



Web 2.0 integration into the graduate classroom

An appreciative inquiry into prospective school administrator strengths and leadership experiences

Raymond L. Calabrese

*School of Educational Policy and Leadership, The Ohio State University,
Columbus, Ohio, USA*

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to advance the preparation of prospective school administrator students by extending the Web 2.0 application of blogging to discover students' strengths and successful leadership experiences. During the blogging process, students reflected on and responded to appreciative inquiry (AI) blog posts that encouraged reflective responses highlighting and identifying their inherent leadership strengths and successful leadership experiences.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative case study model was used to explore the reflective blog contributions of prospective school administrators to discover patterns in the blogging data by grounding the study in an AI theoretical research perspective. A bounded case study delimited the scope of the study to participants who were: masters or doctoral students in a school administration preparation program at a large Midwestern United States research extensive university; and enrolled in four graduate administrative preparation classes taught using reflective blogging over three instructional quarters.

Findings – The Web 2.0 application of appreciative inquiry blogging: confirmed personal strengths and successful leadership experiences; bolstered a supportive learning environment; confirmed the students' history of successful leadership experiences; and increased social capital among students.

Social implications – Future research using AI in Web 2.0 applications can influence the positive preparation of school administrators by preparing them to lead schools in an evolving digital world. Researchers may examine how an AI blogging Web 2.0 application contributes to changing personal perceptions of contemporary deficit views of schooling to what is possible in light of stakeholders' strengths.

Originality/value – The importance of integrating Web 2.0 applications into educational administrator preparation programs is critical in an age where elementary and secondary school students live in a Web 2.0 world and build social networks with peers throughout the globe. Moreover, the evolving global workplace demands fluency in Web 2.0 applications.

Keywords Appreciative inquiry, Web 2.0, Blogs, School administrator, Preparation programs, Learning environment, United States of America, Educational administration

Paper type Research paper

Introduction and purpose

Integrating Web 2.0 applications into the classroom preparation of prospective educational administrators may be one way to advance the recognition and development of prospective educational administrators' leadership qualities. I frame this paper in the context of educational administration preparation programs and focus on the higher education classroom instructional environment where prospective educational administrators gain the requisite knowledge base for practice as school administrators.



I propose that the philosophy that undergirds the evolving technologies associated with Web 2.0 may advance prospective educational administrators' leadership development. This is crucial since the infrastructure underlying Web 2.0 and its applications provide an opportunity for educational administration programs to increase social capital among students and create a learning community based on their strengths and successful leadership experiences – to date, the pedagogical implications of a Web 2.0 approach are barely explored (Hemmi *et al.*, 2009).

Flowing out of Web 2.0 and an AI theoretical perspective, classroom instruction may be viewed as a socially constructed phenomenon and, as such, reconstructed to incorporate the social communication technologies supporting human needs and values (Zhang, 2008). As some suggest, this paradigm shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 is resulting in powerful social engagement, cognitive, and learning styles as well as new literacies (Dede, 2007). In doing so, the application of Web 2.0 technologies shows promise to advance prospective educational administrators' learning.

Web 2.0 is an important consideration since the emerging generation of students possess an information-age mindset, and may be considered Millennials or the Net Generation (Net Gen) (Dede, 2005). Net Gen students live in a connected, social networked world. They see themselves having global networks of friends, accessing instantaneous information, learning by doing, and engaging in learning activities that encourage and support social interactions such as blogging, Wikis, Facebook, and Twitter (Oblinger and Oblinger, 2005). Net Gen students view existing technologies such as MP3s, cell phones, and PDAs, instant messaging, text messaging, and blogs as commonplace. They use various technologies to communicate with each other, even if they are in the same room. They do not remember a time without computers or without access to the digital world (Hartman *et al.*, 2005).

Higher education is now engaged in how to understand and apply Web 2.0 to a new generation of students (Lorenzo and Dziuban, 2006). Using Web 2.0 technologies to advance learning may transform the learning experience for prospective educational administrators. There is evidence that social communication occurring through the application of these technologies is freely embraced by students and leads to a greater level of sharing than might typically occur in the traditional classroom (Dede, 2005).

