

## ENHANCING “OJT” INTERNSHIPS WITH INTERACTIVE COACHING

*The intent of this article is to examine how the best type of internship, i.e., the full-time, job-embedded model can be enhanced using coaching. Before illustrating an exemplary internship program with coaching, this paper describes what an exemplary full-time, job-embedded internship experiences looks like and expounds on the importance of designing exemplary “OJT” job-embedded internship experiences and not settling for less. Subsequently, this paper examines briefly the literature surrounding coaching and how it benefits the internship experience. Upon completion of the coaching literature, we share the elements of an exemplary residency program implemented by the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) as part of their doctoral program (Ed.D.) for developing urban school leaders. And finally, we conclude this paper with policy recommendations for states to consider in designing an internship experience that fully inducts an intern into the real life world of school leadership.*

Internships have been touted as critical experiences in preparing effective school leaders (Barnett, Copland, & Shoho, 2009). Clinical experiences have been incorporated in educational leadership preparation programs for over fifty years (Chance, 1991; Foster & Ward, 1998). Initially borrowed from the field of medicine, internships or residencies were intended for practitioners to gain “on the job” (OJT) experience near the completion of their formal preparation (Milstein, Bobroff, & Restine, 1991). In the medical residency, an intern follows a practicing physician as they visit patients in a clinical hospital environment. The relationship of the intern to the physician is one of apprentice to master, or using a sports analogy, player-to-coach. The focus of “on the job” experience has been described in a variety of ways; however, in their description of internships in educational leadership preparation, Fry, Bottoms, and O’Neill (2005) explained:

A well-designed internship expands the knowledge and skills of candidates while also gauging their ability to apply new learning in authentic settings as they contend with problems that have real-world consequences. Built right, the internship becomes a sturdy vessel upon which new practitioners can navigate the swift, unpredictable currents that separate classroom theory and on-the-job reality (p. 3).

In reviewing internships in the field of educational leadership, the internship has been touted as a critical element of pre-service preparation (Barnett, Copland, & Shoho, 2009) and induction into the field. Yet, de-

spite its importance, educational leadership internships across the country vary considerably and are generally less than stellar in achieving their purpose of providing real life on the job experience for aspirants.

The intent of this article is to examine how the best type of internship, i.e., the full-time, job-embedded model can be enhanced using coaching. Before illustrating an exemplary internship program with coaching, this paper describes what an exemplary full-time, job-embedded internship looks like and expounds on the importance of designing exemplary “OJT” job-embedded internship experiences and not settling for less. Subsequently, this paper examines briefly the literature surrounding coaching and how it benefits the internship experience. After examining the coaching literature, we share the elements of an exemplary residency program implemented by the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) as part of their doctoral program (Ed.D.) for developing urban school leaders. And finally, we conclude this paper with policy recommendations for states to consider in designing an internship experience that fully inducts an intern into the real life world of school leadership.

### **Job-Embedded Internships**

In 2006, Murphy indicated there was a “revitalization of the internship” (p. 53) in educational leadership preparation programs and a corresponding increased emphasis on field-based activities directly affecting student learning (e.g., shadowing and interviewing administrators, working on projects affecting students and teachers). In a chapter written by Barnett, Copland, and Shoho (2009), they outlined the varying standards and experiences for internships across the country. Despite this variability of internship experiences, there is widespread acceptance and acknowledgement that the best internship experience is a model where the interns are relieved from their teaching responsibilities and given a full-time administrative experience under the watchful eye of the principal. The full-time, job-embedded internship is considered the best model for aspiring principals (Carr, Chenoweth, & Ruhl, 2003).

The full-time, job-embedded model allows aspiring principals to be immersed in on-the-job learning during their internship experience. As Shoho and Barnett (2010) discovered in their study of new principals, nothing replaces “on the job” experience. Almost universally, new principals identified “on the job” experience as the most valuable learning opportunity in their development as school leaders. While the job-embedded model represents a small number of internship programs across the country, its appeal is growing, especially if preparation programs are able to establish strong linkages with school districts or capitalize on legislative mandates. For instance, the University of Illinois at Chicago has established a long-standing partnership with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) that supports full-time paid residencies. One frequent criticism of full-time job-embedded intern-

ships is their cost. There is no doubt that the cost associated with supporting full-time paid job-embedded internship is expensive, but the real question is can school districts and university preparation programs continue to operate otherwise, given the high turnover rate of principals, especially in high need urban schools? Similar to successful learning organizations that invest their resources in human capital, school districts and universities must change their paradigm on internships, emphasizing quality over quantity in terms of learning experiences that prepare aspirants to assume the roles and responsibilities of an effective principal.

