E-PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY OF AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM'S ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

by

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of Educational Leadership,
Policy, and Technology Studies
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2015

ABSTRACT

Institutions of higher education now face demands from a variety of sources to provide evidence of institutional and student achievement (Jackson & Rodgers, 2012). As a result, many institutions have adopted the use of standards-based assessment practices as part of their efforts to meet their continuous improvement needs (Hendry, Armstrong, & Bromberger, 2012), and some have questioned whether these practices are compatible with program assessment and accreditation efforts (Strudler & Wetzel, 2012).

The purpose of this study was to examine the standards-based assessments derived from the use of an e-portfolio assessment tool by one instructional leadership program (ILP) at a southeastern university. In this study, a program evaluation was conducted on one master's level educational leadership program's assessment practices that utilized both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In phase I, quantitative analyses were conducted using faculty assessments of student performance in LiveText to determine if they were predictive of student performance on the Praxis II. In phase II, the researcher conducted one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with program faculty members to uncover program practices, procedures, polices and attitudes towards their institutional assessment practices.

Phase I data analyses indicated that students' performance, as reported in LiveText is not predictive of students' performance on the Praxis II. Phase II of the study indicated that faculty members have a negative perception of their program's assessment program. During the integration of the results it was discovered that faculty members' perceptions of the purpose of the assessment program greatly impacts how they actually conduct assessments in their courses.

In addition, a discrepancy in how faculty members enter assessment scores into LiveText and a lack of communication among assessors were also contributing factors that affect the program's assessment practices.

DEDICATION

For Abby and Brock, you are my inspiration! I hope that through my efforts in school, I have instilled in you a love of learning and a belief that, with hard work, patience and perseverance, you can achieve your dreams.

For Elizabeth, through good times and bad, you have always been there for me. The sacrifices that you have made during my doctoral journey have not gone unnoticed. Thank you for the unfailing love and support you have given me all these years. I hope you take pride in the completion of my doctoral journey. I could not have done it without you!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although my name will be the one that appears on the diploma, my doctoral journey was certainly not an individual effort. I am deeply indebted to many people who have supported and encouraged me throughout my coursework and the completion of this dissertation. It is with sincere gratitude that I thank the following individuals.

First, I must acknowledge the blessings given to me by my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is not a coincidence that my opportunity to complete this degree was presented to me at the same time that I accepted Him as my Lord and Savior. It is through Him that I found the strength to complete this process.

I would like to also thank Dr. Vivian Wright for many years' worth of guidance, encouragement, and support through the dissertation process. You started me on this journey all those years ago when you recruited me to the CAT master's program; and through all the years, you have whole-heartily supported my academic and professional careers. Your guidance during my career and through the completion of this dissertation has been invaluable, and I can never thank you enough for all that you have done for me.

To my tremendous dissertation committee: Dr. Liza Wilson, you have been my teacher and colleague since I was an undergraduate student. You helped light in me the fire that I have for education. In all this time you have never failed to support and encourage me in both my academic and professional careers. For that, thank you. Dr. Margaret Rice, yet another mentor who has taught me longer than I care to admit, thank you for always encouraging me, listening to all my ideas and guiding me during my graduate studies. Dr. John Dantzler, the man who somehow makes learning statistics fun! I never would have been able to complete this

dissertation without the skills that I learned from you. I admire the passion for research methods and statistics that you bring to your classroom and your ability to teach those skills to others. Dr. Brenda Mendiola, you sparked the idea for this dissertation. It has been a pleasure to work alongside you as we attempt to improve the field of educational assessment. Thank you for always listening to my ideas and for all the guidance you provided throughout the completion of this dissertation.

To Dr. Kathy Wetzel, I cannot pass on the opportunity to say thank you. You are responsible for bringing me back to The University of Alabama, without which, I would have never been able to complete my doctorate. Thank you for always encouraging me to continue on.