Web 2.0 technologies cover a range of social application technologies within the higher education learning environment: online discussions, blogs, wikis, social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and MySpace, virtual environments such as second life, and distant collaboration efforts in terms of classes, webinars, or web meetings. When these technologies are blended with face-to-face instruction, it is referred to as hybrid or blended learning (Ackerman, 2008).

One Web 2.0 technology that may integrate the role of higher education institutions as knowledge providers with the evolving learning styles of Net Gen students is weblogs commonly referred to as blogs. Blogs are a global means of "flattening the world" and are easy to use and relatively inexpensive (Loving *et al.*, 2007). Blogging provides Net Gen students with the capability for interacting in a public venue to share thoughts, ideas, interpretations, hopes, and fears with others (Brescia and Miller, 2006).

Blogging is seen by some as a means of social construction, sharing of ideas, and developing communities of practice (Oravec, 2005). Blogging is a form of self-expression that has rapidly grown with over 57 million people in the US professing to read and/or respond to blogs. Consequently, blogging has a hidden social power to affect the opinion and perceptions of a wide audience; many blogs are the

result of self-organizing to share common ideas and join in common causes (Avital *et al.*, 2006; Wei, 2009). As such, blogging may have distinct instructional advantages to advance student learning.

Some researchers suggest that incorporating blogging into the instructional environment increases the opportunity for students to add to their knowledge base, heighten interest and ownership in learning, increase participation in the learning environment, and provide context for diverse viewpoints (Ferdig and Trammell, 2004). When applied effectively, blogging may provide an instructional component-extending student learning through social construction of knowledge promoting reflection and constructive responses in a safe environment (Brescia and Miller, 2006). Currently, blogging is most widely used in higher education as an instructional tool to promote reflection, improve writing, and dissolve traditional barriers among students, teachers, and researchers (Grover *et al.*, 2009).

The instructional use of blogging framed in an appreciative inquiry (AI) perspective provides a venue for students to discover, share, and communicate their positive core of strengths and leadership experiences through guided blog contributions. When students view themselves through their strengths, they become conscious of their history of successful experiences, thus, enhancing their sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness – all of which are essential to emotional well-being (Reis *et al.*, 2000). Discovering students' rich history of successful actions is an untapped source for generative conversations for advancing their practice as educational administrators and spark their imagination to create a transformational and hope-filled future (Adams *et al.*, 2004; Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005).

Consequently, the identification and sharing of personal strengths and successful leadership experiences may occur more readily in a Web 2.0 environment through the lens of AI and may add value to the instructional process as well as creating a learning climate where students increase their skills and knowledge base.

Appreciative inquiry is analogous to the open philosophy associated with Web 2.0 technologies. It embodies a social constructionist philosophy focused on collective action to discover the best, good, and true in an organization when it is or was at its healthiest. When organizational members focus on their collective history of successful experiences, they begin to generate positive images of an optimistic and high-achieving future – where the present requires action as if the positive images of the future were already present (Adams *et al.*, 2004).

Appreciative inquiry has its genesis in the work of Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987b) developed in the later part of twentieth century. AI emerged from the traditions of humanistic psychology, mind/body research, organizational psychology, and metaphysical concerns (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987a). The majority of published research on AI reports its use as a change methodology in venues such as:

- nursing and adjacent professions (Lewis *et al.*, 2006; Moody *et al.*, 2007);
- mentoring (Truschel, 2007);
- program evaluation (Calabrese *et al.*, 2007); and
- the use of technologies to improve educational administrator preparation programs (Calabrese *et al.*, 2008).

Appreciative inquiry is juxtaposed to traditional forms of inquiry that focus first on problems. Instead, AI seeks to discover the best in people and the world around them. It affirms past and present strengths, potentials, and possibilities. It seeks to discover

what gives life to living systems when they are most effective and capable (Cooperrider *et al.*, 2003). My inquiry led me to examine if AI coupled with Web 2.0 technologies might advance prospective educational administrators' perceptions of their personal strengths and leadership experiences.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to advance the preparation of prospective school administrators by extending the Web 2.0 application of blogging to discover their strengths and successful leadership experiences. During the blogging process, prospective educational administrators reflected on and responded to appreciative inquiry (AI) blog posts that encouraged reflective responses highlighting and identifying their inherent leadership strengths and successful leadership experiences.

