Implications for Training Program Content, Pedagogy, and Field Experiences

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Leadership in school psychology is a complex, applied competency regularly referenced in discipline-specific guidance documents, NASP conference strands, and other professional resources. Comprised of a complex set of skills extending beyond "expert knowledge" in domain-specific practice areas, cultivated by instructional, reflective, and experiential learning opportunities, the development of leadership ability among school psychology candidates may best be conceptualized as a parallel process, occurring alongside of content-specific instruction and in tandem with field experience opportunities. Given the roles, responsibilities, and imperatives set forth by our professional practice standards, as well as other influential works such as the NASP Blueprint for Training and Practice (Ysseldyke et al., 2006), it is incumbent upon masters and doctoral-level training programs to consider integration of leadership training frameworks into course requirements. For many years, despite robust reference to leadership in multiple outlets germane to the practice of school psychology, the field had not benefitted from a cogently articulated model for the integration of leadership skill development into graduate school psychology training programs. Following careful analysis of leadership theory vis-a-vis NASP Professional Standards and similar guidance works, Augustyniak (2014) presented an initial framework for leadership training in school psychology programs, serving as the foundation upon which the recommendations in this section rest.

The leadership viewpoints expressed by the contributors to this volume, though in some cases domain specific, share common characteristics, distilled in many ways from not only the NASP Professional Standards (2020) but from representative literature bases. However, though leadership is *implied* by language evident in

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the NASP Professional Standards, it has only been articulated as such in the NASP Blueprint for Training and Practice, which, to date, remains the sole guidance document for the practice of school psychology in which the term "leadership" is explicitly used. Written several years ago, the *Blueprint* highlights the role of the school psychologist as follows:

> School psychologists need to provide leadership in identifying those instructional environments and cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral factors that have a significant impact on school achievement and the development of personal competence. (p. 18)

> School psychologists should be recognized by school administrators as leaders in data collection and interpretation, who can play significant roles in designing assessment practices to meet responsibilities for accountability reporting to the general public. (p. 18)

> School psychologists should provide leadership in developing schools as safe, civil, caring, inviting places where there is a sense of community, the contributions of all persons, including teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, families, students, and related services personnel, are valued; and there are high expectations for excellence for all students. (p. 18)

> School psychologists are viewed as leaders for improvement and change. In this capacity, they need to share leadership and coordinating responsibilities with other agencies and help form linkages within the community. The move in many places to make schools less 'independent' and more 'collaborative' with parents, social and health agencies, corrections authorities, and local businesses is a major and long-term effort. School psychologists should be prepared to help lead and maintain the emerging collaborations. (p. 19)

> School psychologists should be knowledgeable about development in social, affective, and adaptive domains and be able to identify and apply sound principles of behavior change within these domains. They should provide leadership in creating instructional environments that reduce alienation and foster the expression of appropriate behavior as well as environments in which all members of the school community-both students and adults-treat one another with respect and dignity. (p. 20)

While certainly progressive for its time, multiple elements of practice have since evolved, extending leadership principles more directly to the development of interventions for students in need, informing curricular initiatives, and developing, implementing, and evaluating programs, in addition to those leadership elements referenced by the *Blueprint*. Identification of the *ways* in which school psychologists serve as leaders, however, is only one of the several elements to be considered in leadership development. Theoretical alignment, or the degree to which school psychologists identify with, or are perceived to identify with, extant leadership theories, models, and styles, is of equal importance in forging training curricula. As discussed earlier in this volume, distributed leadership, which is increasingly the most utilized model of leadership observed in school settings, decenters leadership tasks and responsibilities from administration, distributing them to knowledgeable stakeholders throughout the organization. This distribution, which is the antithesis of centralized models of leadership, encourages cultivation and attainment of collective goals while calling upon the unique expertise of contributors and fostering