To my friends and colleagues in my doctoral cohort, I would like to say thank you. I could not have asked for a better support group to join me on every step of this journey. Honestly, when I signed up for this program, I knew that I would have the opportunity to work with talented peers, but I had no idea just how invaluable they would be to my overall doctoral experience. I would have never dreamed that doctoral work could be this fun! This group has encouraged me at every step of the process, never ceasing to urge me to continue, sharing their own experiences and becoming each other's biggest fans.

To my parents, let's be honest, none of us would have looked at the teenage version of me, and said: he will one day earn a PhD! Thank you for the lifetime of love, support and encouragement. You raised me and instilled in me the values necessary to complete this journey, so take pride in this accomplishment.

To Abby and Brock, being your father has brought great joy to my life. I will never forget the encouragement you provided as I wrote my "book." Through all of my efforts in school I hope you learn the significance of a quality education.

Last, but certainly not least, I must say thank you to my beautiful wife, Elizabeth. The completion of this journey required great commitment and sacrifice on her part. For all the weekend and night classes, and the late night writing sessions, thank you for holding down the fort. Even more importantly, thank you for all of the love and support you gave me during this journey, without which, I would have never finished.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Historically, the responsibility of evaluating institutional and student achievement of learning outcomes in higher education belonged solely to the institution. However, Hjelm and Baker (2001) stated that higher education's role as sole judge of these measures has eroded over time. The cause of this erosion stems from a variety of sources, most notably, a gradual decrease in public confidence regarding higher education institutions' abilities to authentically document the achievement of learning outcomes, as well as a growing skepticism from constituents regarding the relevance of using traditional measures of assessment, such as grades and degrees, to serve as adequate measures of achievement (Hjelm & Baker, 2001). As a result of this erosion of public confidence, there are growing interests from higher education stakeholders concerning the quality of educational and institutional results (Stensaasen, 1995). Consequently, institutions of higher education now face demands from a variety of sources, including national, regional and state accrediting agencies to be more accountable for providing evidence of institutional and student achievement (Jackson & Rodgers, 2012).

Continuous Improvement

As a result of these new demands for greater accountability, Arnold (2011) has noted that many stakeholders have advocated for institutions of higher education to implement models of continuous improvement within their assessment practices to assist in documenting achievement of institutional and student learning outcomes. This effort is supported by various educational

organizations, such as AdvancED, a non-profit community of educational professionals (AdvancED, 2014), which has issued a public call challenging policy makers and practitioners to transform educational systems and to make continuous improvement a focal point of their assessment practices (AdvancED, 2011).

In 2011, Arnold stated that a variety of educational accrediting agencies, legislators and higher education professionals had "become enamored with applying the language of continuous improvement to learning outcomes" (p. 16). Citing a lack of sufficient data and incomplete assessment processes among educational institutions as a cause for concern, one example of the demand for continuous improvement (CI) comes from AdvancED (2011), an educational organization that assists institutions with transforming educational systems, using CI as the focal point of their efforts. In addition, another example of mandates for CI comes from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS COC) that has mandated continuous improvement as a non-negotiable marker of institutional effectiveness for all the institutions for which they provide accreditation (Arnold, 2011).

This shift in the assessment community towards CI involves changes in instructional philosophies, requiring instructors to move away from the traditional teacher-centered learning paradigm and to embrace a learner-centered learning paradigm (Aggarwal & Lynn, 2012). The common theme is to make sure students are learning what they should be learning (Aggarwal & Lynn, 2012). Huba and Freed (2000) have maintained that learner-centered assessments should be used to support CI efforts because they provide institutions with the ability to promote and assess learning, rather than simply to monitor. As a result, many universities have not only implemented CI based assessment plans as part of their efforts to satisfy stakeholders, but in

some instances, institutions are actually rewarding their faculty members for developing and utilizing CI based assessment plans in their classes (Aggarwal & Lynn, 2012).