Methodology

I used a qualitative case study model (Yin, 2003) to explore the reflective blog contributions of prospective school administrators to discover patterns in the blogging data by grounding the study in an AI theoretical research perspective. Being grounded in an AI perspective meant that the direction of all inquiry was to discover and affirm strengths and successful leadership experiences of those participating in the blog conversations (Calabrese, 2006). I also applied the concept of a bounded case study (Merriam, 2001) to this research by delimiting the study to participants who were:

- masters or doctoral students in a school administration preparation program at a large Midwestern research extensive university; and
- enrolled in four classes I taught using reflective blogging over three instructional quarters.

My belief that students have a history of strengths and successful leadership experiences drove my research and yielded the following overarching question: how can the use of a Web 2.0 technology such as blogging support the design principles of increasing the prospective educational administrators' sense of competence and relatedness? From this overarching question, the following research questions guided my inquiry:

- RQ1.* How do prospective school administrators describe their experience of difference makers who served as exemplars in their lives?
- RQ2.* How do prospective school administrators describe their strengths and successful leadership experiences where they overcame challenges?

I conducted this inquiry guided by three propositions:

- P1.* All students come to class with a blended set of experiences and knowledge that positively contributes to the learning environment.
- P2.* The use of a theoretical research perspective that seeks to facilitate the identification of student strengths and successful leadership experiences can be embedded in blogging.
- P3.* The public sharing of highpoint stories describing strengths and successful leadership experiences positively affects the classroom-learning environment.

I recognize two limitations to this study:

- (1) The generalizability of the results of this study is limited and left for interpretation by the reader.
- (2) The nature of the appreciative exploration that guided this study focused solely on student strengths and successful leadership experiences.

Throughout the remainder of this paper, I use the term appreciative blogs to signify the direction of conversations encouraged by the blog postings. I framed the appreciative blogs with two broad themes: reflections on self and reflections on another. The following is an example of the type of AI questions guiding the students on personal reflection.

Taking an AI perspective, recall a time when YOU overcame a significant challenge and turned adversity around on its heel. What were the circumstances? Who was involved? What did you learn from your experience? How can you apply what you learned to your work context?

The following is an example of the type of AI questions guiding the students on reflection on the responses of another:

Can you recall a person from your personal or professional experience who persisted in spite of obstacles? What were the challenges this person faced? How did s/he overcome these challenges? What examples did this person set for you and others?

Data sources

My data sources were the publicly available internet blog postings of graduate students (masters and doctoral levels) in an educational administration program at a large Midwestern United States research extensive university. The unit of analysis was comprised of 47 students, 35 female and 12 male, from four classes taught over three consecutive quarters. Nine students were African-American, two were African [Kenyan], and 36 were Caucasian.

During each quarter, students in the perspective classes were required to contribute asynchronously to class blogs. A total of 229 blog posts were made in response to AI-driven posts. I posted class blogs three times during the quarter for each of the four classes grouped in this study. Each post referenced an AI topic related to personal strengths and successful leadership experiences. In several cases, posts were illustrated with a real-world example.

I followed the post with a series of AI-driven questions. Students were asked to post:

- one substantive response – a substantive response was defined as students specifically addressing the questions listed in the blog with a minimum response of 200 words to each blog entry; and
- two additional responses – an additional response was defined by a minimum of 25 words affirmatively reflecting on a contribution of another classmate to each blog entry.

Data analysis

I analyzed data by applying traditional qualitative research data analysis techniques using open and axial coding practices to establish pattern matching and content analysis. My data analysis was supported by the application of two qualitative software packages – CATPAC and ATLAS.ti. CATPAC is an intelligent program that reads text and summarizes concepts. It identifies the relationship of words based on

proximity to each other providing a fuzzy logic to link and identify key words positively related to each other, and assists in grouping/clustering similar word patterns in the text. I used these keywords in the ATLAS.ti program to code the data and confirm my identification of themes emerging from the data. During the data analysis any reference to names of students appearing in blogs were cleaned (in accordance with IRB approval).

Findings

I identified four findings. I list the four findings and discuss each finding supported by rich, thick, and descriptive quotations from the blog postings. As I report the results of the study, I refer to participants as students. I used pseudonyms for all student names in reporting my study. The four findings follow:

- (1) Appreciative blogging confirms personal strengths and successful leadership experiences.
- (2) Appreciative blogging bolsters a supportive learning environment.
- (3) Appreciative blogging confirms the students' history of successful leadership experiences.
- (4) Appreciative blogging increases social capital among students.

