

THE INDUCTION OF BEGINNING PRIMARY-SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THAILAND

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PROPOSAL

**TITLE: Leaders for a Global Society: Western and Eastern
Perspectives on the Professional Induction of Beginning Elementary
Principals**

**PROPOSAL TEXT:
INTERACTIVE SYMPOSIUM PROPOSAL**

**Leaders for a Global Society: Western and Eastern Perspectives
on the Professional Induction of Beginning Elementary Principals**

Symposium Organizer

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OVERVIEW

Today, educational policymakers throughout the world recognize that improving education is vital to the individual and collective well being of a nation's citizens. One of the key actors in this improvement process, of course, is the principal. He or she is

charged with communicating clarity of purpose and direction for a school's improvement efforts. It is the principal who actively initiates and maintains school-wide goal setting activities and identifies tasks to meet those goals. For beginning principals, success at facilitating school improvement can seem a daunting task.

Regardless of national context, the challenges awaiting school principals in the 21st century are remarkably similar, and cross-national comparisons of the professional induction of beginning principals can contribute to the improvement of education worldwide. This interactive symposium, then, will present a series of international, comparative perspectives on the professional induction of beginning elementary principals in several countries in the West and in the East.

Several questions provide the focus for this interactive symposium:

1. What within-school (internal) issues most concern beginning principals in the different national settings?
2. What community-wide (external) issues most concern these beginning principals?
3. Are their salient differences between the issues that concern principals in Western contexts and those in Eastern contexts?
4. To what extent do the issues that concern beginning principals reflect themes that are universal across the countries?
5. What strategies do principals in Western and Eastern cultural contexts use to develop their abilities to deal with issues of concern, and what sources of support help them accomplish this goal?
6. How do new principals in different countries perceive the culture of their new school, and how do they become "cultural leaders"?

With reference to the foregoing questions, the interactive symposium will converge upon a set of recommendations to support beginning principals in Western and Eastern cultural contexts.

BACKGROUND

The International Beginning Principal Study (IBPS) is patterned after the methodology used by Parkay and Hall (1992) in their study of new secondary principals during their first three years on job in the U.S.A.; however, the IBPS investigates novice elementary principals, rather than secondary school administrators. In addition, the IBPS approach allows the investigators to make cross-cultural comparisons of the professional socialization experienced by new principals.

The IBPS consists of two phases. Phase 1, which began in 1999, involved eight research teams (three in the U.S.A. [Colorado, Georgia and Nevada] and one each in Western Canada (Saskatchewan), Australia, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands). During Phase 1, survey data were collected from beginning principals in these six Western cultural contexts. In addition, follow-up interviews, on site and via telephone, were conducted throughout the beginning principals' first two years in the position.

Using e-mail and other telecommunications systems, Phase 1 data were analyzed by each research team. The early analyses focused on professional development and the learning needs of first-year principals. Data gathered from the principals during their second and third year on the job were analyzed to determine early patterns of professional socialization and development (Hall et al, 2001).

In Phase 2, which began in 2001, the IBPS research team was expanded so that data could be gathered from beginning principals in Eastern cultural contexts. To date, data have been gathered from beginning principals in Thailand, Taiwan, and the Republic of Korea (South Korea). During 2002-03, data will also be gathered from beginning principals in Japan and the People's Republic of China.

Data for Phase 1 and Phase 2 were gathered through national distributions of a four-part IBPS survey. Section I of the IBPS survey asks for demographic information (gender, age, degree, size and location of school, etc.). Section II asks participants to "identify three external groups, organizations, or events that have influenced you and your work as a new principal [and] briefly describe how you have dealt with these external influences." Six items in Section III focus on current concerns, major challenges, and strategies for establishing personal and professional support. Lastly, eight items in Section IV focus on (1) the average number of hours per week respondents spend on various leadership tasks, (2) what respondents had learned about their schools' culture, and (3) the "most" and "least" successful change they introduced in their schools.

To ensure that the IBPS survey was translated accurately for use in Thailand, Korea, and Taiwan, the "back translation" procedure was used—that is, after the survey was translated into Thai, Korean, or Taiwanese, that version was translated back into English and then compared with the original English version. In addition, the language, format, and content validity of the translated surveys were evaluated by independent panels of educational administration professors in each country.

OBJECTIVES

During the first half of the interactive symposium, presenters will outline critical issues and problems in the professional induction of beginning principals in their respective cultural contexts. The second half will consist of an extended discussion between participants and presenters that focuses on the following three questions:

1. How can administrator preparation programs best address the specific professional needs of principals in the West and in the East?
2. How can cross-national comparisons of principal induction enhance each nation's efforts to address issues and problems in critical areas such as the following: learning to "balance" internal school "realities" with increasing external pressures, building the school culture, and developing a strategic sense (Hall 1988; Hall and Hord, 2001)?
3. How can those who prepare administrators in Asian countries avoid undue foreign influence (typically, from the U.S. and other Western countries) in their efforts to develop and implement models for school leadership that reflect their own cultural and social realities?

EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE

As the nations of the world become more interdependent, the cross-national study of the professional induction of beginning principals will play an essential role in the development of educational administration policies and practices in all nations of the world. This symposium will extend our knowledge base regarding various approaches to principal induction worldwide, and it will increase our awareness of the importance of international exchanges of information on issues and problems in principal induction.