Popularized in the 1960s, continuous improvement has operated under several titles, including total quality management and plan-do-check-act (also known as the Deming circle) (Moyce, 2014). Continuous improvement models were first applied in the business sector, and were later adapted and applied in the educational sector as part of an effort to increase quality control in education (Downey, 2000). Simply defined, CI is a systematic process of ongoing and incremental change of existing practices, aimed at improving performance (Boer et al., 2000) and leading to institutional transformation and a complete change in patterns of behavior and culture (Ni & Sun, 2009).

Standards-Based Assessment

With institutions of higher education facing pressures to be more accountable for supporting and documenting student achievement of learning outcomes, many institutions have adopted the use of standards-based assessment practices as part of their efforts to meet their CI needs (Hendry, Armstrong, & Bromberger, 2012). Defined as a systematic method for collecting valid and reliable evidence of student knowledge (Bers, 2008), standards-based assessments are undertaken at many higher education institutions for the purpose of improving student learning and development (Palomba & Banta, 1999). In 1999, Schmoker and Marzano stated that an ongoing movement in education towards standards-based assessment had begun. They described it as a major force with the potential for huge significance. In recent years, society has come to realize the limitations of assessment practices that merely sort and rank students; and due to increasing scrutiny from policy makers, institutions are now turning to standards-based assessment practices to fulfill their needs (Stiggins, 2005).

Standards-based assessment has been defined as a set of pre-defined criteria that outline different levels of achievement. As part of standards-based assessment plans, students are awarded grades based upon their level of performance or achievement, relative to a set of pre-defined standards, meaning that student achievement is not measured in relation to other students, or a pre-determined system of grade distribution. Instead, student achievement is measured against a set of standards. As part of the standards-based assessment movement, assessment criteria is clearly articulated, and the students are made aware of the assessment criteria that will be used to evaluate their achievement before the assessment takes place. In addition, students are informed of what levels of performance relative to the standards are required for achievement (University of New South Wales Australia, 2014). Ultimately, advocates of the standards-based movement believe that quality standards-based assessment practices generate a well-articulated common focus, which clarifies understanding, accelerates communication, and promotes persistence and collective purpose within institutions (Rosenholtz, 1991).

Portfolio Assessment

As higher education institutions searched for ways to improve their assessment practices and to institute continuous improvement, portfolios emerged as an alternative method for measuring student learning (Wade & Yarbrough, 1996). In recent years, many state accrediting agencies have mandated portfolio processes for licensure purposes because of the belief that portfolios contribute to the development and growth of individuals (Zeichner & Wray, 2000). Simply defined, portfolio assessment involves the assessment of a collection of student artifacts that is gathered to demonstrate a student's abilities acquired through a learning journey over a period of time (Butler, 2006).

In the early years of the twenty-first century, portfolio assessment evolved as new research emerged touting the benefits of student-created electronic portfolios (e-portfolios). E-portfolios are an excellent form of value added assessment, which serves as an indicator of learner growth and achievement (Popper, 2005). The electronic portfolio, defined as an online method of collecting, assessing and displaying student work samples, has in recent years become a popular method of student assessment and an integral component of a new wave of innovative assessment systems that enhance programs and provide evidence for accreditation purposes (Everhart & Hogarty, 2009).

The term electronic portfolio, also commonly referred to in the literature as eportfolios, e-portfolios, digital portfolios and efolios, among others, can take many forms (Matthews-DeNatale, 2014). For this study, the term e-portfolio was used to refer to all of the various terms mentioned in the literature.

Online Assessment Tools

As the adoption of e-portfolios has increased over time, Lorenzo and Ittelson (2005a) have stated that institutions face pressures to select an e-portfolio system that best suits their needs from a variety of available options. Four common e-portfolio options exist: homegrown, open source, commercially available, and software generated. Each option carries its pros and cons, and each institution must evaluate the available features of each and select a tool that meets its needs (Sweat-Guy & Buzzetto-More, 2007). In Alabama, all of the degree-granting instructional leadership programs that lead to certification from the Alabama State Department of Education are required to document student performance in relation to the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders (ASIL). However, the state does not mandate specifically how that is to be accomplished. Most institutions in Alabama have elected to use some form of online

assessment program (Mendiola, Hardin, & Vaux, 2012). LiveText, TaskStream, Weave Online, Tk20 and Tracdat are a few examples of online assessment products that are currently available to serve institutional assessment needs (Sweat-Guy & Buzzetto-More, 2007).