Appreciative blogging confirms personal strengths and successful leadership experiences
Appreciative blogging led to the self-discovery and confirmation of personal strengths and successful leadership experiences among the students. The appreciative blogging experience created a generative space where a student's reflection stimulated deeper and richer appreciative blogging from others reading the student's blog.

For many students everyday work was ordinary. They were unable to see the extra-ordinariness of their leadership actions or realize the transformative nature of simple leadership acts until they began to appreciatively blog. When their blogs were guided by AI questions, the students discovered a hidden positive core of strengths and successful leadership experiences within themselves and their classmates. Sara blogged, "Kathy, your story reminds me of a time when I gave an award to one of my students who was an exceptional [emotionally challenged] student. Teachers came to me afterward, applauding that I did something nice for this student". Moreover, appreciative blogging caused students to reflect and learn from each other. Ellis stated:

Your story is powerful for me. I attended a Native American sweat lodge with a friend several years ago. After it was over, we walked through rocks arranged in a special way and we saw a spirit standing in the center of the rock formation. He was pointing to the sky directly at the big dipper. I do not know what it means or why we saw him [. . .] but it proved to me that there is a lot more to our world than we perceive on a daily basis. I became much more open and accepting of the mystical and special world we are in after the blindfold was lifted from my eyes that night.

The mystical experience shared by the student may not have been offered in the context of a classroom discussion; yet, appreciative blogging created a safe and encouraging environment for Ellis to share an insight that would have normally remained hidden for fear of being ridiculed. Ellis's affirmation by other students in their posts reinforced his view of the efficacy of his Native American sweat lodge experience. The affirming practice by peers reinforced the identification of strengths and leadership experience, bolstering the student's blog response.

Landry posted a typical affirming blog entry:

Geoff, it was great to read how you helped your student with his immediate needs while allowing him to save face and preserve his self-esteem. Acts like this demonstrate going the extra mile to help someone without making it about you and what you did. Thanks for making a difference that student's life.

Affirming support encouraged voluntary responses. Students voluntarily added multiple contributions beyond class requirements. These voluntary responses added depth to the student's discovery of strengths and leadership experience. Pamela, for example, stated, "My mother always says that, 'Nothing builds character like growing up barefoot'. Your story about your grandfather reaffirms that strong, persistent people can overcome any obstacles to success".

Pamela's entry is anchored in folk wisdom passed on to succeeding generations through oral traditions. Some people may not be privy to the depth and richness hidden in folk wisdom. Pamela's sharing of her mother's folk wisdom served to bolster a classmate as well as strengthening her conviction related to the importance of persistence as a leadership trait.

Appreciative blogging creates a healthy and supportive learning community

Appreciative blogging contributes to the creation of a healthy and supportive learning community by framing blog contributions with unconditional positive questions that seek to identify what gives life to a healthy organization (Reason, 2000, May 4-5). Asking unconditional positive questions facilitates the creation of a healthy learning community by fostering connections emphasizing the inherent goodness of students. Chief Seattle offered Native American wisdom supporting the importance of connections, "All things are connected like the blood which unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a stand in it".

Consequently, in each appreciative blogging activity, I asked students to affirm, support, and respond to at least two entries made by their classmates. Their responses were unexpected as students forged bonds I did not anticipate; a change occurred in how students thought about and understood shared experiences - a change supported in blog research (Stanley, 2006).

The students' appreciative blogging created a healthy mutual support system. They affirmed each other's professional contributions. This mutual support system helped students recognize that their everyday contributions to their work environment created a healthy, supportive, and meaningful environment. Kim stated:

Lisa, many people do not believe in themselves or the power they have to help others. What a wonderful example you gave of changing the teacher's life and encouraging her to look at her skills in a new way. I bet she is one of your happiest and most productive teachers!

Bud recognized the difference Malinda made in the student's life. He blogged:

This story shows just how much difference one teacher can make. By going the extra mile made Kevin feel he was special. Getting him the counseling he needed, will help him the rest of life. His life will never be the same because of you.

