

Improving the Leadership Skills of Pre-Service School Librarians Through Leadership Pre-Assessment

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School librarian guidelines encourage active leadership in schools. Two ways school librarian educators can encourage school librarians to be leaders are to embed the standards into the certification curriculum and to assess the leadership potential of pre-service school librarians in order to adapt the curriculum to their needs. This mixed-method study examines how a pre-assessment of leadership potential was implemented in a school librarianship certification program that emphasized leadership skills. The results of the study indicate that the leadership pre-assessment implemented during the program application process effectively identified teacher leaders with the potential to be exceptional school librarians. This signifies that leadership pre-assessments can enable school librarian educators to help pre-service school librarians to improve their leadership skills.

Keywords: mixed method, survey, school librarians, LIS education, leadership development

Introduction

School librarians are called upon by professional guidelines to exhibit leadership behaviors. However, recent budget cuts within the educational system make it increasingly necessary for school library degree and certification programs to teach school librarians how to advocate for their positions and to provide programs that clearly impact student achievement. The Project LEAD degree program, described in this study, was specifically designed to serve this function.

Based on the foundations of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) to promote excellence and leadership (NBPTS, 2013), the Institute of Library and Museum Services (IMLS) funded a program offering full master's degree scholarships to teachers in the state of Florida who were pursuing an American Library Association (ALA) accredited

degree in librarianship and school librarianship certification. Thirty participants were recruited from six Florida counties. Because the program emphasized leadership preparation and the development of a model for helping teachers transition from the classroom to the library, the program directors (two university professors) required applicants to be current classroom teachers who were also leaders.

The teacher-leaders selected to participate in the program completed a rigorous application process that included a leadership pre-assessment. The program directors designed the leadership pre-assessment with the assistance of an advisory board consisting of school librarianship leadership experts. These experts reviewed the pre-assessment prior to its distribution to program applicants. Suggestions made by the advisory board were incorporated into the pre-assessment.

Potential students began the applica-

tion process by obtaining a recommendation from their principals in the form of a rubric. The rubric (Danielson, 2007) is widely accepted by school districts for providing professional development and evaluating teachers (Alvarez & Anderson-Ketchmark, 2011). The rubric is also endorsed by the ASCD (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) and is included in the organization's *Teacher Effectiveness Suite* (ASCD, 2013). The categories on the rubric reflect teacher-leadership domains pertaining to the classroom environment, lesson planning and preparation, and professional responsibilities.

Next, the prospective students who secured recommendations from their principals were invited to complete a scholarship application consisting of questions regarding their previous degrees, use of technology, reasons for applying to the program, beliefs about teaching reading, and collaborative activities with school librarians. In addition to the scholarship application, each prospective student was required to submit transcripts, GRE scores, a university graduate admissions application, and a degree program application. Students who were unable to meet the university graduate school admission and the degree program admission requirements were excused from the scholarship application process. The remaining students were designated as finalists. These finalists completed an essay detailing their perspectives on the leadership role of school librarians. The project directors, with the assistance of school librarian supervisors from the school districts, assessed the leadership essays using Loertscher's (2000) taxonomy for scoring.

When all of the application materials were submitted, the program directors assessed the leadership potential of each finalist by combining several scores. (See Table 1.) These scores included: the rubric completed by the principals, grade point averages, answers to the application questions, and the leadership essays. Points

were also given to achieve a diverse group according to gender, race, age, ethnicity, and subject taught. The total of the possible points was 100. The program participants were selected from the applicants with the highest scores.

Literature Review

Leadership in School Librarianship Standards

Standards have been developed to guide the professional practice of school librarians. The *Information Power* guidelines for school library programs (AASL & Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1998) presented the first set of standards that specifically described the leadership role of school librarians. These guidelines encouraged school librarians to be vocal advocates for library programming, technology integration, and instructional partnerships with teachers.

