

Preface

A New Conception of the Knowledge Base of a Profession

The *Encyclopedia of Educational Leadership and Administration* was an enormous undertaking. After 2 years of work, over 260 professors, graduate students, practitioners, and association officials contributed more than 600 individual entries. The authors came from 125 universities, colleges, school districts, organizations, and associations in 36 states and several provinces of Canada. Their job was to describe the theories, research, terms, concepts, ideas, and histories that represent educational leadership and school administration as it is taught in preparation programs and practiced in schools and colleges today.

The initial list of entries came from culled lists of the most popular general texts in educational leadership and school administration published within the past 25 years, as well as the two handbooks of research in educational administration, edited by Norman J. Boyan in 1988 and Joseph Murphy and Karen Seashore Louis in 1999. Specialized texts representing teaching and learning, curriculum, psychology and motivation, budgeting and finance, law, statistics, research, personnel management, planning, and supervision were also consulted. In addition, professors conducting research were also encouraged to submit possible entries that were more recent and cutting-edge in nature.

The result is a picture of the most comprehensive knowledge base of educational leadership and school administration that has, as yet, been compiled. This representation of the “knowledge base” in the *Encyclopedia* represents the ideas, topics, concepts, terms, and theories that continue to resonate within the profession itself. Editing this work, it is clear to me that what we have is not a knowledge base as a platform resting on metaphorical pillars of support, but a *knowledge dynamic*, that is, clusters of ideas and

perspectives in juxtaposition with one another, often complimentary and sometimes contradictory, shifting and moving in simultaneously constructed fields. These multidimensional clusters are carried as living constructs in our applied field, and like the physical universe itself, *are expanding*. They are not “out there” somewhere, but “in there” in the minds, hearts, and aspirations of those toiling in the profession.

This work makes clear that attempts to erect professional standards on a “technical core” or partial knowledge base would be to recognize only a percentage of the entries in this *Encyclopedia*. The danger of this approach, now used in the construction of the national standards for educational leaders, would leave those who prepare future educational leaders with a false impression that they might somehow be doing the job by paying attention only to such a “core.” They do so at their peril. This is a false economy, not only from the perspective of the sunken and operational costs of erecting a competent preparation program but also of graduating future leaders who are totally prepared to face the challenges of leadership they will confront in the world of practice.

Unfortunately, in the past, we have mistakenly thought that our profession advanced somewhat linearly, and our constructed landscapes reflected this picture. That was the idea of progress. From such a metaphor firmly in our minds, some scholars would do a word search of a concept in the literature, and after a frequency count (and finding no more citations after a certain date) pronounce the concept, idea, or theory alive or dead. Some even referred to these portraits conveniently shelved in artificial periods as a kind of “paradigm shift.” This is incredibly naive. For example, Frederick Taylor’s scientific management is rarely cited

in the literature any more, but its main concepts have been renamed and are still in vigorous motion within our field. We see within this *Encyclopedia* that concepts and ideas take on new lives. They mutate like viruses. They take on different forms and find new adherents. And the unschooled in our ranks, or politicians and pundits outside of them equally unschooled, continue to advance agendas that have a long history and use renamed notions that have a whole lot of past baggage of which they were unaware. They then act surprised when there is no “reform.”

This new idea of a dynamic and expanding knowledge universe ought to make us wary of establishing a set of standards that draw the accreditation borders too tightly around preparation programs. Only dormant programs contain no anomalies, no ambiguities, or no contradictions. Good preparation programs will undoubtedly reflect uncertainty as well as internal inconsistencies if they are vibrant and rigorous, because no one person or agency controls the ideas, concepts, themes, or theories that are in contention for the development and application of new knowledge, especially not in a democracy. This is even more the case at research universities, where faculties are pushing the borders of the known. Doubt rather than certainty is the water of life for a program and a profession that is growing.

Educational leadership/school administration has been a service profession. School leaders were citizens of communities expected to be in service to all children. The new rhetoric of consumerism and the market metaphors aimed at “bottom-line” thinking are propelling the profession to consider changing that constellation to one anchored in the profit motive. Not that that seductive call has not always been around, at least since Raymond Callahan described it at the beginning of the last century. But somehow in the past, both professors and future educational leaders could take the metaphors with a grain of salt, and while the rhetoric was in the air, the service ethic was still the norm of the day. There is now a full-scale assault on the service ethic of the profession. The new language is finding its way into circulation and is represented in the *Encyclopedia* as well.

So the reader should know that the terms, ideas, concepts, research, and theories that are presented in this *Encyclopedia* are not those necessarily recommended by the editor, authors, or the publishers. They are merely in circulation. They animate our thinking, positively or negatively. Traces of their shadows from historical contexts color our vocabulary and shape

our conceptual fields. They define the possibilities. They include and exclude. They reveal and they conceal. The *Encyclopedia* is testimony to this continuous and contentious process.

The *Encyclopedia* also includes the people whose ideas, aspirations, and lives have contributed much to the profession. There are more than 75 short biographical sketches in these pages. They include the founders of the field, such as Ellwood Cubberley, and famous professors, such as Walter Cocking, Andrew Halpin, and Jack Culbertson. Skillful practitioners such as Ella Flag Young, Barbara Sizemore, Deborah Meier, Susan Miller Dorsey, Margaret Haley, and William Torrey Harris are also included. And there are the thinkers whose ideas still resonate loudly in education, such as Aristotle, Plato, John Dewey, B. F. Skinner, Abraham Maslow, Jean Piaget, and Sigmund Freud, who have left a lasting imprint. The increasing need to be more inclusive as the schools attempt to serve an increasingly diverse student body has brought strong themes of civil rights and social justice to the forefront. For this reason, the *Encyclopedia* includes biographies of Mary McLeod Bethune, Septima Clark, Thurgood Marshall, Fanny Coppin, Anna Cooper, W. E. B. Du Bois, Harry Hay, Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, Carter Woodson, and Felicitas Mendez. The biographies also include thinkers from the business field whose ideas can still be found, some for better or worse, in educational leadership and school administration: Frederick Taylor, Chester I. Barnard, W. Edwards Deming, Mary Parker Follett, and Douglas McGregor. Thinkers in disciplines that impact our applied field are also present, such as Max Weber, Thomas Kuhn, Carl Jung, Karl Marx, and Milton Friedman. The fact that the writings of such individuals have impacted educational leadership and school administration is testimony to the fact that ideas are the most contagious of all things in life. They are immortal and transcendent in the human story.

I would like to thank Dean Thomas James at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for his support in granting me a leave to complete this work. As an educational historian, Dean James understood the importance of such a venture as vital to advancing a professional field of studies. It is my hope that the result will be worth his trust in the efficacy of the project.

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