Stimulated by my original appreciative blog posts, the affirming nature of the students' blog posts were often anchored in personal experiences. Their blog posts began to promote a supportive and healthy learning environment as they shared authentic experiences. These authentic experiences contributed to a learning and knowledge

base in the Web 2.0 environment. These connections decreased the distance between classmates and heightened the similarities of the human experience. Adam stated:

One person who immediately came to mind when reading this blog post about persistence was my grandfather. Growing up, my grandfather was raised in a very poor Polish family in Pittsburgh. His father died of tuberculosis when he was young. His sister was diagnosed with tuberculosis and spent several years of her childhood in quarantine in a Philadelphia children's hospital. My grandfather [lived] alone at home with his mother. He worked fixing cars at a local body shop to make money to pay for music lessons and to save money for college. He was accepted to Carnegie Mellon University, and given a full scholarship to the college of engineering. As a student, he worked full time for Gulf Oil and went to school part-time in the evenings. Meanwhile, he married and had three kids at home. It took him eight years to graduate from college. When he graduated, he was promoted at Gulf. He worked at Gulf until his retirement. When he retired, he had over 40 patents to his name and travelled internationally to oversee factory operations. He taught me that if you work hard, anything is possible. I also learned to be thankful for the opportunities I've had; he has pushed me to take advantage of all opportunities.

Stories such as the one offered by Adam were plentiful. They supported how appreciative blogging helped students connect more deeply to each other and to recognize the strengths that each member brought to this learning environment. They recognized that their personal and professional lives were intertwined. Rachael said:

Mia, you inspire me. I knew from the moment I met you there was something about you reminding me of my mother. Through your story, I realize it is your spirit that is much like my mom. Your spirit to love, your spirit to give, and your spirit to push on is what makes you the person you are. Thank you for that story and I pray that no matter what stressors come up, you will continue to carry on.

It became clear that levels of empathy and compassion grew among the students from each class. When the students recognized their capability for being compassionate, they easily recognized compassion in the acts of their classmates. Compassionate performance in one area is predictive of compassionate performance in another area (Dutton *et al.*, 2007).

Appreciative blogging confirms the students' history of successful leadership experiences

The depth of the leadership experience expressed in students' blog responses was unexpected. I wanted to learn how these students expressed leadership so naturally that their actions did not seem out of the ordinary. In each story, the action was other-centered. It was an exhibition of leaders serving the best interests of others. Karissa's posting highlighted the common actions shared by others:

I had a 16-year-old female student placed in a freshman [class] because she recently came to the US. She was bright, hard working, and scored high marks. At the end of the year, she ranked in the top 10 [students] for the freshmen class. Each year, our high school has a top-ten banquet for students at an off-campus facility. The students may invite one teacher as a guest. This student invited me. As the event got closer, I noticed she had not picked up her ticket. When I asked if she was going, she said no one in her family could drive (her father was killed during the war in Somalia, and her mother was left partially blind). I offered to drive the student and her mother. I visited her home to meet and get permission from her mother to drive the student. The mother agreed [but didn't attend]. My student was thrilled. She loved hearing the seniors tell stories about their favorite high school memory. I was happy to see her enjoy her reward!

As in Karissa's case, appreciative blogging confirmed that she came to class with a history of successful leadership experiences. Her blogging encouraged students to recognize that making a difference in the lives of others was an integral part of a successful leadership experience. Students began to realize their leadership experiences were often part of a profound change in another's life.

Edna spoke about her mother as an exemplar, whose example continues to influence her personally and professionally. The most persistent person I have ever met is my mother. I grew up in a single parent home. There were four of us. My mother had several boyfriends along the way. Most were financial leeches [...]. My mother struggled to afford school. I remember when she got her associates degree; we thought our troubles would be over. It turned out that most people still did not want to hire women – especially women that lived in the ghetto [...]. My mother mowed lawns almost every Saturday. The amazing thing [...] she did it on her days off to buy milk for her children. Since those days, I have loved milk. It reminds me of her and gives me strength to do whatever it takes to provide for my family and myself. Students in class saw Edna through different eyes. They saw her as a strong woman, rising above adversity and, integrating the strength of her mother. As students became aware of their history of successful leadership experiences and their genesis, I witnessed a rise in their self-efficacy and a growing confidence. They were beginning to believe they had a history of successful leadership experiences, and most importantly, they were beginning to realize their potential to be successful school administrators.