The viewpoints articulated in *Information Power* were updated and school librarians were presented with *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* (AASL, 2009). *Empowering Learners* further defined the leadership role of the school librarian, "As interactive technology has come to permeate every aspect of daily life; leading businesses and organizations have changed the way they work in order to thrive . . . SLMSs must lead this revolution to make room for new models of teaching, learning, and organization to prepare learners" (AASL, 2009, p. 46). Accordingly, these standards assert that school librarians should be visible leaders who model various leadership behaviors. These behaviors include being among the first educators in schools to demonstrate technology, participating on school committees, providing input in the development of school curricula and reforms, offering professional development, collaborating with other teachers, and utilizing research to engage in evidence-based practice.

Table 1. Leadership Pre-Assessment Criteria.

<p>Principal Rubric 42 Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domain 1: Planning and Preparation —Designing coherent instruction • Domain 2: The classroom environment —Creating an environment of respect and report —Establishing a culture for learning • Domain 3: Instruction —Using Questioning and discussion techniques —Engaging students in learning —Providing feedback to students —Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness • Domain 4: Professional responsibilities —Reflecting on teaching —Maintaining accurate records —Communicating with families —Contributing to the school and district —Growing and developing professionally <p>Leadership Questions 30 Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology integration behaviors • Motivation for becoming a school librarian • Teaching reading • Prior collaboration with school librarians • Examples of teacher leadership • The leadership role of school librarians <p>GPA 20 Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.0–3.19= 5 points • 3.20–3.49= 10 points • 3.50–3.79= 15 points • 3.80–4.0= 20 points <p>Diversity 8 Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age = 2 points • Gender = 2 points • Ethnicity = 2 points • STEM Subject Taught= 2 points 	<hr/>
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In addition to *Empowering Learners*, the ALA in conjunction with the AASL revised the *Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians* in 2010. The guidelines, which were approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, consist of five stan-

dards. The fourth standard is Advocacy and Leadership. This standard implores school librarians to demonstrate a commitment to the profession, become life-long learners, establish networks to share resources, articulate and implement their roles in effecting student achievement,

and use evidence-based practice to effect school reform (ALA & AASL, 2010).

Another organization that has been instrumental in guiding the leadership practices of school librarians is the NBPTS. The NBPTS' (2013, ¶ 6) fifth core proposition states that educators should be, "leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses". In addition, the standards that the NBPTS has designed specifically for school librarians include a standard that addresses leadership. In this standard, the NBPTS affirms that school librarians should be visionary leaders in the profession and in their schools that model administrative, professional, and instructional leadership.

Leadership Development Efforts in the School Librarianship Community

In addition to dictating these standards, the school library professional community provides support in implementing the standards. For example, the School Library Journal sponsors a leadership summit each year. Similarly, the ALA created the Emerging Leaders Program. This program is a leadership development initiative that brings together librarians from across the country to network, learn problem-solving skills, and offer the participants opportunities to learn more about the ALA by serving in a leadership position (ALA, 2012).

The AASL supports the ALA's Emerging Leaders Program with the Leadership Development Task Force (AASL, 2012). The purpose of this task force is "to investigate ways to expand and promote leadership opportunities for AASL members" (AASL, 2012, ¶ 1). In addition to exploring strategies to support AASL members through the Emerging Leaders Program, the taskforce's duties include developing strategies to publicize leadership opportunities for AASL members, increasing the involvement of AASL members under 35, and increasing the number of AASL members who participate in ALA leadership activities.

While the School Library Journal, ALA, and AASL engage in leadership development by offering professional development, the IMLS has emerged as a major source of federal funding for libraries. This funding provides support for school librarian leadership development through grant opportunities. The programs that are funded by IMLS sustain the growth of leadership skills in school librarians through opportunities such as master's degree programs, doctoral degree programs, and research (IMLS, 2012).

There is still a tenuous relationship between research, professional practice, and library science education. This relationship exists despite the emphasis that has been placed on leadership in the guidelines, professional development activities, and funding opportunities. Everhart and Dresang (2007) acknowledged this void by conducting a study to assess the needs of school librarians who participated in the NBPTS certification process. The results indicated that universities needed to develop more courses that place emphasis on the leadership role of school librarians. The degree program that is the subject of this study emerged as a result of Everhart and Dresang's research. When it was developed, it was one of the only program in the United States that addressed leadership for school librarians through a research-based curriculum.

