicators while a common measure evaluative measure reveal nothing about program impact or quality but a lot about program efficiency.

Why Do Programs Need to Show Performance, Value, and Impact?

Impact requires a program to change attitudes or behavior, or benefit society (Diem, 1997). Identifying program impact is important for four reasons: (a) to justify the investment of public funding; (b) to earn and build professional, organizational, and political credibility and support; (c) to yield tangible data (quantitative and qualitative) that enable a public institution to show the

quality of their program(s); and (d) to satisfy the requirements of political bodies and funding agencies. Measuring impact is part of both the summative evaluation component, which judges the quality and worth of a program, and the formative evaluation component, which provides feedback to help improve and modify a program (University of Central Florida, Program Assessment Handbook, 2008).

Do Educational Leadership Preparation Programs Have the Capacity to Show Program Performance, Value, and Impact?

Currently, administrative preparation programs are under tremendous political pressure to demonstrate their value and impact on the performance of leaders whom they prepare and ultimately the schools that they lead. There are over 500 university-based educational leadership preparation programs in the United States, all of which are accountable to state and national leadership preparation standards and graduates' performance on the state leadership test (UCEA website, 2008). These university programs are now under scrutiny by critics external to the educational leadership professoriate who argue that educational leadership program content, rigor, and relevancy are generally suspect (Fordham Foundation, 2003; Hess, 2003; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Levine, 2005). Some states have responded to their critics—Iowa, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, and Louisiana—by pressuring colleges and universities to update their educational leadership training programs.

Arthur Levine, then-president of Teachers College, at Columbia University, concluded in 2005 that many university-based school leadership programs are engaged in a "race to the bottom," attempting to attract students by offering lower standards, ensuring less demanding course work, and awarding degrees in less time and with fewer requirements. Levine also noted that many programs fail to actualize the placement of school leadership graduates in administrative posts. In a parallel critique, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) report *Schools Can't Wait: Accelerating the Redesign of University Principal Preparation Programs* argues:

> There is a lack of urgency for refocusing the design, content, process, and outcomes of principal preparation programs based on the needs of schools and student achievement and little will happen until there are committed leaders of change at every level—state, university, and local school district. (Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2006, p. 4).

A 2007 Wallace Foundation survey of 22 higher education institutions concluded that "many universities are not getting the job done . . . [they] have moved at a glacial pace to make improvements, or have made only cosmetic changes" (p. 10). Furthermore, the report criticized leadership faculties for being overly concerned with maintenance of existing course work (often posited as evidence of meeting required standards), faculty independence in course content development, and potential losses in enrollment that might translate to decreases in revenue production.

Contextual Background: Development of Florida State Standards

In 1979 the Florida legislature passed the Management Training Act (FS 231.086), which outlined a new system for administrator certification. This system involved three major

partners—the state's universities, the 67 school districts, and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE). Each partner was assigned roles or functions. CoEs were tasked with teaching the knowledge base associated with the field of educational leadership. The act also specified that principals should be trained in competencies, identified by the commissioner of education, necessary to execute school-based management. It also authorized school boards to submit to the commissioner a proposed program designed to train school leaders.

Additional legislation in 1980 created the Florida Council on Educational Management (FCEM) (FS 231.087) to be controlled by the deputy commissioner of education, not CoEs. The council consisted of 17 appointed members (six principals, three university professors, three persons from private-sector management, one elected school superintendent, one appointed superintendent, one school board member, one person engaged in school district management training, and one person from the Department of Education). Duties of the FCEM included identification of requisite principal competencies, validation of these competencies, development of competency measurement and evaluation, production of policies for compensation, identification of screening, selection, and appointment criteria, and other related activities. The FCEM was also asked to create and adopt guidelines and a review process and procedures for program approval. CoEs' educational leadership programs were directed to offer in their program the following eight core curriculum areas: (a) public school curriculum and instruction, (b) organizational management and development, (c) human resource management and development, (d) leadership skills, (e) communication skills, (f) technology, (g) educational law, and (8) educational finance, plus six credit hours in either elementary, middle, secondary, or exceptional student education. School districts, through their respective human resource and management development (HRMD) programs, were expected to provide "hands-on" (performance of the 19 principal competencies adopted by the FCEM and all duties required by the district school board) through a type of administrative internship and management/principalship training program. The FDOE was given the responsibility for approval of Colleges of Education's curricula, districts' HRMD programs, and the administration of the required Florida Educational Leadership Examination (FELE).