Appreciative blogging increases social capital among students

Social capital refers to the level of mutual influence generated by relationships formed among the students to create and sustain a strong sense of reciprocity (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, n.d.). I discovered the level of social capital exponentially increasing during the appreciative blogging activities in each of the four classes. Appreciative blogging led to high levels of mutual trust, a sense of reciprocity and shared future, and a desire for collective action to be successful school leaders (Flora, 2000). The levels of social capital grew as students discovered how the life stories of their classmates served as exemplars of courage, fortitude, and persistence in the face of challenges. Connie directed her blog post to her classmate, Marcia:

I feel you inspire people without realizing it. When you spoke about your illness, I was proud of you. You fought through it and kept your head high. Days may get you down, but you fight through it and you don't let the illness run your life. You inspire me, and I guarantee that you inspire others by your power and dedication to life and to your family. Your children are lucky to have a great role model for a mom.

These educational administration students took inspiration from each other on personal challenges as well as challenges in their educational settings. This form of connection increased the level of emotional connection among them. Their posts often brought an emotional response as they became more connected to each other. Paula's post to Mark illustrates this point:

That was a great story! It brought tears to my eyes. It warmed my heart to read it. I can imagine how those kids felt because of you; they didn't realize it was you doing the good deed. I'm sure you made a difference in many kids' lives. I'm glad you were able to get through to someone in that way! Keep up the great work!

One student was from a rural village in Africa. Her appreciative story spoke of a remarkable struggle for power and respect by the women in her village. Her leadership story inspired her classmates as well as informing them of the struggles women face in her culture. Her contribution to appreciative blogging expanded the social capital network beyond the borders of the US to this Kenyan village and its women. Kara responded:

This is amazing. One or even two or three women could not have accomplished the task on their own. It took many of you to ban together to make it happen. You have made a difference at such a high level and the change influences many people. That is great!

The application of appreciative blogging provided students with encouragement and freedom to affirm and support each other's leadership capacity. Students, having this sense of freedom, discovered that affirming each other was a path to connect at deeper levels and to learn from the experiences of each other.

Appreciative blogging allowed students to delve deeper into shared experience and identify common ground that laid the foundation for the growth of social capital as bridging capital. Bridging capital moves beyond the tight social bonds found in some groups to create invitational and inclusive communities. The importance of creating bridging capital among students cannot be overstated. As Putnam *et al.* (2003) suggests, the creation of bridging social capital is central to places where diversity is large and crowded and social harmony and prosperity are important.

Conclusions and future directions

This study extended the Web 2.0 application of blogging to appreciative blogging. Appreciative blogging advanced the preparation of prospective school administrators by using an AI theoretical research perspective to assist them in discovering inherent strengths and successful leadership experiences. Appreciative blogging also generated positive outcomes at several different levels: adult student learners in this study tapped into positive, highpoint experiences to discover they already possessed the capacity for leadership. These prospective educational administrators' helped to create a learning community buttressed by mutual respect and increased levels of social capital. They recognized that differences in appearance, gender, race, and ethnicity evaporated as their shared appreciative blogging posts expanded the common ground graduate students typically share.

Appreciative blogging played a part in balancing traditional forms of critical inquiry commonly experienced by these students in other class settings by providing them with an alternative perspective. Applications of appreciative blogging provided an opportunity for students to gain experience in building communities of practice based on the re-discovery of strengths and the powerful use of mutual affirmation. In doing so, students discovered they have a history of successful leadership experiences. They also discovered that their successful leadership experiences afforded opportunities to apply new knowledge to create new theory about learning and leading in the digital age in educational settings.

The students imagined new possibilities for Web 2.0 applications: using appreciative blogs in the school setting to build social capital among students and teachers; using appreciative blogging to create exemplars among faculty as mentors; and using appreciative blogging to move from deficit thinking to hope-filled thinking. The use of social software facilitated the connection of student-to-student, student to instructor, and generated higher levels of trust – essential to social capital.

As such, this research supported the work of Jackson *et al.* (2007) who had similar findings of blogging acting as a community-building vehicle. The importance of integrating Web 2.0 applications into graduate student education in general and more specifically into educational administrator preparation programs is critical in an age where elementary and secondary school students live in a Web 2.0 world and build social networks with peers throughout the globe. Moreover, the evolving global workplace demands fluency in Web 2.0 applications (Albion, 2008).