The Leadership Debate

While the school librarianship community endeavors to teach school librarians how to be effective leaders, there is an ongoing debate about whether leadership is learned or innate. There are those who argue that some people are predisposed to be leaders. In describing leadership, Burns (1995) provided several examples of leaders who seemed to innately possess leadership qualities. There is little research to explain the phenomenon. On the contrary, there is ample research providing evidence that leadership skills can be learned (Co-

peland & Chance, 1996; Feidler, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Bennis and Nanus (2003) assert that learning new concepts is a survival mechanism that facilitates the creation of new ideas and enables leaders to adapt to change. Moreover, it has been found that the ability to learn (Brown & Posner, 2001), as well as the possession of skillful learning strategies (Trautmann, Maher, & Motley, 2007), is highly correlated with leadership behaviors. Respondents who showed high performance on a learning inventory also demonstrated a remarkable number of transformational leadership behaviors (Brown & Posner, 2001).

Transformational Leadership

In addition to the ability to easily learn new skills, another characteristic that is valuable for leaders is the ability to learn from previous experiences (Brown & Posner, 2001; Trautmann *et al.*, 2007). This trait is also considered to be an indicator of transformational leadership because transformational leaders are people who evolve with the situations present within their organizations. They are able to learn from existing conditions to make changes that benefit an entire organization. Transformational leadership can be defined as a leadership approach that builds on the concept that leaders may bring about or guide change within an organization by engaging in unselfish behavior (Bass & Bass 2008; Burns 2003). Thus, transformational leaders are agents of change who benefit from their ability to challenge their own preconceived conceptions of their environment (Trautmann *et al.*).

Transformational leadership, the theoretical foundation of this study, is designated as an effective form of leadership in schools because of the need for educational reforms (Griffith, 2004). Coinciding with the meaning of transformational leadership, (Bass & Bass, 2008; Burns, 2003), the Project LEAD program aimed to prepare participants to be transformational

leaders. The standards embedded within the curriculum note that school librarians can be leaders within schools (NBPTS, 2013). Therefore the students were taught several transformational leadership behaviors and completed multiple activities that encouraged them to become change agents through collaborating, creating shared visions and missions, using technology for school reform, being role models for outstanding leadership practices, and teaching information literacy skills to improve their school communities.

Training in transformational leadership components such as those taught in Project LEAD and the assessment of leadership is important because research indicates that school librarians are not always perceived to be leaders by teachers (McCracken 2001), principals (Edwards 1989), or even school librarians themselves (Ishizuka, Minkel, & Lifer 2002; McCracken 2001). School librarians have the advantage of interacting with students, parents, classes, teachers, and community members. The combination of interaction and the use of transformational leadership behaviors have the potential to empower school librarians to become change agents without being formally appointed as leaders.

Methodology

Statement of the Purpose and Research Questions

As previously discussed, the participants of this study participated in the Project LEAD program that was designed based on the NBPTS standards. The program incorporated training for transformational leadership behaviors. Acceptance into the program required the participants to complete a leadership pre-assessment.

Upon the completion of the program, the participants were asked to comment on their experience with the program and to share their opinions on their leadership skills. This study was designed to

determine the effectiveness of the leadership pre-assessment that the participants completed before starting the program. The researcher also sought to determine if the participants learned transformational leadership behaviors during the program. The examination of the effectiveness of the leadership pre-assessment, the participants' transformational leadership strengths and weaknesses, and the relationship between the leadership pre-assessment and the participants' self-perceived transformational leadership skills are important components of establishing the effectiveness of the Project LEAD program. If school librarians, school librarian educators, and school administrators can appraise the leadership strengths and weaknesses of school librarians, at various stages of their careers, the information can be used to help school librarians become successful leaders.

The following questions guided the investigation.

- *RQ 1:* To what extent does the leadership pre-assessment correlate to the self-perceived transformational leadership potential of the program participants?
- *RQ 2:* What does the participants' self-perceived transformational leadership potential reveal about their leadership behavior strengths and weaknesses?