In 1981, FS 231.087 was retitled as the Management Training Act and included revisions and additions (such as recognition of the Florida Academy for School Leaders and the connection of selection, appraisal, and training programs to certification).

In 1985, the legislature passed the Principals and Assistant Principals; Selection (FS 231.0861). This act was important as it prescribed a deadline (July 1, 1986) for compliance of districts to adopt and implement their approved, objective process for the screening, selection, and appointment of principals and assistant principals. It also provided strict guidelines concerning out-of state administrators moving into Florida and examination requirements for new administrators. Also in 1985, the legislature renamed FS 231.087 Management Training Act; Florida Council on Educational Management; Florida Academy for School Leaders; Center for Interdisciplinary Advanced Graduate Study. This revision created district program approval guidelines and a training network, and emphasized 19 Principal Competencies as well as yearly accountability.

Several state board rules were written and enacted in 1986 to provide criteria as written in the statutes for certification of principals and assistant principals. Florida School Principal Certification (SBER 6A-4.0081) addressed the requirements Levels 1, 2, and 3 Certification. Florida Educational Leadership Examination (SBER 6A-4.00821) concerned the written examination for certification (i.e., the Florida Educational Leadership Examination or FELE).

Specialization Requirements for Certification in Educational Leadership—Administrative Class (SBER 6A-4.0082) required three years of successful teaching experience, a master's degree, and successful completion of the Florida Educational Leadership Core Curriculum for initial certification. School Principal—Administrative Class (SBER 6A-4.0083) required documentation of successful performance of principalship duties through the Preparing New Principals Program. It also addressed the requirement of a district-based objective screening and selection system.

With the sunset of the law in 1999 requiring HRMD programs based on the 19 competencies, the state was required to develop new leadership standards. A Commissioner's Educational Leadership Summit was held in September 2002 to bring together business, higher education, and school district leaders to discuss educational leadership. The summit outcomes were an agreement to develop new educational leadership standards modeled after the Educator Accomplished Practices (EAPs), creation of "Standards Working Group" to research and draft standards, and a peer review process to promote stakeholder involvement (Florida Department of Education website).

In 2003 a series of meetings was held with representatives of school principal and higher education groups, along with selected school administrators, resulting in revisions to the Florida Principal Competencies and sample key indicators. Over 200 participants from 40 counties participated in the development of the standards. In addition, all current school principals in the state were sent the recommended standards and were asked to comment on them, along with representatives of the Florida Association of School Administrators (FASA), the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS), the Florida Association of Professors of Educational Leadership (FAPEL), and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) (Florida Department of Education website, 2013).

In 2005 the Florida Principal Competencies were replaced by the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FLPS), State Board of Education (SBE) 6B-5.0012. They served as the state's standards that Florida school leaders must demonstrate in preparation programs and in school administrator evaluations. FPLS were adopted into rule (6 A-5.080) by the State Board in 2006–07, and Educational Leadership and School Principal Certification programs were redesigned to implement the new standards in 2008.

In 2006 the Florida legislature passed the William Cecil Golden Professional Development Program for School Leaders (F.S.1012.986), which replaced the school districts' HRMD plan that was designed to meet the "sunsetted" Management Training Act. This act included the following goals: (1) provide resources to support and enhance the principal's role as the instructional leader; and (2) build the capacity to increase the quality of programs for preservice education for aspiring principals and in-service professional development for principals and principal leadership teams.