By providing interns with full-time extensive experiences, interns learn about the organizational culture and operating norms of the schools where they are placed. It also allows them to be socialized into the community of school leaders. The UIC program is founded on ten factors which (see Table 1). As the logic model illustrates, these ten factors are meant to nurture leadership knowledge and skills to develop a school's organizational capacity to support instructional practices to achieve high levels of student learning.

**Table 1**

*UIC's Ten Factors for Building Urban School Capacity for Improved Student Learning*

| Logic Model  |  |
|--|--|
| Leadership ⇒ Organizational Capacity ⇒ Instructional Practices ⇒ Student Learning  |  |
| <p>UIC's theory of action: <i>The principal is most effective as the leader of improvement – specifically improving student learning—when s/he engages key individuals in leadership roles, develops a climate of trust through strong relationships, creates a sustainable culture with high aspirations and expectations, and builds professional communities focused on improving both adult and student learning. UIC views the process of transformational school leadership in terms of ten closely related factors:</i></p> |  |
| <p>To build a culture of shared responsibility for achieving high aspirations, the school must:</p>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attract, enlist and develop a leadership team of highly qualified teachers who see it in their self-interest to co-lead, with the principal, the building of a highly effective learning community capable of doing all of the following items.</li> <li>2. Establish among students, parents and teachers a detailed, pro-active set of expectations for the behavior, interpersonal conduct and academic performance of all parties who shape the school-wide and classroom culture of the school. This culture should make clear on a daily basis the correlation between academic success, effective habits and a productive and fulfilling life.</li> <li>3. Establish grade-level and content-specific teams that develop goals, strategies, classroom assessments and tracking tools that are used on a daily or weekly basis by the team to document progress and modify practice for the purpose of measurably increasing the learning of all of the children in each grade level.</li> </ol> |

*(continued)*

**Table 1** (continued)

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|--|---|
| To establish structures and systems to realize those aspirations, the school must:           | <p>4. Develop written course outlines, or curriculum maps, for each grade level and content area that are based on state standards, test score analysis and teacher knowledge of student work. Curriculum and instruction for literacy, numeracy, and higher order skills receive heavy emphasis in these course outlines.</p> <p>5. Develop structures, tools, and procedures to ensure that every teacher in the school is engaged in mastering a wide and deep range of instructional practices and classroom management strategies that ensure the high achievement of every child.</p> <p>6. Establish a highly transparent, school-wide data tracking system to which everyone has the access and ability to analyze the implementation and results of all goals and strategies.</p>  |
| To provide the necessary technological and human supports for such systems, the school must: | <p>7. Develop the social and emotional supports needed by everyone to engage in the above efforts and achieve at the level defined. The school leadership team recognizes that human relationships are at the heart of sustainable school change, and that social and emotional learning [for students, staff, and administration] are important to achieving transformative school goals.</p> <p>8. Integrate technology into the management and execution of instructional practice through strong learning communities.</p> <p>9. Develop specific strategies for engaging parents in the daily support of their children's learning development and achievement.</p> <p>10. Be able to manage up and out as well as manage down. That is, not only must school leadership have the organizational and management skills to implement and sustain complex change at the building level, but it must also have the political and interpersonal skills to work productively with system level officers and community stakeholders to achieve school goals.</p> |

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This strong emphasis on developing organizational capacity to foster effective instructional practices lends itself to developing urban leaders who can lead professional learning communities as touted by DuFour and Eaker (1998).

While the job-embedded internship has an intuitive appeal, there is not much empirical, evidence-based work that focuses on its effects or outcomes. As noted by Barnett, Copland, and Shoho (2009), despite the scant empirical literature on internships, there are some areas where internships seem to have an impact. These involve: (a) a better understanding of the role conceptions of the principalship; (b) being socialized to what it means to be a principal; (c) developing skills through “real” experiences on the job; and (d) the importance of developing a support network or finding a mentor or coach to share ideas in a safe environment. It is this last area on which this article focuses its attention. While there has been extensive literature on mentoring and its importance for new leaders, mentoring is distinctive from coaching. The coaching literature, while predom-

inant in the corporate sector, is a relatively new phenomenon in educational circles, especially in developing principals and other school leaders.

## **Coaching for Leadership Preparation and Development**

Peer coaching in educational systems has primarily been used for teacher development, especially for teacher induction or remediation (Garmston, 1987; Joyce & Showers, 2002). In recent years, however, more attention has been devoted to how coaching prepares aspiring school leaders and supports practicing administrators (Barnett & O'Mahony, 2008). As a result, many school systems are embracing coaching as a way to influence and enhance leaders' skill development, cognitive abilities, and emotional intelligence (Crow & Matthews, 1998). This section provides an overview of coaching for school administrators by focusing on how the concept has been conceptualized, the benefits of coaching, qualities of effective coaches and programs, and the potential limitations of coaching relationships.