The Population

Thirty pre-service school librarians participated in this study. This represents a 100% response rate for the entire population of students that were offered scholarships and completed an online school librarianship degree program focused on leadership. Each participant was a classroom teacher from one of six school districts in Florida that entered into a partnership with the program directors to fulfill a grant from IMLS to implement the degree program. The participants matriculated through the program as a cohort.

Data Collection and Analysis

A mixed method design with concurrent triangulation was implemented for this study. The researcher chose this type of methodology because this study is exploratory in nature and the program leadership pre-assessment tool was designed to identify leaders. As such, a purely statistical analysis may not have divulged subtle relationships between the participants' scores. The inclusion of open-ended questions allowed the participants to share their opinions about the skills they learned during the program.

Each participant received two paper-based self-administered surveys in the mail. The first data collection instrument was the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) which was designed by Kouzes and Posner (2007). The LPI was the ideal instrument for this study for several reasons. First, it has been shown to be a valid and reliable instrument (Brown & Posner, 2001; Fields & Herold, 1997; Harris, Martin, & Agnew, 2004; Hautala, 2005; Ridgway 2001) and has been used in various educational settings to explore leadership behavior (Joseph, 2009; Koh, 2008; Lafflin, 2009; Moniz, 2008).

Secondly, the LPI was designed specifically to assess transformational leadership behaviors by measuring five dimensions:

1. Modeling the way: the ability to establish best practices for the treatment of others, create goals for an organization, and to act as a role model.
2. Inspiring a shared vision: the ability to envision a future of an organization and excite others about the vision.
3. Challenging the process: the ability to take risks in order to change the current conditions of an organization.
4. Enabling others to act: the ability to empower others by promoting trust, mutual respect, and teamwork.
5. Encouraging the heart: the ability to recognize, reward, and celebrate the

contributions of others in an organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

The second survey contained open-ended and closed-ended questions. It was designed by the researcher to collect information about what the participants learned during the program. The survey instrument was pre-tested on a group of ten graduate students and reviewed by three university professors with expertise in leadership and survey research methodology. Feedback from the graduate students and professors was used to edit the survey. Each participant was asked to answer two open-ended questions related to what they learned during the Project LEAD program in each transformational leadership dimension as they were defined by Kouzes and Posner (2007). (See Table 2 for a list of the questions.)

In addition to the data collection instruments, pre-existing data resources were used to complete the study. For example, the leadership pre-assessment scores from the application process were used. While there were thirty study participants, the project directors were only able to provide twenty-eight of the pre-assessment scores. The scores for two of the pre-assessments were lost. This is reflected in the results for Research Question 1.

Furthermore, the national norm scores reported by Kouzes and Posner (2003) were incorporated into the study. The participants' scores on the LPI were compared to the national norm to determine if the scores were similar. The participants' scores on the LPI, the comparison of participants' scores to the national norms, and the responses to the open-ended questions, were used to answer Research Question 2.

All statistical analysis was conducted using the software SPSS. A Spearman correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the respondents' leadership pre-assessment scores and the LPI total score and the LPI subscale scores for Research Question 1. Research Question 2 was analyzed in two ways. First, the

software Nvivo was used to code data from the open-ended questions into themes. Next, a t-test was employed to examine the difference between the study population's LPI mean scores and the national population norms reported by Kouzes and Posner (2003).

Findings

Research Question 1

The first significant finding is a correlation between the leadership pre-assessment scores and the LPI subscale for Enabling Others to Act, $r_s = .446$, $n = 28$, $p = .017$. This was revealed through an analysis of the pre-assessment's relationship to the LPI total score and LPI subscale scores. A correlation was not found between the LPI total scores and the pre-assessment scores or the pre-assessment scores and the remaining subscales.

One reason why the leadership pre-assessment had a correlation with the Enabling Others to Act subscale could be that successful teachers are adept at helping others use their strengths to achieve goals and learn strategies for improving their weaknesses. For example, York-Barr and Duke (2004) assert that "[t]eacher leadership reflects teacher agency through establishing relationships, breaking down barriers, and marshaling resources throughout the organization in an effort to improve students' educational experiences and outcomes" (p. 264). Moreover, Crowther, Ferguson, and Hann (2008) describe teacher-leaders as educators who can improve schools by forming collaborative networks between schools and communities. Hence, teacher-leaders are adept at enabling others to succeed in their endeavors.