In 2012 the legislature adopted the Fourth Edition of the Competencies and Skills Required for Certification in Educational Leadership in Florida. The revised competencies and skills reflect an alignment to the revised Florida Principal Leadership Standards, Rule 6A-5.080, Florida Administrative Code (FDOE memorandum, 2013). The FPLS currently form the basis for all of Florida's leadership preparation programs and establish the core practices for leadership appraisal systems. Revisions to the competencies and skills consequently necessitated content changes across all three current FELE subtests resulting in a new examination, FELE 3.0.

Criticism of Colleges of Education

Under the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act (1990), higher education institutions are required to produce data on the following: (a) retention and graduation rates; (b) financial assistance available to students and requirements and restrictions imposed on Title IV aid; (c) crime statistics on campus; (d) athletic program participation rates and financial support; and (e) other institutional information, including the cost of attendance, accreditation and academic program data, facilities and services available to disabled students, and withdrawal and refund policies, to calculate and disclose a precisely and uniformly defined graduation rate. From the beginning there were doubts about the usefulness of using this rate to compare the effectiveness of institutions. The media were quick to create league tables, and, not surprisingly, opinion of the league tables among institutions varies depending on their ranking positions.

Major stakeholders such as state and federal legislators perceive the US educational system as falling behind international competitors. The Spellings Commission report by the US Department of Education (2006) accused American higher education of becoming what "in the business world, would be called a mature enterprise: increasingly risk-averse, at times self-satisfied, and unduly expensive" (p. xii). The commission called on higher education institutions to develop "new performance benchmarks designed to measure and improve productivity and efficiency" (U.S. Department of Education 2006, pp. 14, 19, 20). The National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education issued a report in 2005 that made similar recommendations.

But neither the Spellings Commission report nor the National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education explained how transparency, measurement, and accountability measures improve graduate education, specifically in educational leadership programs.

As criticisms mount, there is an increasing sense of urgency among Colleges of Education to be seen as relevant and essential to school leadership preparation. Colleges of Education are cognizant of the current critical narrative that accuses them of falling short due to academia isolation, elitism, and lack of understanding of current problems occurring in the field. This narrative is constantly reiterated as state- and national-level policy actors, urban districts, foundations, and private organizations question how best to prepare leaders, particularly given existing shortages of highly qualified principals and superintendents and the complex demands of leading school reform efforts.

Can Program Faculty Gather the "Best" Data?

How do we know that a program is a "quality program" and that its graduates are "quality educational leaders?" The first indicator in Florida would be whether the program is state accredited. In Florida there are eight private institutions offering Educational Leadership (EL) Preparation programs, 12 public institutions, and one district with a total of 5,132 candidates and 1,700 completers in 2011, the last year for which data is available. In 2012 the Florida Department of Education contracted with MGT of America Inc. (MGT) to review and examine the implementation of the Continued Program Approval Standards for teacher and school leader preparation programs in Florida's 48 institutions of higher education, as required under Part D of the Great Teachers and Leaders' portion of Florida's Race to the Top (RTTT) application (MGT report, 2012).

Further, the FDOE is also working with a Race to the Top (RTTT) committee, the Teacher and Leader Preparation Implementation Committee (TLPIC), to review the Continued Program Approval Standards, identify and recommend performance measures, review curriculum, and recommend modifications to the site visit processes. The TLPIC is currently exploring new ways to assess and improve educational leadership preparation at the state level. Its work is cognizant of the work of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Educational Administration—Special Interest Group Taskforce on Educational Leadership Preparation, and the recommendation by the National Conference of State Legislatures (2012) who identified the need to redesign preparation programs, develop tougher program accreditation, strengthen licensure and certification requirements, and provide meaningful mentoring programs and quality ongoing professional development. Turning their attention to program input, they recommended higher standards in recruiting, selecting, and retaining a talented pool of aspiring principals, and finally they recommended evaluating candidate and program effectiveness. The need to find meaningful outcome measures is one that states, organizations, and institutions are wrestling with.