shared responsibility (Harris, 2004; Hartley, 2009; Ritchie & Woods, 2007). Beyond field-embraced leadership models, recent research exploring the leadership styles most evident among school psychologists indicates that practitioners endorse practices associated with transformational leadership, as opposed to transactional or passive leadership (Augustyniak et al., 2016), a perception of school psychologists that is also shared by teachers. The same study also revealed that school psychologists strongly believe that they currently function as leaders in their respective positions, that they strongly identify with models of leadership promoting empowerment of constituents, and that they perceive themselves as being more successful than other school professionals in representing the needs of others, meeting organizational requirements, and leading groups (Augustyniak et al., 2016). It is important to note that the identification of transformational leadership as the most leadership style evident among practitioners strongly aligns with provisions of both the 2010 and 2020 NASP Professional Standards as asserted over the past 10 years, given the emphasis of the standards on consultation, collaboration, educating others, and systems change. As is consistent with the viewpoint of Augustyniak (2014), school psychology preparatory programs serve as the primary vehicle by which the field may increase the facility of school psychologists as leaders, fortifying candidate knowledge and dispositions related to the application of leadership principles in their future work. We posit that the process of enhancing the capacity of practitioners as leaders must be infused into multiple elements of instruction, including candidate selection, curricular modification, and experiential requirements.

1 Candidate Selection Process

The candidate selection process has long served as the primary means by which programs identify and accept candidates who strongly orient with existing program missions and ideologies. Formal inclusion of targeted lines of inquiry, designed to demonstrate the degree to which prospective candidates identify with leadership constructs and established program goals and philosophies, can be effectively interwoven into the evaluation of admissions materials via letters of intent, letters of reference, and the interview process. Modification of existing evaluative tools, such as rubrics used to analyze personal statements, letters of reference, and the personal interview, may be modified to include criteria related to evidence of leadership across modalities, once leadership constructs are integrated into the program mission. In accordance with recommendations derived from Augustyniak's (2014) model, "candidates must be adequately briefed about the training program mission and must evidence congruence in traitlike 'distal' attributes, such as dispositions, and motives, and their beliefs about their future roles as school psychologists" (p. 25). While evaluation of candidate dispositions aligned with leadership may prove challenging during the admissions process, articulating a cogent framework specifying target characteristics indicative of leadership potential in the field of school psychology may enhance the potency of pre-admissions evaluative efforts. Selecting candidates who articulate or

demonstrate an interest in changing ineffective practices, who can readily identify incongruences between systemic or individual needs and realities, or who cite a desire to modify systemic practices and operations, based on observations or personal experiences, may prove helpful in identifying leadership potential. Candidates who identify with a broad-reaching, dynamic view of the scope of practice in school psychology and who demonstrate an interest in helping both students *and* systems may align more strongly with leadership traits found among currently practicing school psychologists (Augustyniak et al., 2016). Possessing a demonstrated history of leadership ability, coaching, or disseminating knowledge to others in an effort to cultivate change provides more overt evidence of leadership potential in the field. Review of letters of recommendation and personal statements for evidence of such, in accordance with the previously cited rubric modifications, is a valuable first step in discerning leadership characteristics or behaviors. Program requirements for the submission of personal statements related to candidate interest in and suitability for the field of school psychology may be directly modified to feature requirements eliciting their sentiments on leadership or leadership-related variables. In concert with analysis of letters of reference and personal statements, program admissions teams may also find the inclusion of questions designed to elicit candidate sensitivity to issues related to leadership should be included either directly or inferentially. Use of vignettes requiring interviewees to describe how they would address or respond to situations reflective of a need for leadership, empowerment, or change may also serve as a valuable means of distilling leadership potential via the interview process.