SYMPOSIUM PAPERS

PAPER #1: THE EARLY SOCIALIZATION OF NEW ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS IN THE WEST

Gene E. Hall, University of Nevada-Reno; Bruce Barnett, University of Northern Colorado; Judith Berg, Rhode Island College; Larry Sackney, University of Saskatchewan

Findings from the IBPS in Western countries confirm earlier research on the early stages of socialization experienced by new leaders in an organization. For example, the principals participating in Phase 1 of the IBPS tend to reflect the first two stages of leadership transition described by Hart (1993). In stage 1 (encounter, anticipation, and confrontation), new leaders attempt to interpret and understand their new surroundings. As leaders move into stage 2 (adjustment, accommodation, and clarity), they begin to shape the organizational culture and cope with resistance from its members, events reported by a number of IBPS respondents in Phase 1. In addition, principals describe many of the same early stages of socialization reported by principals in other cultural contexts, such as Reeves, Moos, and Forrest's (1998) research with headteachers in Denmark, England, and Scotland, and Weindling's (2000) longitudinal study of headteachers in England and Wales.

PAPER #2: THE INDUCTION OF BEGINNING PRIMARY-SCHOOL

PRINCIPALS IN THAILAND Wirot Sanrattana, Samphan Phanphruk, Kohn Kaen University, Thailand; Forrest W. Parkay, Washington State University, U.S.A. , and Doctoral Students, Khon Kaen University, Thailand.

Within the Thai context, the IBPS research team focused on three questions: (1) What external factors influence beginning principals and their work? (2) How do beginning principals develop support to meet the challenges of beginning leadership and to develop their careers? (3) What do beginning principals learn from other, experienced school administrators?

The total target population consisted of 3,705 principals in primary schools who were promoted to their new administrative position in 2000. The eventual sample consisted of a total of 347 beginning principals selected randomly from Thailand's 76 provinces. From 347 surveys sent out, 274 were returned, for a response rate of 78.96 percent.

Based on data from the Thai respondents, the following administrative knowledge and skills are perceived as critical for beginning principals: principles of administration and management, information technology development, team building, public relations, organizational development, vision-making, and budget management. In regard to personal development, the following areas emerged as critical: public speaking, greater

understanding of psychology, human relations, community psychology, social behaviors, and awareness-making.

PAPER #3: BEGINNING PRINCIPALS IN TAIWAN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONCERNS OF PRINCIPALS AT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS AND INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS Forrest W. Parkay, Washington State University, U.S.A.; William P. MacLean, Morrison Academy, Taichung, Taiwan

Respondents to the IBPS survey in Taiwan included 12 beginning elementary-level principals at American international schools in Taiwan and 10 principals at indigenous Taiwanese elementary schools. (American international schools serve children whose parents work at U.S. corporations abroad and children whose parents are citizens of the host country. With few exceptions, the curricular and instructional programs at American international schools are based on English).

Due to the makeup of the sample of IBPS respondents in Taiwan, this paper focuses on comparing the concerns of beginning principals in American international schools and those in indigenous schools. In general, the analysis of data reveal that principals at the American international schools are most concerned with *external* issues, while principals at the indigenous schools are more concerned with managing *internal* issues. For example, principals at the American international schools identified the following external influences: the U.S. Embassy, local (Taiwanese) principal and teacher organizations, Parent-Teacher Organizations, accreditation agencies, and professional organizations such as the East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools (EARCOS).

On the other hand, principals at indigenous schools identified the following critical concerns: "conflict resolution and consensus building," "dealing with multiple tasks," and "communicating effectively with various audiences within the school" (e.g., teachers, support staff members, students, etc.).

PAPER #4: BEGINNING PRINCIPALS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA: WHAT ARE THEIR PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS? Forrest W. Parkay, Washington State University, U.S.A.; Byung Jin Lee, Korean National University of Education, Choongbuk, Korea; Jung Woo Cho, Korean Educational Development Institute, Seoul Korea; Brian Brumsickle, Seoul Foreign School, Seoul, Korea

Principals are at the center of the Republic of South Korea's hopes for continuing her impressive growth and development since the 1950s. Currently, schooling in South Korea is compulsory only through grade six, though most students now graduate from high school. The literacy rate of those over 12 has risen from about 22 percent in 1945 to almost 95 percent in 2002. To continue this impressive development of the nation's

educational system, Korean educators and policy makers are involved in a major effort to upgrade the quality of school principals.

The sample of respondents to the IBPS survey in Korea included 27 beginning elementary-school principals within a 100 kilometer radius of Seoul. The analysis of data indicate that the Korean principals are most concerned with the following: creating a better public image, dealing with public/community relations, strengthening the administrative team, dealing with school finance and budget, and securing increased opportunities for staff development provided by the Ministry of Education (MOE).

PAPER #5: DICHOTOMIES AND COMMONALITIES: PRINCIPAL INDUCTION IN WESTERN AND EASTERN CONTEXTS Gene E. Hall, University of Nevada-Reno; Roland Vandenberghe, University of Leuven, Belgium; Rudolph van den Berg, Katholieke University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands; Carol McGrevin, Georgia State University; Keith Walker, University of Saskatchewan

The results of Phases 1 and 2 of the IBPS indicate that beginning principals, regardless of national context, are concerned with the following internal issues: dealing with conflict, socializing with staff, attaining a balance between providing instructional leadership and dealing with management-related tasks, and coping with a wide range of tasks. The following external issues emerged as being of greatest concern to the principals: creating a better public image of the school, working with parent problems, coordinating with feeder schools, working with community groups and services.

Preliminary findings from both phases of the IPBS suggest that cultural "sense-making" is one of the biggest challenges for new principals, regardless of national context. New principals use various strategies to determine "how things are done around here"; who they can trust; and what values and beliefs people hold sacred about "their school." Without a predetermined strategy, principals spend much time trying to survive a continuous barrage of cultural messages and demands, leaving little time and energy to begin to influence the organization in meaningful ways.

DISCUSSANTS

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