Research Question 2

The maximum amount of points for each LPI subscale is 60. The participants' average scores on the LPI subscales are as follows: Modeling the Way (50.30), In-

Table 2. Open-ended Leadership Skill Questions.

Leadership Dimension	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Modeling the Way	Have you learned any new techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you to demonstrate to others how to achieve goals? If so, please describe them.	Have you learned any new techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you to be a mentor to other teachers? If so, please describe them.	Have you learned any techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you to model high ethical standards? If so, please describe them.
Challenging the Process	Have you taken more risks within your school because of Project LEAD? If so, please describe them.	Have you learned any new techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you to discover innovative ways to improve your school? If so, please describe them.	Have you learned any special techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you to share future trends that will influence how work gets done at your school? If so, please describe them.
Enabling Others to Act	Have you learned any new techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you to work in team environment? If so, please describe them.	Have you learned any new techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you to empower the people around you? If so, please describe them.	Have you learned any new techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you to promote diversity? If so, please describe them.
Encouraging the Heart	Have you learned any new techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you create harmonious environments within your school? If so, please describe them.	Have you learned any new techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you acknowledge the accomplishments of others? If so, please describe them.	Have you learned any new techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you to celebrate working with your peers? If so, please describe them.
Inspiring a Shared Vision	Have you learned any new techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you to share future possibilities for your school? If so, please describe them.	Have you learned any new techniques and strategies during Project LEAD that have helped you to shape the culture within your school? If so, please describe them.	Have you learned any special techniques and strategies during the Project LEAD program that have helped you to promote your school community's shared vision of teaching and learning that supports academic achievement? If so, please describe them.

Inspiring a Shared Vision (44.13), Challenging the Process (46.83), Enabling Others to Act (51.77), and Encouraging the Heart (49.29). (See Figure 1). The range in the

scores suggests that the behaviors Enabling Others to Act, Encouraging the Heart, and Modeling the Way were strengths for the participants. Their scores on the Challenging-

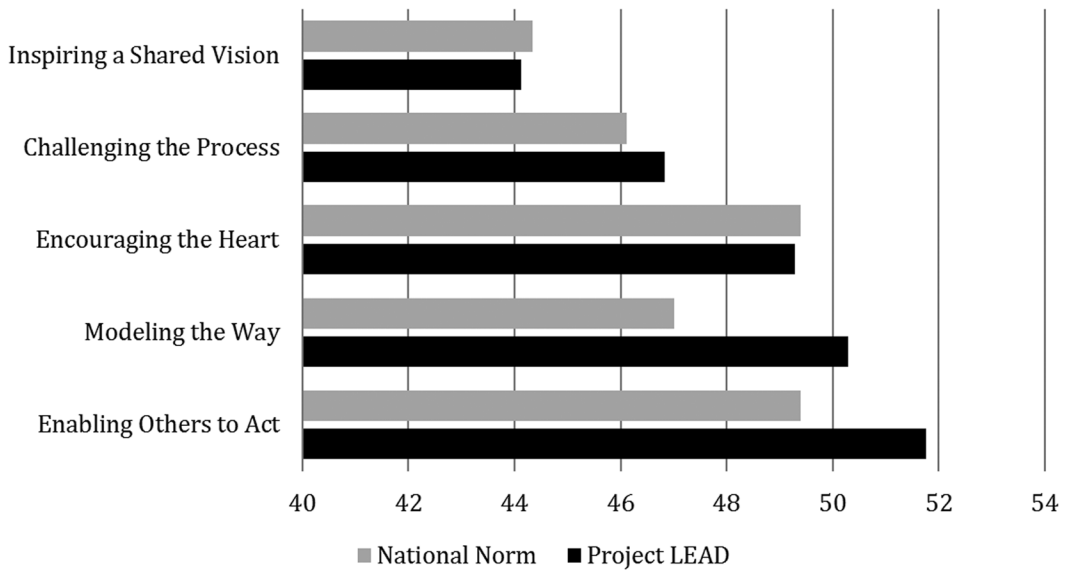


Figure 1. Average Scores on the LPI Subscales.

ing the Process and Inspiring a Shared Vision subscales signify that these leadership behaviors were more difficult for the participants to grasp.