The prospective educational administrators' in this study had all the prerequisites for successful school leadership. Their lived experiences contained multiple examples of leadership that may be translated into leadership in any organizational setting. They have the capacity to be a force for good in the world of education.

Future directions using for research using AI in Web 2.0 applications will find fertile ground in this emerging field, especially how Web 2.0 influences the preparation of school administrators, preparing them to lead schools in an evolving digital world. Another research opportunity may examine how AI, using Web 2.0 application – blogging, contributes to changing personal perceptions of contemporary deficit views of schooling to what is possible in light of the strengths of the stakeholders involved in the schooling process.

Research may offer an opportunity to compare and contrast students preparing for educational leadership positions in traditional formats to the format presented in this research.

Longitudinal research could be undertaken to understand the impact of how Web 2.0 applications blend critical perspectives with an appreciative perspective to advance the preparation of educational administrators. As research grows using Web 2.0 applications and appreciative inquiry, I believe the future is brighter than it has ever been for school leadership.

References

- Ackerman, A.S. (2008), "Hybrid learning in higher education: engagement strategies", *College & University Media Review*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 145-58.
- Adams, M., Schiller, M. and Cooperrider, D. (2004), "With our questions we make the world", in Cooperrider, D. and Avital, M. (Eds), *Constructive Discourse and Human Organization, Vol. 1*, Elsevier, San Diego, CA, pp. 105-24.
- Albion, P. (2008), "Web 2.0 in teacher education: two imperatives for action", *Computers in the Schools*, Vol. 25 Nos 3-4, pp. 181-98.
- Avital, M., Lyytinen, K., Boland, R., Butler, B., Dougherty, D., Fineout, M., Jansen, W., Levina, N., Rifkin, W. and Venable, J. (2006), "Design with a positive lens: an affirmative approach to designing information and organizations", *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, Vol. 18 No. 25, pp. 519-45.
- Brescia, W. and Miller, M. (2006), "What's it worth? The perceived benefits of instructional blogging", *Electronic Journal for the Integration of Technology in Education*, Vol. 5, pp. 44-52, available at: <http://ejite.isu.edu/Volume5/Brescia.pdf>
- Calabrese, R. (2006), "Building social capital through the use of an appreciative inquiry theoretical perspective in a school and university partnership", *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 20 No. 6, pp. 173-82.

- Calabrese, R., Roberts, B., McLeod, S., Niles, R., Christopherson, K., Singh, P. and Berry, M. (2008), "Emerging technologies in global communication: using appreciative inquiry to improve the preparation of school administrators", *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 22 No. 7, pp. 696-709.
- Calabrese, R., Zepeda, S., Peters, A., Hummel, C., Kruskamp, W., San Martin, T. and Woods, S. (2007), "An appreciative inquiry into educational administration doctoral programs: stories from doctoral students at three universities", *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, Vol. 2 No. 3.
- Coleman, J. (1988), "Social capital in the creation of human capital", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94, Supplement, pp. S95-S120.
- Cooperrider, D. and Srivastva, S. (1987a), "Appreciative inquiry in organizational life", *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, pp. 129-69.
- Cooperrider, D. and Srivastva, S. (1987b), "Appreciative inquiry in organizational life", available at: www.appreciative-inquiry.org/AI-Life.htm (accessed April 23, 2006).
- Cooperrider, D. and Whitney, D. (2005), *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, CA.
- Cooperrider, D., Whitney, D. and Stavros, J. (2003), *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: The First in a Series of AI Workbooks for Leaders of Change*, Lake Shore Communications, Bedford Heights, OH.
- Dede, C. (2005), "Planning for neomillennial learning styles: implications for investments in technology and faculty", in Oblinger, D. and Oblinger, J. (Eds), *Educating the Net Generation*, EDUCAUSE, Boulder, CO, pp. 15.11-15.22.
- Dede, C. (2007), "Introduction: a sea change in thinking, knowing, learning, and teaching", in Salaway, G. and Borreson Caruso, J. (Eds), *The ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology*, EDUCAUSE, Boulder, CO, pp. 19-26.
- Dutton, J., Lilius, J. and Kanov, J. (2007), "The transformative potential of compassion at work", in Cooperrider, D., Fry, R. and Piderit, S. (Eds), *New Designs for Transformative Cooperation*, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, CA, pp. 107-26.
- Ferdig, R. and Trammell, K. (2004), "Content delivery in the blogosphere", *T.H.E. Journal*, Vol. 31 No. 7, pp. 4-20.
- Flora, C. (2000), "Just in time research: resilient communities", available at: www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/familydevelopment/components/7565_02.html (accessed February 10, 2006).
- Grover, V., Straub, D. and Galluch, P. (2009), "Turning the corner: the influence of positive thinking on the information systems field", *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. iii-viii.
- Hartman, J., Moskal, P. and Dziuban, C. (2005), "Preparing the academy of today for the learner of tomorrow", in Oblinger, D. and Oblinger, J. (Eds), *Educating the Net Generation*, EDUCAUSE, Boulder, CO, pp. 6.1-6.14.
- Hemmi, A., Bayne, S. and Land, R. (2009), "The appropriation and repurposing of social technologies in higher education", *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 19-30.
- Jackson, A., Yates, J. and Orlikowski, W. (2007), "Corporate blogging: building community through persistent digital talk", paper presented at the 40th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences 3-6 January, Waikoloa, HI.
- Lewis, D., Medland, J., Malone, S. and Murphy, M. (2006), "Appreciative leadership: defining effective leadership methods", *Organizational Development Journal*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 87-101.