In 2006, the program evaluated in this study elected to adopt a commercially available e-portfolio tool because the tool is well developed and provides technical support to the institution. An online assessment tool, LiveText, was adopted, in part, because of available features such as portfolio creation tools, the ability to permanently collect and house student artifacts, built-in course management tools, web hosting by the provider and the ability to create custom rubrics, among others (Sweat-Guy & Buzzetto-More, 2007). LiveText provides academic institutions with e-portfolio tools for assessment, which allows for data reporting to effectively measure outcomes-based learning goals and institutional objectives for accreditation and continuous improvement needs (LiveText, 2014b, para. 1). In this study, LiveText is referenced since it is the specific assessment tool utilized by the program that was evaluated.

Leadership Standards

This study evaluated the assessment practices of one master's level educational leadership program that prepares educators to assume the role of K-12 educational leaders. In the past few decades the role of the school principal has evolved dramatically. Today, principals are tasked to lead school reform efforts and to facilitate school learning. With an understanding of the changing role of school administrators, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) developed five standards intended to guide P-12 school administrators in their efforts to generate positive learning environments. Since that time, most of the 50 U.S. states, including the state of Alabama, have incorporated the ISLLC standards in some capacity into state-level school administrator licensure requirements. In addition, for those institutions that are accredited

by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which includes the program that was evaluated in this study, the use of ISLLC standards is required as part of each institutions' assessment plan, which commonly involves portfolio assessment (Hackman & Alsbury, 2005).

In concurrence with the adoption of the ISLLC standards by many educational leadership programs, these programs have also adopted standards-based assessment practices as part of their efforts to ensure that their graduates enter the field with the competencies necessary to lead school-based reform and promote student learning (Hackman & Alsbury, 2005). In 2004, the need to transform leadership training programs in Alabama's colleges of education was perceived as so essential that members of the Governor's Congress on School Leadership developed plans for reform (Schmidt-Davis, O'Neill, & Bussey, 2010). As reported by Mendiola, Hardin, and Vaux (2013), the ASIL were adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education in 2005 to address those needs. Consequently, in Alabama, institutions of higher education offering degree programs in instructional leadership, which lead to K-12 administrative certification from the Alabama Department of Education, must provide evidence of student mastery of the ASIL. As a result of these demands, virtually all of the instructional leadership programs in the Alabama now utilize some form of a digital portfolio assessment system to assess student performance on the ASIL. These institutions are required to provide evidence of student assessment in relation to the standards, utilizing standardized assessment rubrics as their measures of evaluation. The results of these student assessments are often aggregated, analyzed and published to program or institutional exhibit centers for use during mandated accreditation visits from either state or in some cases, regional accreditors (Mendiola, Hardin, & Vaux, 2013).

Assessment Validity

Hackman and Alsbury (2005) have maintained that faculty members in educational leadership programs should constantly engage in self-assessment of the effectiveness of their administrator preparation programs to identify areas in which they can better prepare students to assume leadership roles, a process in which many programs traditionally do not participate. Since the beginning of the standards-based assessment movement, the role of accountability in today's institutional assessment activities has become more sophisticated and the climate of assessment has become increasingly complex, with the roles that these assessment practices play in institutional processes increasing dramatically (Jackson & Rodgers, 2012). However, despite increasingly complex demands from accrediting bodies that institutions of higher education must develop and sustain a culture of continuous improvement, little research on the subject exists, and only a limited selection of models have been discussed in the literature to provide guidance to help shape sustainable assessment practices (Leimer, 2010). The climate surrounding institutional assessment practices has heightened to the point that educational institutions cannot afford to ignore demands from accreditors (Davis & Rivera, 2014). As Davis and Rivera (2014) have pointed out, the legitimacy of colleges and universities to compete in the industry will be compromised if they fail to maintain accreditation, thus affecting the perceived value of the organization's diplomas and certificates. As Jackson and Rodgers (2012) eloquently stated, "the days of checking the box" are over (p. 59). Consequently, many higher education institutions now depend upon assessment data derived from e-portfolio based assessment practices to initiate curriculum-based and programmatic change processes to satisfy stakeholders (Jackson & Rodgers, 2012).