It is possible that the scores on the Challenging the Process and Inspiring a Shared Vision subscales are lower because this research reflects a time in educational reform when teachers feel disenfranchised. For example, the Florida legislature recently passed the Student Success Act (Florida Department of Education, 2011). This act links teacher compensation and retention to student achievement on standardized tests. In a follow-up conversation to this study, the participants noted that they spend a substantial amount of time teaching students how to pass standardized tests, such as the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). This requirement is one that offers little encouragement for exploring new techniques for teaching students or challenging current school policies.

Further examination of the data indicated that there were significant differences on two subscales between the study participants' self-perceived leadership practices and the national norms reported by Kouzes and Posner (2003). The pro-

gram participants had significantly higher scores on the Modeling the Way subscale, $t(47.01) = 3.865$, $p = 0.001$ (two-tailed) and the Enabling Others to Act subscale, $t(49.39) = 2.610$, $p = 0.014$ (two-tailed). The participants' responses to the open-ended questions further signified that they learned skills in each of the five leadership dimensions (see Table 3).

While the results of Research Question 1 only revealed a correlation between the pre-assessment and the Enabling Others to Act subscale, these results suggest that the leadership pre-assessment was effective. The program directors were able to choose people who, upon the conclusion of the program, matched or exceeded the leadership behaviors reported for the national norms. This is encouraging because the directors were able to create a process that can be used as a foundation for future pre-service school librarian leadership pre-assessments. They were also able to develop a program that enabled the participants to learn transformational leadership skills.

Bennis and Nanus (2003) suggest that teaching these skills increases a leader's ability to survive by adapting to change. The participants of this study were teach-

Table 3. Skills Learned in the Transformational Leadership Dimensions.

Leadership Dimension	Skill Learned
Modeling the Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating • Using Technology • Sharing Knowledge • Using Research • Promoting Diversity • Modeling • Mentoring • Self-Educating
Challenging the Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating • Using Technology • Sharing Knowledge • Using Research • Seeking New Perspectives • Networking • Volunteering
Enabling Others to Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating • Sharing Knowledge • Promoting Diversity • Seeking New Perspectives • Networking • Leading • Mentoring • Risk-taking
Encouraging the Heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating • Using Technology • Modeling • Networking • Recognizing and Celebrating Others
Inspiring a Shared Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating • Using Technology • Sharing Knowledge • Using Research • Promoting Diversity • Modeling • Involving Stakeholders • Promoting the Big Picture

er-leaders who were currently working in the classroom. They were learning to transition from teachers who are leaders to school librarians who lead. While the participants were currently working in the classroom, the school library is a nontraditional learning environment because school librarians are also educators who

must teach 21st century skills the same way other educators do, only they do so in a school library environment. Because school librarians have an impact on the entire school, it is essential for them to flourish as leaders during their transition from teachers to school librarians who are integral assets to school communities.

Recommendations

The Recruitment of Pre-Service School Librarians

It is often perceived that the role of school librarians is limited to activities such as providing reference services and checking out books (Alexander, Smith, & Carey, 2003; Hartzell, 2002). The applicants were all chosen because their responses to the pre-assessment indicated that they understood the importance of the role of school librarians in schools and had the aptitude to fulfill these roles in an exceptional manner. From this, it can be asserted that the pre-assessment achieved its purpose because the participants were all current teachers who answered the questions based on their personal experiences and perceptions. The questions on the pre-assessment were designed to identify teacher-leaders who wanted to be school librarians who are leaders. It is feasible that the applicants' current positions as teachers influenced their responses because the program directors were able to identify a process appropriate for distinguishing candidates with strong leadership potential. This can be concluded because the participants' high scores on the LPI and the positive relationship that the leadership pre-assessment had with the Enabling Others to Act LPI subscale signify that teachers with strong leadership potential were chosen.