### **What is Coaching?**

A variety of professions use coaches, including business and industry (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000), teacher education (Jonson, 2002; Portner, 1998), and graduate education (Brause, 2002). Most definitions of coaching do not view this as a supervisory or evaluative process; rather, effective coaches promote change by establishing their credibility and developing meaningful relationships with their coachees (Taylor, 2008). Leadership coaching involves two people setting and achieving professional goals, being open to new learning, and engaging in dialogue for the purpose of improving leadership practice (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005; Robertson, 2005).

Often, the terms *coaching* and *mentoring* have been used interchangeably; however, there are clear conceptual and practical distinctions between these developmental processes. Mentoring tends to be a long-term relationship between a senior person overseeing a protégé's career development (Douglas, 1997). In contrast, coaching has "a more narrow focus, notably relating to an individual's job-specific tasks, skills or capacities" (Hobson, 2003, p. 1). Typically, observation, instruction, demonstration, and feedback are provided in coaching relationships (Gray, 1988). Although mentors may have good coaching skills and be able to nurture strong relationships, they need not have strong coaching skills (Grant, 2001).

### **What are the Benefits of Coaching?**

Although there are limited studies documenting the empirical effects of coaching (Hobson, 2003), the general sentiment is that coaching has the potential to provide numerous benefits for school leaders.

The rationale for leadership coaching has been espoused by Barnett and O'Mahony (2008), who claim that the process: (a) is a flexible way for two people to devote time for interacting and reflecting on leadership issues, (b) allows for social interaction and personalized support, (c) focuses on the realities of school leadership, and (d) complements other workplace learning activities (e.g., job shadowing, book studies).

Several small-scale studies of leadership coaching validate the value of the process, especially for novice principals. On one hand, beginning principals report being extremely satisfied with having coaches during their first year on the job (Robertson, 2005; Strong, Barrett, & Bloom, 2003). They appreciate the opportunity to examine important issues, including conflicts with staff, external demands from their district, time management, parental and community expectations, and the legacy of previous administrators (Strong, Barrett, & Bloom, 2003). On the other hand, leadership coaching has been reported to help novices increase their self-confidence and reduce isolation (Bolom, McMahan, Pocklington, & Weindling, 1993; Daresh, 2004), enhance their instructional leadership, strategic leadership, and problem-solving skills (Rich & Jackson, 2005; Robertson, 2005; Strong, Barrett, & Bloom, 2003), and influence their decisions to remain on the job (Strong, Barrett, & Bloom, 2003).

### **What are the Qualities of Effective Coaches and Programs?**

**Coaching qualities.** To be effective, coaches need to possess specific skills and attitudes when working with individuals who aspire to leadership roles or are practicing school administrators. Killion and Harrison (2006) specify five components of effective coaching: (a) build relationships, (b) serve as change agents, (c) focus on improving teaching and learning, (d) gather small-scale formative assessment data, and (e) identify and provide resources. Perhaps the most important aspect of the coaches' role is to be able to develop strong relationships and rapport with their coachees. Without this foundation, coaches stand little chance of being viewed as credible resources, capable of providing genuine support and guidance. The leadership coaching literature describes the importance of relationship development for this process to succeed. Coaches build solid relationships by formulating trust, providing emotional support, and focusing on agreed-upon goals (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005). Solid relationships form as coaches schedule time to meet, prepare agendas, and carefully listen and observe (Rich & Jackson, 2005). Coachees report being motivated to work with individuals who are sincere, reliable, and competent (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005); authentic and credible (Panasuk & Lebaron, 1999); and who allow them to take risk (Ross, 1989).

**Program qualities.** To assume that successful administrators automatically know how to coach aspiring or practicing school leaders has been found to be fallacious. The most successful coaches are involved

in programs that prepare and support them to work effectively with their coachees (Barnett & O'Mahony, 2008; Strachan & Robertson, 1992). Hopkins-Thompson (2000) discovered that successful leadership coaching programs: (a) have organizational support, (b) establish clear outcomes, (c) carefully screen, select, and train coaches, (d) focus on learner needs, and (e) constantly monitor and evaluate the process. Based on their experience at the New Administrators Project (NAP) working with first- and second-year administrators, Bloom, Castagna, Moir, and Warren (2005) found the most effective coaches: (a) have at least five years of leadership experience, (b) have previous coaching experience, (c) complete formal training, and (d) participate in ongoing professional development. Finally, effective coaching programs ensure partners maintain regular and sustained contact, realize matches work best when coaches have leadership experience in similar types of schools as their coachees, and understand coaching relationships may take extended periods of time to develop and may extend beyond the formal operation of the program (Barnett & O'Mahony, 2008; Strachan & Robertson, 1992).