Paradigm Shift: From Evaluation to Performance, Value and Impact

Literature on educational administration program value and impact is limited. In 2011 the Context for Success project, sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, brought together a group of scholars and policy makers to consider issues related to effective program evaluation focused on designing "input-adjusted metrics." With the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the consulting firm HCM Strategists invited a number of scholars from around the country to write papers that would discuss the methodological issues in accounting for differences in student populations when evaluating institutional performance. In some cases these authors were also asked to demonstrate the effects of such adjustments using actual data (Clotfelter, 2012). Seven papers were commissioned, along with an overview and a literature review. These will be available in September on the project website at http://www.hcmstrategists.com/contextforsuccess/.

The most authoritative study to illuminate the chain of causal influences between program design features and school outcomes was conducted by Orr and Orphanos (2011). Through the application of structural equation modeling, they found that the effect sizes of principals who graduated from exemplary preparation programs were significantly larger than principals who graduated from traditional programs on effective leadership practices, school improvement practices, and effective school culture.

In 2012 Davis and Darling-Hammond examined five exemplary preparation programs and found that only one program had multiple and robust measures that linked program features with graduates' effects on important school outcomes. The University of Illinois, Chicago, had developed an evaluation protocol that used a longitudinal approach with multiple measures of student and principal performance measures and comparative descriptive analyses between treatment and nontreatment programs, graduates (principals), and K–12 students in the Chicago public school system.

The nonprofit urban principal preparation program New Leaders has also accumulated a considerable amount of evidence about their graduates who become principals, their leadership practices, and various school and student outcomes. Likewise, the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, has developed an administrator preparation program

evaluation protocol that aligns principal behaviors, attitudes, and retention data with student achievement outcomes. In addition, the National Institute for School Leadership is engaged in the development of strategies to assess the relationship between certain administrative practices and student achievement (Davis, 2013).

The Council of the Great City Colleges of Education sponsors the Dr. Shirley S. Schwartz Urban Education Impact Award to honor an outstanding partnership between a university and an urban school district that has had a positive, substantial impact on student learning. Criteria for the award include employment data, leadership roles, and school value-added scores. In 2012 the College of Education at the University of Illinois, Chicago, won the award. It is worth noting that the award's criteria included the school value-added scores. This remains a contentious criterion as program graduates not in an administrative position may be required to use their teacher scores, which can be used to compare program completers while they are in instructional or nonadministrative positions as well as when they receive administrative appointments. But is this an impact measure for educational leadership program graduates?

Program Performance, Value, and Impact Strategies

Unlike undergraduate education there is no graduate version of the Collegiate Learning Assessment that measures a program's value added. In Florida, in order to graduate from a state approved program, a Beginning Effective School Administrator Candidate (BESAC) must pass the Florida Educational Leadership Exam (FELE). A standardized test of content knowledge that creates a standard measure of BESACs across all Florida-approved leadership programs. FELE as a measure of program effectiveness is therefore not influenced by intervening variables in the school setting impacting an accurate measurement of preparation program effects (FAPEL, White Paper, 2013).

The National Governors Association recommended that colleges and universities be funded based on the effectiveness of their graduates in the workplace, and to this end the state collects program completion data and employment data. But there are pragmatic issues with both. First, certain accountability expectations and assessments, such as completion time to program graduation, while informative, are insufficient to enable programs to strengthen capacity to develop quality leaders capable of leading continuous school improvement for all children and their schools (UCEA website, 2008). Second, employment data is affected by the intervening time gap between program graduation and successfully achieving a principal position. Intervening variables, such as Level 2 Certification programs, and professional development impact the program graduate. Further, across the state there is a lack of consistency among school districts of the assigned coding of school administrators' titles. Principal, assistant principal, dean, curriculum coordinator, community education coordinator, and any of the above as "interim" are counted as a school-based leadership position, but some may be instructional, nonadministrative positions (dean, curriculum coordinator, etc.). Personnel classifications are instructional/nonadministrative or administrative or classified. BESAC students fall in to the instructional/nonadministrative category and may remain there as teacher leaders either in schools or at the school district levels. Educational leadership program graduates require time to achieve a school leadership position. Further, time is then required to measure individual student and program impact in the field, assuming that appropriate methods can be found that are stable over a number of years.