This study shows that leadership pre-assessments for school librarians can be instrumental in helping school librarianship faculty, school library administrators, and principals identify the motives of students who are entering the field. This is important because experienced teachers often gravitate to school librarianship as a way to leave the classroom (Everhart, 2002). Yet, it is important to recruit teacher-leaders who want to move beyond the perception that school librarians have limited responsibilities. Each individual who seeks to be a school librarian should

be aware of the professional guidelines and the important roles that school librarians have before they choose to enter the profession. Counseling prospective school librarians can increase the quality of education offered to students.

Teaching School Librarians to be Leaders

One cannot ignore the effect of the leadership instruction that the participants received during the program. The skills that the participants stated they acquired, as shown in Table 3 coincide with the assertions of numerous researchers that state that leadership skills can be learned (Copoland & Chance, 1996; Feidler, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). These findings support the notion that some leadership skills may be innate (Burns, 1995). However, instruction can improve them.

According to Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (1995), teachers are conservative professionals. Because of this, several advocates have promoted teaching risk-taking skills to teachers in order for them to spark instructional reform (Leinwand, 1992). While the overall scores of the participants on the total LPI and its subscales were high, a closer look at the average LPI subscale scores indicated that there were some weak areas in the scores of the participants. These weak areas were the Challenging the Process and Inspiring a Shared Vision subscales. Risk-taking is a part of the Challenging the Process subscale. Developing and promoting a shared vision can be part of a risk-taking behavior for an educator who may not want to appear to counteract school norms.

The results of this study imply that it would be helpful to teach school librarians how to cope with change, take risks, and ways to promote shared visions. It is essential for school librarians to acquire these skills because school librarians interact with the entire school community in highly visible instructional settings that affect student achievement. School librar-

ians need to make a difference in their school communities by promoting their vision for the programs they offer and taking risks to explore new instructional techniques.

Improving the Assessment

The School Library Journal, ALA, and AASL help pre-service and current librarians improve their leadership skills by offering them professional development. The Project LEAD directors introduced another option by creating a research-based curriculum that also addressed professional practice. The instruction offered to the study participants was important because teaching experience may not provide aspiring school librarians with transformational leadership experiences. As shown in the results of this study, even adept teacher-leaders need to be introduced to transformational leadership skills that support the roles of school librarians. By examining Table 3, one can deduce that pre-service school librarians can be taught transformational leadership behaviors that are consistent with the NBPTS (2013) standards, *Empowering Learners* (AASL, 2009) and the *Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians* (ALA & AASL, 2010).

One way to ensure that pre-service school librarians understand the standards is to offer them pre-assessments during their degree programs. The results signify that the pre-assessment of leadership potential and instruction was effective. However, making a few changes to the pre-assessment could have provided better evidence of the pre-assessment and program success.

For example, the pre-assessment was developed without consideration for how it could have been used after the students completed the degree program. In hindsight, it would have been useful to have the participants submit another principal rubric and answer the questions on the pre-assessment again. This post-assessment

could have been used to determine how the participants' viewpoints about school librarianship changed during the program. Moreover, the principals would have been able to provide input about the participants' leadership development.

Another change that could have been made to improve the pre-assessment was to include a tool, such as the LPI, to measure transformational leadership traits. Kouzes and Posner (2007) developed a leadership workbook for facilitating transformational leadership skill improvement. Pre-service school librarians, as well as veteran school librarians returning for refresher courses, should be encouraged to complete the workbook. The LPI could then provide them with feedback from an easy to administer, reliable, and valid tool. Taking a few minutes to assess leadership before and after a school librarianship program of study could potentially mean the difference between school librarians who think they understand leadership and those who know how to build upon their leadership strengths and improve their weaknesses.

Conclusion

This study was limited to thirty pre-service school librarians. Although the number of respondents was small, the results encompass the entire population of a unique group of teacher-leaders who were educated to become school librarian leaders. The admissions process, which included a leadership pre-assessment, was also unique. Although the results may not be generalizable to the overall population of school librarianship students in the United States, they have implications for the recruitment and training of school librarians. Based on the results, it can be concluded that counseling pre-service school librarians throughout their degree programs based on leadership pre-assessments can prepare them to be the resilient change agents who are depicted in school librarianship professional standards.

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