### **What Are the Limitations of Coaching?**

Despite the promise of leadership coaching, there are various situations and circumstances that can inhibit or minimize coaches' influence. On one hand, coaches may not be well suited to the role, depending on their experiences and qualifications. Problems may arise if they are unable to provide individual support (Bloom, Barrett, & Strong, 2003), are insensitive to working with adult learners (O'Mahony & Barnett, 2008), unwilling or unable to devote adequate time to develop the relationship (Bloom, Barrett, & Strong 2003; Hobson, 2003; Robertson, 2005), or are reluctant to share and retain confidential information (Bloom, Barrett, & Strong, 2003). On the other hand, coaching programs can be compromised when they do not provide adequate training and support, (Hobson, 2003), inappropriately match coaches and coachees (Hobson, 2003), and do not encourage coaches to use reflective questioning strategies (Robertson, 2005).

### **Coaches' Influence during Internships**

During their internship experience, students typically are assigned a school-based administrative supervisor (typically the principal where the intern works) and a university-based faculty supervisor (Barnett, Copland, & Shoho, 2009). Because school and university supervisors have many other job responsibilities, they cannot devote much time to actively and consistently observe, demonstrate, and engage in reflective conversations with interns, problems that plague ineffective coaching programs (Hobson, 2003; Rich & Jackson, 2005; Robertson, 2005). As a result, internships become fragmented and disjointed experiences, diminishing the

potential to impact interns' leadership development. However, if trained coaches were allowed to spend concentrated periods of time with interns (e.g., three to five hours per week), the impact on interns' growth and development could be substantial. Coaches could collaborate with principals to allow interns to spend considerable time on instructional leadership activities (e.g., professional development, teacher observation, data analysis), and important management tasks (e.g. scheduling, budgeting, managing facilities), events that most interns rarely have the opportunity to experience (Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neal, 2005).

**Career stages.** As a result of these intensive interactions with coaches, interns would be socialized to the realities of school leadership much earlier in their careers, easing their transition into the role. Earlier personal, social, and professional experiences greatly affect beginning administrators' job expectations and perceived abilities to succeed (O'Mahony & Matthews, 2003; Reeves, Moos, & Forrest, 1998; Weindling & Dimmock, 2006). In their first few months on the job, novices strive to understand the dynamics of their schools, assess staff members' strengths and capabilities, and determine areas of need (Day & Bakioglu, 1996; Parkay & Hall, 1992). After about six months on the job and throughout their second year, novices begin to initiate action and implement change (Reeves, Moos, & Forrest, 1998; Weindling & Dimmock, 2006). Astute coaches can help interns recognize these common career stages and determine effective ways to address these predictable socialization experiences.

**Job challenges.** Furthermore, coaches can help interns anticipate the typical challenges new administrators face, ones they often are not prepared to deal with effectively. For instance, newcomers confront teacher resistance (Nelson, de la Colina, & Boone, 2008; Woodruff & Kowalski, 2010) are compared with their predecessors (Briggs, Bush, & Middlewood, 2006; Cheung & Walker, 2006); encounter substantial workload demands (Sackney, Walker, & Gorius, 2003; Slater, Garcia, & Gorosave, 2008), and are pressured by policymakers, community members, and parents to improve student performance (Briggs, Bush, & Middlewood, 2006). In addition, novices have acknowledged the importance of understanding how their personal and professional qualities align with what is required for leadership success. Examples include demonstrating emotional intelligence, being flexible, treating other people fairly and equitably, having strong communication skills, developing productive working relationships, and having strong organizational skills (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012).

If coaches devote considerable time to these tasks and topics, novice administrators would be better able to "hit the ground running" by anticipating and addressing the job realities much earlier in their careers. Their initial culture shock when beginning the job would be reduced, allowing novices to spend more time on teaching and learning processes. The sooner administrators are able to establish goals and expectations, co-

ordinate instructional programs, promote sound professional development programs, and ensure an orderly and supportive learning environment, the more likely their schools will begin to see dramatic increases in student learning (e.g., Leithwood, Anderson, Mascall, & Strauss, 2009; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Similarly, if coaches continue working with novices once they enter the workforce, they not only can help beginners develop a more strategic view of the school, clarify their personal visions, establish long-term goals, and make more sound instructional decisions, but also maintain their motivation to remain on the job. To illustrate how effective coaching enhances an internship experience, we highlight the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) coaching program with the Chicago Public Schools. What is unique about this program is that the UIC internship is a full-time paid residency, i.e., a job-embedded placement with full-time coaches to provide individualized support during this time, as well as the first three years of their administrative careers.

