Dr. Cordelia Twomey

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS AND TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION IN THE URBAN SCHOOL SETTING

Martha Osei-Yaw

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Abstract

Acknowledgements

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METHOD

As discussed in chapter one, the purpose of this study is to identify and investigate the effective leadership characteristics exemplified by urban school leaders that have demonstrated sustained academic achievement at their school. Furthermore, this study seeks to examine 1) the impact of effective leadership characteristics on technology integration in elementary schools in urban districts, 2) the correlation between the leadership characteristics of principals and the effective integration of technology in urban elementary schools, 3) the correlation between the integration of technology and the impact on student achievement, 4) the impact of accessibility to technology resources and student achievement.

As part of the study, the researcher will identify schools in urban districts that have demonstrated academic excellence and the successful use of technology integration. The results of this study will be shared with school leaders in order to provide greater insights and best practices for technology implementation and alignment to the curriculum. Once school leaders determine their level of technology readiness, they will be asked to collaborate with key stakeholders at their own school in order to create an action plan for future implementation.

Research Method

This study consists of a Mixed-Method approach which will include content analysis, as well as, action research. Creswell states that the core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches

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 provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone (p.4). The action research will include a systematic inquiry to gather information about the accessibility of technology within the individual schools and the manner in which technology is being integrated into the curriculum. In addition, a self-reflection component will also be disseminated to building administrators to better determine the characteristics of the school leadership in the area of technology.

Content analysis will be incorporated as part of this research to summarize the findings from urban elementary schools that have demonstrated academic excellence and the successful use of technology integration. The results of the Technology Literacy Assessments of a particular grade within a large urban district in northern New Jersey will also be analyzed to determine if there is a correlation between the results of the TLA and the findings from the school leadership technology surveys.

 For the convenience of the reader the research questions previously stated in Chapter I are repeated here to restate the focus of this investigation:

1) To what degree do the leadership characteristics of principals impact technology integration in urban schools?

2) To what degree is there a correlation between the leadership characteristics of principals and the effective integration of technology in urban elementary schools?

3) To what degree does the integration of technology impact student achievement?

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4) To what degree does accessibility to technology resources impact student achievement?

Documents Used in the Study

Several key documents will be incorporated within this study and the appendices are included within this chapter. The Jersey City University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A) has granted permission to conduct this study. The superintendent of a large urban school district will receive a letter (see Appendix B) requesting permission to utilize and analyze the TLA to gather. Furthermore, the superintendent will also receive a letter (see Appendix C) written by the researcher requesting permission to complete a questionnaire on technology integration and principal leadership styles. Once the surveys have been received and the data has been compiled, the superintendent of schools of the above mentioned district in a large urban community in New Jersey will receive a letter (see Appendix D) requesting permission to discuss the national findings with the school leasers in his/her district. The superintendent of schools will also receive a letter (see Appendix D) requesting permission to conduct a school leadership technology survey (see Appendix E) and to disseminate an action plan template (see Appendix F). The action plan template will be disseminated to school leaders in order to develop next steps as part of district professional development.

As part of the study, extensive research questions were developed to guide the process.

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Resources

(Issues regarding my topic) A representative from the organization that has developed the TLA, which is a national educational digital solutions company, will be interviewed in order to gain his/her perspective on the leadership characteristics of principals in urban school settings and the impact on technology integration at the school level. In addition, the researcher will investigate the number of National Blue Ribbon Schools that have received their status as a result of licensing their digital solutions products. The results of the findings can be used to make informed decisions in terms of setting instructional goals in an effort to support student learning in the area of digital literacy and implementation. A website will be developed which will include resources and best practices of technology integration within urban schools.

A panel of experts will be called upon to review the questionnaire and to provide adequate feedback before the document is disseminated to the participants.

Participants

The first group participants in this study are principals and assistant principals in National Blue Ribbon Schools within the United States. Two hundred participants will be surveyed in all. Broad bases of educational institutions are reflected in this study including public and private elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. The schools selected in this study reflect excellence in demonstrating progress in closing the achievement gaps among student subgroups.

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The second group taking part in this study is principals and assistant principals in a large urban district in northern New Jersey.

Data Collection

Prior to collecting the necessary data, the researcher received permission from the New Jersey City University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and formal permission was granted.

The researcher will identify a testing instrument that will assess the leadership qualities of school administrators based on the ISTE Standards and the Performance Indicators (2009) (see Appendix E). The testing instrument will be aligned to the following ISTE Standards for Administrators: Visionary Leadership, Digital Age Learning Culture, Excellence in Professional Practice, Systematic Improvement and Digital Citizenship.

The assessment tool will also identify existing technology resources available at each of the schools. In addition, the instrument will include a demographic section related to the participants being surveyed and the demographics of the student population.

Once the instrument has been developed, a panel of experts will be called upon to review the validity of the questionnaire that is being disseminated to school leaders in National Blue Ribbon Schools throughout the country. Based upon their feedback, the survey will be adequately modified.

Before the testing instrument is disseminated, nationally acclaimed Blue Ribbon Schools will need to be identified. Once the schools are identified, the permission letters

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for the participants and the testing instrument will need to be photocopied and mailed to the respective parties. A reminder will be sent out two weeks prior to the submission date.

Upon receiving the completed questionnaires, the findings will be analyzed and presented via bar charts and graphs. The superintendent of schools in a large urban district in New Jersey will be contacted in order to share the findings with him/or her. Furthermore, permission will be requested to discuss the results of the study with administrators in his/her school district. Once the information is shared with the principals and the assistant Principals, an “action plan” will be developed by each of the participants. The purpose of the “action plan” is to develop goals and strategies that inform best practices to improve student achievement.

**Samples:**

IRB (see Appendix A)

Superintendent’s Approval (See Appendix B)

Superintendent’s Approval (see Appendix C)

Informed consent (see Appendix D)

School Leadership Technology Survey Tool (see Appendix E)

Action Plan Template (see Appendix F)

Data Analysis

Visually, the data will be presented using bar graphs and pie charts.

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Summary

The researcher will conduct a study aligned to the ISTE standards to determine if there is a direct correlation between the integration of technology and the leadership characteristics of school administrators in urban settings. The primary purpose of the analysis of the data collection is to determine the key factors may impact the use of technology in the classroom. Based on the findings, best practices will be shared with school leaders in an effort to increase technology usage and make greater gains in respects to student achievement.

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