2 Curricular and Experiential Modifications to Support Leadership Development

2.1 Curricular Modifications

Curricular modifications to school psychology training programs lending to the development of leadership capacity among future practitioners is necessary in even the most progressive training programs (Augustyniak, 2014). While many contemporary school psychology programs have long featured coursework emphasizing the dynamic role of school psychologists as change agents, via emphases on systems change, program evaluation, large-scale intervention implementation, consultation, and advocacy efforts, course sequences explicitly imparting knowledge of leadership theory, style, and application are viewed as an integral first step in cultivating leadership potential among inexperienced professionals (McCauley et al., 1999). It is incumbent upon school psychology training programs interested in generating graduates with a high propensity for leadership to conduct rigorous program evaluations through which instructional needs are identified. In many cases, alongside of including content related to leadership theory, programs may need to reinforce the degree to which existing courses, such as consultation, provide for "development in candidate knowledge of conflict resolution, motivational

strategies, teamwork, communication, and analytical and process skills, and to foster candidate understanding the larger political, social, and economic contexts of school systems" (Augustyniak, 2014, p. 25). Identification of coursework in which general leadership related themes are already evident (e.g., coursework discussing advocacy, consultation, needs assessment and program evaluation, large-scale intervention planning, and implementation, among others) provides an ideal forum for more explicit and targeted instruction in leadership theory and related factors. To the greatest degree possible, brief micro-lessons integrating and reinforcing elements of leadership theory and application across all courses should be developed and implemented. For example, in an entry-level assessment course, micro-lessons and activities reinforcing the means by which school psychologists serve as leaders in data-driven practices capable of informing district policy as related to assessment data and data analysis can be included. Instructional and assessment tools such as "case studies, discussion, experiential exercises, and feedback instruments" (Augustyniak, 2014, p. 25) can be employed alongside of video analyses or other observational activities. In the event that courses have already reached content saturation or there are substantial needs for instruction in leadership as dictated by community imperatives, additional coursework specifically targeting multiple elements of leadership can be designed and implemented. At the most basic level, consistent reference to the role of the school psychologist as a leader by all faculty across all courses serves as a substantial means of reinforcing program ideologies related to leadership. The *Framework for Integration of Leadership Tenets into School Psychology Practice*, revised for this volume and presented at the conclusion of this chapter, provides a detailed presentation of the intersection of leadership frameworks, dispositional considerations, and training program considerations.

2.2   *Experiential Modifications and Assessment*

The development of an experiential framework for reinforcement and application of leadership skills is critical to program efforts cultivating leadership ability among candidates. We posit that an assessment and experiential system that parallels instructional components of leadership throughout the curriculum serves as the modal means of ensuring synthesis and application. The development of a formal program model identifying the alignment of instruction, experience, and assessment is a formidable manner of ensuring correspondence between instruction and application, as is required for programmatic components explicitly linked to NASP standards. From a curricular standpoint, programs are positioned to ensure that several assessments of candidate leadership knowledge and application are represented throughout courses, potentially through existing assignments, by the addition of assignment elements encouraging application of and reflection on leadership implications. At the most basic level, structured assessment questions surrounding leadership tenets and reflective assignments may be integrated into existing course assessment systems. Candidates may also be required to complete self-assessments

of leadership style at the outset of their studies and again at their conclusion. Valid and reliable assessments such as the Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 2004) are well-suited for the purposes of establishing pre- and post-instruction approaches to leadership for those with and without experience in the schools. Larger-scale assignments, such as those designed to document candidate impact on student learning in accordance with NASP program approval standards, are ideal forums for the integration of implications for leadership, particularly in relationship to leading academic, behavioral, and social/emotional intervention design, implementation, and progress monitoring efforts at the individual and whole group level. Culminating portfolio assessment systems may feature requirements related to the conceptualization, administration, and evaluation of a leadership-oriented project, alongside candidate growth reflections as related to their leadership and application of theory and personal leadership style. For example, NASP standards related to organizational needs assessments and program evaluations serve as fertile ground for the integration and synthesis of culminating leadership principles. A more expansive approach to the development of leadership among graduate school psychology students is the development of well-planned, field-based experiential requirements in school settings outside of practicum and internship requirements. Specifically, in consultation with local school districts, faculty may identify areas of need expressed by partner schools and charge graduate candidates with conceptualizing a plan to address the need with guidance from the district. For example, a partner school experiencing an epidemic of school tardiness and absenteeism may solicit the assistance of a team of second year graduate students in providing and training school staff to implement evidence-based solutions as part of a consultation course. Graduate candidates would be responsible for leading the charge in obtaining data surrounding the district need, identifying evidence-based approaches, consulting with district leaders and staff to discuss targeted improvement plans, and consulting with stakeholders to disseminate information regarding potential program implementation and monitoring. Though not entirely similar to fully implementing the initiatives themselves, many critical leadership skills, including tacit leadership abilities, are required by virtue of this project requirement (Kilanowski, 2018). Any guided fieldwork project of a similar ilk may be positioned into upper-level graduate courses, meeting advanced requirements for application and evaluation of leadership tenets.