Since the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to meet the challenges of urban leadership are so extensive and require considerable time and experience to develop, UIC decided to situate the program in an educational doctorate (Ed.D.) rather than a traditional Master's program or a Ph.D., which is better suited to developing researchers and policymakers. Below, we describe the UIC/CPS residency program, paying particular attention to the role of coaching to enhance the experiences of the residents.

### **Coaching Components of the UIC Urban Principal Preparation Ed.D. Program**

The key components of the UIC residency program are:

- A one-year, full-time paid residency funded by CPS and administered by UIC under the terms of CPS/UIC memorandum of understanding (MOU)
- Coaching for a one-year residency and for the first three years of their principalship by a full-time UIC coach who is a recently retired CPS principal with a transformational student achievement record. It must be emphasized that coaches must have a demonstrated record of success in leading high-performing urban schools

**The one-year paid residency.** In May of each year, a process begins to match those candidates going into a paid residency with a residency site and a mentor principal. The primary role of the mentor principal in the UIC program is to be leading a transformational process in his/her school as defined by the UIC theory of action described in the UIC 10 factor framework. This creates the opportunity for the resident to see how a leader, on a daily basis, goes about the work of establishing a high performing professional culture in a previously failing CPS school in the face of multiple obstacles. That theory of action is:

The principal is most effective as the leader of improvement—specifically improving student learning—when s/he engages key individuals in leadership roles, develops a climate of trust through strong relationships, creates a sustainable culture with high aspirations and expectations, and builds professional communities focused on improving both adult and student learning through collaborative data analysis and problem-solving (See Table 1).

UIC selects mentor principals from among those students in its Ed.D. program who have a substantial percentage of the 10 factor framework established in their school, whose student achievement score gains exceed the CPS average, who have demonstrated their ability to mentor and develop leadership in their school, and who commit to the mentor principal responsibilities outlined in the residency syllabus. UIC's mentor principal recommendations are forwarded to CPS for final approval.

Incoming residents develop a profile of their developmental needs and indicate the conditions that they would like to see in a residential site. That information, along with a resume, is sent to all approved mentor principals. Approved mentor principals compile a list of the things that they are looking for in a resident and a list of the potential residency projects that could be undertaken at their school that would give the resident the experience needed to develop his/her instructional leadership skills and pass the rigorous CPS principal qualification process. That, in addition to the report card on their school, is mailed to all residents. Shortly after completion of these information exchanges, a matching session is arranged to allow all parties to meet each other individually and indicate their first through fourth preference. Based on that information and the judgment of the UIC team, residency recommendations are sent to CPS for final approval.

In the first week of July, residents report to their residency sites and are given a week to get acclimated and initiate their relationship with the mentor principal and others on site. During the second week, the UIC assigned coach meets with the resident and mentor principal to begin the discussion of goal and action plan development for the residency. The selection of those goals is guided by developmental needs of the resident, the 12 CPS principal leadership success factors which must be met to make the principal eligibility list, and the development needs of the residency site as defined by the mentor principal. For the remainder of July and into August, residents are building the relationship with their mentor principals, opening up the relationship with other members of staff, parents and community leaders, familiarizing themselves with the School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement (SIPAAA), the budget and key performance data on the school and continuing to refine their goals and action plan for the residency in weekly meetings with their UIC coach. They also determine which one of those goals will become the CPS instructional change project which must be written up and submitted for approval to CPS along with a budget of \$3000, which they must manage throughout the residency using the school's budget program.

During this same period, assistant principals admitted to the program are also meeting with their coach and principal to design residency goals that will give them the same developmental opportunities that are afforded the residents. From this point on, every aspect of the residency being described also applies to the assistant principal residents. Part of the logic for this is driven by the school system: to become a principal in CPS, a candidate has to pass a rigorous, multi-part assessment, regardless of prior experience. The residency enables assistant principals and former teachers alike to work with coaches toward the common goal of successfully passing that eligibility assessment. This is no small feat, as the failure rate for candidates who are NOT enrolled in a UIC or other principal residency program is over 70%.

Coaches are observing residents in their interaction with staff in the building and others. Often there are opportunities to plan and conduct professional development for teachers, manage summer school programs and do home visits. The key things that coaches are checking at this stage of the residency are interpersonal relationship skills, data analysis skills, goal setting and action planning skills, professional development skills, disposition for proactivity, problem-solving and follow-through, and the residents' credibility as instructional leaders with teachers.

Toward the end of August, coaches are insuring that each resident has significant responsibilities for "school opening duties" and getting their goals and action plans in final form. Mentor principals, residents, and coaches meet once toward the end of August for presentations by each resident on the goals for his/her residency plan. The mentor principal gives his/her take on the performance of the resident to date. The coach is also meeting with the mentor principal and resident separately to make sure that resident/mentor principal relationship is on solid ground with a high degree of mutual confidence in its potential success. Residents are also attending their first classes for two required courses. Residents who are not performing satisfactorily are given program counseling at this date; if the problem has been a recurrent one and progress is not satisfactory, an alternative residency placement may be considered or the resident may be counseled out at the end of the summer.