- Lorenzo, G. and Dziuban, C. (2006), *Ensuring the Net Generation Is Net Savvy*, EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative, EDUCAUSE, Boulder, CO.
- Loving, C., Schroeder, C., Kang, R., Shimek, C. and Herbert, B. (2007), "Blogs: enhancing links in a professional learning community of science and mathematics teachers", *Contemporary Issues in Technology & Teacher Education*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 178-98.
- Merriam, S. (2001), *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 2nd ed., Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA.
- Moody, R.C., Horton-Deutsch, S. and Pesut, D.J. (2007), "Appreciative inquiry for leading in complex systems: supporting the transformation of academic nursing culture", *Journal of Nursing Education*, Vol. 46 No. 7, pp. 319-24.
- Oblinger, D. and Oblinger, J. (2005), "Is it age or IT: first steps toward understanding the net generation", in Oblinger, D. and Oblinger, J. (Eds), *Educating the Net Generation*, EDUCAUSE, Boulder, CO, pp. 15.11-15.22.
- Oravec, J. (2005), "Blending by blogging: weblogs in blended learning initiatives", *Journal of Educational Media*, Vol. 28 Nos 2-3, pp. 225-33.
- Putnam, R. (n.d.), "Social capital: measurement and consequences", available at: www.oecd.org/dataoecd/25/6/1825848.pdf (accessed January 6, 2010).
- Putnam, R., Feldstein, L. and Cohen, D. (2003), "Better together: restoring the American community", available at: www.bettertogether.org/thereport.htm
- Reason, P. (2000), "Action research as spiritual practice", *paper presented at the University of Surrey Learning Community Conference, May 4-5*, available at: <http://people.bath.ac.uk/mnspwr/Thoughtpieces/ARspiritualpractice.htm>
- Reis, H., Sheldon, K., Gable, S., Roscoe, J. and Ryan, R. (2000), "Daily well-being: the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 419-35.
- Stanley, R.D. (2006), "Creating conditions for healthy learning organizations: embracing complexity and principles of healthy dynamical living systems", *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 1-12.
- Truschel, J. Artist (2007), "Using appreciative inquiry in advising at-risk students: moving from challenge to success", *The Mentor*, Vol. 9 No. 3, available at: www.psu.edu/dus/mentor/070706jt.htm
- Wei, L. (2009), "Filter blogs vs personal journals: understanding the knowledge production gap on the internet", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 532-58.
- Yin, R. (2003), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3rd ed., Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Zhang, P. (2008), "Toward a positive design theory: principles for designing motivating information and communication technology", in Avital, M., Bolland, R. and Cooperrider, D. (Eds), *Designing Information and Organizations with a Positive Lens, Advances in Appreciative Inquiry Series, Vol. 2*, Elsevier, New York: NY.

Corresponding author

Raymond L. Calabrese can be contacted at: calabrese.31@osu.edu

To purchase reprints of this article please e-mail: reprints@emeraldinsight.com
Or visit our web site for further details: www.emeraldinsight.com/reprints

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.