Integration of the application and assessment of leadership tenets in field experiences, including practicum and internship, serves as a capstone method of evaluating candidate comfort and proficiency with leading. Though we certainly do not wish to suggest that candidates who do not evidence strong leadership ability should not advance in programs, objective evaluation of several elements of leadership provides candidates with valuable feedback about the types of positions and roles in the field that they may be most interested in pursuing after graduation. Cultivating opportunities for applied engagement in leadership-oriented principles requires careful consultation with field-based supervisors to ensure shared understanding of the multiple manifestations of leadership-oriented skills during placement. It is also important to work with supervising school psychologists to discern the degree to

which they themselves believe they are leaders in their schools and for what reasons. According to Augustyniak (2014), leadership development during field placement and collaboration with sites "may begin by utilizing a framework of identified successful leadership characteristics and behaviors as a means to demystify leadership, develop mutual understandings between the field and training programs, and promote a purposeful structure where school psychologists may view themselves as leaders" (p. 25). Given the varied and dynamic nature of field placements, and, in many cases, differences between the workplace role of supervising school psychologists, consultation must occur to develop a sense of the opportunities available to candidates at each respective site. In situations where candidates interview for an internship placement and are competitively selected, the graduate program may have less control over the opportunities available to graduate students. It is particularly important in those cases to establish a sense of understanding between the site and the training program in terms of program missions related to leadership and the varied ways in which candidates may apply leadership in the context of their site. For this reason, inclusion of a culminating portfolio section involving leadership is recommended in an effort to universalize leadership-oriented requirements for all candidates, regardless of the strengths and limitations of their respective placements. Inclusion of leadership objectives in the internship requirement contract is also recommended to foster attention to program aims related to leadership while also articulating required experiential opportunities. In accordance with the aforementioned, existing practicum and internship evaluation forms should be modified to allow for assessment of "soft" leadership skills, aligned with professional dispositions, as well as more targeted leadership skills, such as their proficiency in leading an initiative, conducting professional development, or managing elements of other district or building initiatives. In short, application of leadership skills should be evaluated in the same way that professional dispositions and skills aligned with NASP training requirements are evaluated, with expectations increasing in developmental complexity, from practicum through the culminating internship.

3   Future Directions for Training Programs

Discussion of leadership in the practice of school psychology, though thematically evident in discipline-specific writings for many years, has only recently emerged as an area of focused interest in the literature and deliberations of our professional organizations. Limited extant research formally operationalizing leadership as related to the practice of school psychology speaks to the need for additional inquiry into the manifestations of leadership in our practice, practitioner characteristics associated with leadership strengths, and the outcomes of infusing leadership tenets into graduate training programs. Reflected in this volume is the integration of current research surrounding leadership in school psychology and the generalization of leadership tenets across domains of practice in which school psychologists *clearly* serve as leaders without administrative titles. The tendency for many in the schools,