From September through the end of the calendar year, the resident is:

- Beginning action on residency goals
- Getting into classrooms and doing observations related to residency goals; leading meetings with teams related to those same goals and to administrative assignments s/he may have
- Meeting with the mentor principal daily to participate in key experiences with the mentor principal and once a week for deep reflection on his/her core performance
- Meeting monthly with the coach and mentor principal to evaluate the resident's performance using the CPS 12 success factors, which they must meet to get on the principals' eligibility list

- Engaging in a monthly day-long Friday meeting at one of the residency sites, where the host resident and mentor principal do a presentation on the history of the school under the leadership of the mentor principal, do classroom observations, personally assess the school's progress and host a panel of students and teachers who discuss their experience in the school. Time is also set-aside for residents to discuss their residency goal progress with coaches other than their own, in order to get multiple perspectives on their work.
- Meeting weekly for at least two hours to do one or more of the following tasks:
  - \* Observing the resident giving feedback to a teacher, leading a team meeting, conducting a professional development (PD) session, carrying out one of his/her administrative duties
  - \* Conducting a walk-through with a resident and checking notes on how each one assesses the things that they observed
  - \* Examining the tools that the resident is developing to monitor progress on the residency goal with his/her team
  - \* Engaging in a deep discussion about problems, challenges and success that the resident is experiencing in the implementation of residency goals and the residency overall
  - \* Evaluating how the relationship is going with the mentor principal and all of the other people in the building
  - \* Analyzing key school data and what is improving because of the resident's efforts, where that question is relevant
  - \* Assessing how the resident is managing stress. Key question: Is the resident able to be relational, relaxed, reflective, creative and strategic with his/her residency goal team members in spite of pressures of a heavy residency and UIC class load?
- Participating in three full-day Friday sessions in December during which the residents and coaches meet to vet their written progress reports on residency goals using the CPS success factors, they check the degree to which they are assembling evidence that they meet those success factors and to practice their ability to orally respond to questions from fellow residents and coaches about how their work documents their leadership skills.
- Spending January, February and March focusing on "driving for results" on their residency goals, building their relationship with their network chief (the person who supervises the work of their mentor principal and 24 other principals for CPS), and completing their application to be certified by CPS for the principals' eligibility list. That application includes a resume and three essays of 500 words each, providing evidence of their skills and abilities as described by the 12

success factors. They also take the eligibility assessment, consisting of a series of interviews and paper and pencil tasks.

- Devoting their attention from April to the end of June to complete their residency goals and applying for principal jobs if they passed the eligibility process, or applying for assistant principal jobs if they didn't. Those who don't make eligibility will have the opportunity to apply again in a year; our experience is that they make it the second time around. Each year only one or two of the UIC residents fail the assessment on their first try. Throughout the period from January to the end of August, their coaches continue to meet with them to prepare them for eligibility and for their job search. Coaches are not only coaching, but also using their relationships to develop leads for job interviews. Mentor principals are doing the same. Where it is possible, coaches also attend job interviews to directly observe the residents' interviewing skills and giving feedback.

**The coaching process: Why are coaches needed in addition to mentor principals?** The UIC program faculty believes that coaches are needed in addition to mentor principals for the same reason that clinical faculty are needed in addition to supervising classroom teachers in teacher preparation programs—only more so, because of the greater complexities of the position. The personal attention required for such development goes beyond what mentor principals can afford to provide, given their primary leadership responsibilities. There are a limited number of principals who have produced transformational results in previously low performing urban schools. While a mentor principal can only handle one resident at a time, a coach with proven transformational skills and results can work intensely with at least 10 residents at a time.

**Coaching approach.** In the residency phase of the program, our coaches are guided by the program's theory of action, the developmental needs of the resident measured against CPS standards, the requirement for the successful completion of the residency goal and action plan, and the CPS MOU requirement that a significant percentage of residents pass the CPS eligibility assessment. UIC coaches use the wide range of coaching strategies described in *Blended Coaching* (Bloom et al., 2005). Facilitative, instructional, collaborative and consultative coaching are used as the situation demands, but the strategy most frequently used is transformational coaching, because it forces the resident to reflect on who they are and who they need to become in order to be transformational, rather than focusing primarily on the acquisition of skills and knowledge.