In trying to identify appropriate program impact rather than program evaluation strategies, it is useful to be cognizant of Bennett's hierarchy of program cause and effect in response to a need to show program impact. Bennett (1975) developed a seven-step hierarchy that shows the causal links between the steps from inputs to outcomes. Program impact increases as you move through the hierarchy.

1. Inputs: Costs, time, and personnel
2. Activities: Workshops, field days, seminars, awareness-raising campaigns
3. Participants: Number of people, their characteristics
4. Reactions of participants: Degree of interest, likes and dislikes
5. Changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations
6. Practice change: Adoption and application of knowledge and skills
7. End results: Range of outcomes that might be desired in program delivery

Bennett pointed out that program designers must be able to answer the question: "How do you know this program was responsible for these impacts?" Bennett stated that the data required to measure program impact on clients (e.g., program graduates, school districts) can be gathered in only three ways: ask them, test them, or observe them.

Recent studies reveal that researchers have used a variety of quantitative (e.g., descriptive and inferential statistics, regression analyses, structural equation modeling, hierarchical linear modeling) and qualitative methods (e.g., case studies, grounded theory, and ethnography) to link program features with graduates' impact on school and student outcomes. However, much of the literature focuses on the aggregate characteristics of programs and their relationship to particular leadership practices, characteristics, or career outcomes (Darling-Hammond, LaPoint, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007; Hess & Kelly, 2005), which Bennett would categorize as low-level impact. Other research has assessed the relationship between preparation program elements and graduates' career advancement and retention (Orr, Silverberg, & LeTendre, 2006; Orr, 2011), which would be categorized at a higher level in Bennett's hierarchy. Current efforts to measure how programs impact particular principal practices and school outcomes could be categories in Bennett's highest level of program impact.

What Can Educational Leadership Programs Do to Develop Robust Impact Statements?

First, program faculty should be clear why they are gathering and publishing program impact, performance, and visibility data. Who is the desired audience? The answer to this question will determine how the impact data and statements will be used.

An effective, impactful program must be informed by horizontal and vertical communication. By this we mean that program design and desired outcomes should be grounded not only on state standards but on the input of all stakeholders, specifically program graduates and school districts served by the program. Such collaboration aids the gathering of program graduate performance data at prespecified points after graduation both from the graduate and from an independent agency. The development of a collaborative partnership in program delivery places a moral imperative on partners and stakeholders to help in the gathering of program data, which always proves difficult whether instigated by the program, the university, or the state.

Clifford, Behrstock-Sherratt, and Fetters (2012) described several program outcomes from which impact statements can be grounded, all of which reflect principal practice in the field: (a) a shared vision, (b) improving instruction, (c) a supportive learning environment, (d) managing resources, (e) positive relationships, and (f) ethical leadership.

The development of impact statements currently tends to be dependent on data gathered by university alumni offices that for some time have collected data on program graduates' employment status, promotion efforts, salary attained, and other additional data as requested by educational leadership faculty. However, educational leadership programs intent on gathering impact data need more specific information from their program graduates. Gathering such information is delicate and requires considerable open communication with the university's alumni department regarding their own timeline and information gathered.

Conclusion

The proliferation of a higher education market economy, alternative institutions, and alternative course delivery at traditional institutions require not only a reexamination of educational leadership graduate program assessment but also authentic awareness of program impact on the graduate and the school districts served. At the moment there is no known method that allows programs to establish irrefutable causal relationships between various program features and specific school outcomes. At best, analytic evaluation methods provide only estimates and approximations. This paper has argued that differentiating program evaluation from program impact is challenging but necessary for public universities offering an educational leadership preparation program. The development of reliable and accurate metrics for assessing the impact of educational leadership program graduates is promising and in the future will be the focus of considerable attention as it becomes paramount to the survival of some public university programs.

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