including some school psychologists, to continue to view leadership as a centralized practice constrained to principal leadership, directorships, or district administration serves as testimony of the need to universalize understanding of leadership theory and applications as related to our discipline. In the absence of further development on this subject, both at the training level and among those currently working in the field, school psychologists may not maximize potential contributions across the current domains of practice. Regardless of the complexity of individual school psychology positions, whether one functions exclusively in an assessment-oriented capacity or more dynamically, school psychologists lead efforts among constituents on a daily basis. Explicit linkages between leadership tenets, existing school psychology leadership research, and our diverse roles in the schools are integral to attuning others to the scope of our contributions. It is incumbent upon practitioners, academics, and field supervisors to work toward greater understanding of the practitioner characteristics associated with strengths in school psychology leadership, as well as the most effective means of developing future school psychology leaders, by virtue of additional research and inquiry. Fortifying our discipline-specific leadership research base while simultaneously iterating the importance of leadership cultivation among graduate candidates is essential to meeting the progressive aims of contemporary school psychology.

Framework for integration of leadership tenets into school psychology training

Key theoretical frameworks	Associated skills, dispositions, and relevant contextual variables	Training program considerations
Global theory: Trait models	Distal attributes (e.g., cognitive abilities, dispositions, motives, values) Successful leaders (SLs) strive for continuous growth (expansiveness) Proximal attributes (e.g., social capabilities, technical skills, professional expertise) SLs possess both technical and tacit knowledge of strategies to manage complex situations	Training programs (TPs) duly consider relevant leadership traits in both recruitment and curricular endeavors TP culture vigorously facilitates and models continuous development (faculty, students, and practitioners) TP provides students requisite knowledge of leadership models TPs assist students in identifying and cultivating personal attributes that predict leadership success TPs purposefully provide developmental experiences and opportunities for reflective practice to enhance proximal attributes, tacit knowledge, and self-knowledge

Key theoretical frameworks	Associated skills, dispositions, and relevant contextual variables	Training program considerations
Global theory: Information processing models	SL behaviors are predicted by the interaction of expert knowledge structures and situational perceptions SLs are both present and future oriented SLs strive for innovative practice Positive and accurate beliefs of self and others are viewed as predictor of SL behavior	TPs build student skills and confidence with information literacy and encourage innovative practice TPs provide students requisite knowledge of leadership models TPs actively promote student self-awareness of current and anticipated strengths and weaknesses relevant to emerging professional objectives TP provides requisite knowledge of leadership models TP explicitly promotes feedback-seeking and initiative-taking behaviors TP requires students to engage in mindful analysis of interactions self-schema, organizational structures, and behavioral responses to challenging situations
Global theory: Transformational models	SLs form goal-oriented connections with others with a heavy emphasis on shared values SL behavior is cultivated through empowerment, visioning, and ethics SL behavior targets growth in motivational and capacity of stakeholders	TPs promote student commitment to developing potential in self and colleagues TPs create opportunity for students to actively consider emotional, motivational, and professional needs of others in their organizations In addition to traditional collaborative problem solving, TPs teach collaborative strategic planning with emphasis on establishing shared goals and high expectations, developing and supporting staff, and modifying organizational conditions to promote progress toward goals
Applied models: Distributed school leadership	SLs evidence effective communication skills to advance shared goals SLs strategically allocate their professional resources in alignment with goals SLs are highly involved in evaluation, consultation, and strategy development across multiple assessment enterprises SLs are actively engaged in initiatives to develop the human capacity of their organizations SLs actively collaborate with others to ensure a supportive and fair organizational climate	TPs cultivate an enthusiasm for building leadership capacity among their students TPs allocate sufficient curricular resources to provide a strong foundation in conceptual models of leadership development TPs clearly define for students basic discipline-specific leadership competencies and sensitize them to opportunities to develop and exercise applied skills TPs avail students of active learning to enhance applied leader skills within and beyond traditional modalities of school psychology service delivery TPs use multiple best-practice approaches to evaluate their success in developing leadership potential among their students

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