**Coaching of first through third year principals.** While every school has its own unique developmental needs, there are core efforts that need to be undertaken in every school by a new principal. Although these efforts are described sequentially, the actual implementation is simultaneous and iterative:

- Analyzing all of the key student achievement, administrative and dashboard data on the school to help shape the conversation with teachers and parents about the first year strategy for the school
- Conducting individual meetings with all school personnel and local school councils (LSC) for the purpose of opening relationships, getting a sense of their concerns and priorities for the school, and to get their take on the principal's own preliminary assessment of the school. These are the beginning steps for establishing trust and transparency.
- Initiating relations with key community leaders, public officials, local social service agencies and local media
- Developing a plan for maintaining and re-norming the vision, climate, and culture of the school
- Preparing for the return of teachers, students and parents to the school
- Establishing various grade level, departmental, and instruction leadership teams and setting a timetable for them to establish their goals, strategies and inquiry cycle patterns
- Establishing the two-way communication strategies that will establish a sense of direction, purpose, and transparency
- Getting into classrooms on a daily basis for supportive culture building and instructional purposes, but also for assessment purposes: beginning the process of determining who can lead, who can improve and who needs significant support
- Establishing a relationship with their Network Chief and beginning the process of setting goals and expectations.

These are just a few of the things that a new principal has to initiate in his/her school. UIC coaches have all put such steps into practice in their own work, and they spend a great deal of time during July, August, and September with their new principals insuring that they are taking these steps while reflecting on what they are experiencing and learning as they undertake these efforts. Our coaches have to work hard at getting their new principals to understand that they have to make time for all of these key strategic priorities, rather than simply reacting to operational and crisis pressures and emergencies.

The coach's key message is that the principal's key responsibility is to engage and develop leadership teams that help them put in place the systems and routines that develop a reflective professional learning community with a culture of high expectations that is learner-centered and can overcome all obstacles. UIC coaches are in these schools on a weekly basis, accompanying principals as they do classroom observations, attend key meetings, do walk-throughs, examine data—all for the purpose of getting them to be reflective, strategic, relational and proactive about what

they are experiencing. Their main job is not to advise them, but to help them think and ask the key question—“What do I need to be doing to build the capacity of this professional learning community?”

Generally speaking, by the end of the first year, the coach expects to see the new principal establish the following:

- A central leadership team that has drafted a vision and comprehensive strategic plan (SIPAAA), for the coming school year
- Grade level and vertical teams that have developed a draft of working plans, routines, benchmarks and tools for taking their work to the next level
- Visible signs that a culture of high expectations is beginning to develop in the school
- A strong positive behavioral strategy is in place that is beginning to go beyond disciplinary rule compliance
- A local school council (LSC) feels respected and involved in setting the direction for the coming school year
- Parents, in general, feel well informed and positive about how their children are feeling and generally feeling heard
- A substantial percentage of teachers feel good about the growing focus and collaboration, but a level of tension among other teachers who are concerned about regular presence of the principal in their classroom. Principal conversations take place, with a few teachers about finding a more suitable school next year
- Test scores start moving on an upward trajectory—in a few cases by as much as 10–15%
- Attendance increases, disciplinary issues decline and the overall appearance of the school noticeably improves. There is observable progress, but a long way to go.
- In the very lowest performing schools where there may be extensive resistance, a number of these benchmarks will not be as advanced as described above, but there should be a clear sense that the school is on a new path and will not be deflected.

The coaching focus of the second year begins about March of the first school year, with the coach helping the principal use his/her leadership team to do an in-depth evaluation of all aspects of the first year, planning how to use the summer to get a running start on the second year. The summer is a good time to build the instructional, leadership, and team capacity of school community and to acclimate the new hires to norms and culture building efforts that the leadership is in the process of creating. The effort will be to go deeper, especially in the areas of instruction and social support systems for students.

During the second year, the coach focuses the principal on developing his/her strategies for:

- Substantially improving the classroom instructional skills of all teachers. During the first year the coach has the principal assessing the strengths and weakness of the teachers and beginning to get the teachers to look at their current practice against a higher standard. The principal needs to get all of the teachers to discover their self-interest in committing to a college prep level of practice and of getting the students to recognize their self-interest in learning at a higher level. This process should be far enough along to begin to free the school of the gravitational pull of its past culture of failure
- Deepening the leadership bench so that a greater percentage of teachers, other school personnel, parents, and students are helping to build the capacity and achievement results of the professional learning community (PLC)
- Making all team meetings more focused, strategic, systematically reflective, with each successive meeting building on the work of the preceding meeting
- Clearly systematizing the individualized efforts to keep chronically distracted kids on track with regard to all leading indicator benchmarks
- To do all of these things well, coaches must get principals to reflect throughout the first year and assess how well they did against the skills, knowledge and dispositions expressed by the accomplished principal standards, with special attention paid to dispositional development. That is the element that is perhaps most essential for transformational change. The coach makes sure that the principal is asking (in effect), “Am I becoming so ingrained in developing metacognitively as an instructional and motivational leader that I am beginning to shed my non-generative self and become transformational from the core out?”
- Student achievement scores should be making a noticeable increase—3% to 8 %—a magnitude that if sustained over time will signal a genuinely transformed school. We are aware of the “implementation dip” that sometimes flattens or reverses such improvement trends in the second or third year, and we see that phenomenon in a minority of our UIC-led schools, as well

Fundamentally the job of the coach during all three to four years of coaching is to get the resident (and then the principal) to understand that a substantial part of failure of currently low performing schools is that they are places where people merely go to work in relatively isolated cells to carry out uninspiring tasks under very stressful circumstances with little or no sense of direction or appreciation. To change that, principals must learn to reflect deeply and broadly on their own sense of themselves as leaders

of learning and development—their own first, followed by that of others. How good are they at asking the question: “How good are my knowledge, skills and disposition at enabling me to get others to see where we have to be, the gap between our goal and our present position, and at getting them to recognize their own self-interest in closing the distance?” If the coach can get the principal to that point, the principal will likely be able to build a high performing school.

The preceding paragraphs have dealt with the “what” and “how” of coaching. We focus now on how the program ensures that these things are occurring. There are essentially three elements that have proven effective in managing the coaching process. The first is the individual meeting between the Director of Leadership Coaching and the individual coach. These two-hour meetings have fluctuated between monthly and bi-monthly, meeting the focus on the coach’s work with each coachee under their care. The second is the two-hour meeting of all coaches led by the Director of Coaching, and those meetings occur in the off-weeks from the individual meetings. These meetings focus on a wide range of issues that grow out of the patterns and concerns that the Director of Coaching picks up from the individual meetings with coaches, or that the coaches are identifying and talking to each other about. When core issues are discovered from this process, it prompts a longer planning or problem-solving meeting. For example, coaches identified the need for the residents to meet monthly for a full day on a Friday with all of the coaches to share and reflect on specific aspects of their residency experience. This meeting is the third thing that has proven effective, because these are “high-sharing meetings” that also serve to expose what all coaches are doing with their residents and principals, so that best practices among individuals can become the practices of the whole organization.

## Conclusions

In this article, our goal was to articulate the need for the full-time job-embedded internship model. We have described how it is enhanced through the support of coaches who have demonstrated the leadership skills and track record of a highly successful urban school leader. We identified the importance of full-time job-embedded internships and how coaching is distinguished from mentoring and can enhance the internship experience. We subsequently highlighted a nationally recognized model program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, partnering with Chicago Public Schools and providing full-time job-embedded residency. This partnership has operationally shifted the paradigm of producing principal candidates from one of producing as many candidates as possible and hoping some of them can lead high need urban schools effectively to one of producing fewer principal candidates, but with higher quality experiences. In Jim Collins’s (2001), *Good to Great*, he puts forth two operational concepts for organizations. One is being a “fox.” The other is being a “hedgehog.” Collins advocates that “great”

organizations operate like hedgehogs and not foxes. Foxes are organizations that chase every new thing, most of which are fads that fade away in a short period of time; another way of describing a fox is an organization that is a “jack of all trades, master of none.” In contrast, hedgehogs determine what is best for the organization and pursue it with zeal and determination. Similarly, university preparation programs must confront a stark reality: Do they want to be known for quality and great graduates, or do they just want to generate the most semester credit hours and produce a mixed bag of graduates? One of the most telling questions any person associated with preparing future leaders should ask is, “Would I want this person to be the principal or teacher of my child?”

Given the criticism of cost that is often cited as the biggest deterrent to school districts and preparation programs from implementing full-time job-embedded internships with coaching on a larger scale, we argue that if we continue as a nation to do the same things with internships that we have done for more than fifty years, then we should not expect anything different in terms of outcomes. One way to implement high quality, full-time, job-embedded internships is to communicate and advocate to policymakers and legislators about the importance of providing such experiences. Successful efforts have occurred in North Carolina and Illinois. In Illinois, UIC faculty were able to provide data to show the supply and demand for school leaders in the short- and long-term and then help craft legislation that would require preparation programs to have high quality internships as part of their program (these programs would be subject to review for quality elements prior to approval). The data that UIC faculty were able to generate indicated that the state of Illinois was producing way more principal candidates than it could ever need. This glut in the supply line was at the expense of providing high quality experiences and candidates. It was also more costly, because public institutions are subsidized by public funds to lower the cost of tuition for principal candidates seeking initial licensure or certification. By using a policy and legislative approach, UIC was able to encourage the state to establish a policy that would shut down all “diploma mills” and re-direct the focus on leadership preparation to a dialogue centered on what creates highly effective school leaders. It may be time for other states to follow their lead in developing this dialogue and policy change.

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