The demand from external constituents for quantitative assessments has left many post-secondary instructors confused regarding the nature and purpose of standards-based assessments, and fearful that these demands are part of the corporatization of the university system (Ascough, 2011). As a result, Hardin (2012) stated that too few higher educational institutions have a process to measure the effectiveness of their assessment programs, usually because the energy involved in simply implementing mandated assessment processes often leads to a mode of simple compliance, instead of processes of discovery. Furthermore, it has been noted in the literature that "though assessment is frequently conducted, the quality of its implementation is seldom investigated" (Rodgers, Gray, Fulcher, & Jurich, 2012, p. 384).

Rodgers, Gray, Fulcher, and Jurich (2012) have maintained that although the quality of assessment is important, because influential decisions such as curricular changes should be informed by quality information, many institutions simply conduct assessments in an attempt to satisfy external stakeholders. Some of the commonly-cited obstacles that cause these issues include faculty resistance (Shavelson, 2010), most often due to being overwhelmed by assessment work (Pringle & Michel, 2007), the complexities of assessment processes and terminology (Daffron & Jordan, 2012), as well as a fear of evaluation, erosion of academic freedom and lack of return on investment (Likon, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

The original intent behind the adoption of an e-portfolio assessment system by the program that was evaluated in this study matched three of Chatham-Carpenter, Seawell, and Raschig's (2010) purposes for e-portfolios, which are to facilitate reflection, showcase career skills, and to document assessment of professional standards. The e-portfolio process implemented by the program that was evaluated in this study closely matches what Zeichner and

Wray (2001) have described as a credentialing portfolio, which was designed to document student achievement in relation to the ASIL for student certification purposes. The assessment data derived from this program's e-portfolio process was not originally intended to serve as a data source for program evaluation or determining programmatic change.

The program evaluated in this study is part of an institution that is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), a regional accrediting body for degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on College, 2014a). As part of SACS' accreditation processes, the program evaluated in this study is required to implement a standards-based assessments plan in order to measure student achievement of program outcomes, establish criteria for student success, provide evidence of student and institutional performance and create plans for improvement.

In 2010, SACS mandates prompted new uses for the assessment data being collected through their e-portfolio process. At that time, a process for utilizing the assessment data that had been collected through LiveText for documentation of student performance on the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders was created. The analyses of those data served as the basis for establishing program goals and implementing continuous improvement change processes, which was reported in the programs annual SACS report.

Some faculty members in the program evaluated in this study have questioned the validity of using the data generated from their e-portfolio assessment system for means other than its original intent (Mendiola, Hardin, & Vaux, 2012), which was to document student performance on the ASIL. Specifically, questions have arisen regarding the appropriateness of

using these data for program improvement. Now that these data are being used as a data source for programmatic change, further examination is warranted.

Methodological Framework

The e-portfolio movement is at a crossroads (Enyon, Gambinbo & Torok, 2014). Even though many college and university campuses have incorporated a variety of e-portfolio assessment processes into their assessment practices (Dahlstrom, Dzuiban & Walker, 2013), many within the field of higher education have questioned whether e-portfolio assessment practices are compatible with program assessment and accreditation efforts (Strudler & Wetzel, 2012). Given the concerns for increased accountability, supporters of e-portfolios are increasingly being asked difficult questions regarding whether e-portfolio initiatives really work, if they are worth the institutional investment and to justify the value that e-portfolios bring to institutions (Enyon, Gambino, & Torok, 2014). Consequently, Matthews-DeNatale (2014) has stated that there is a pressing need for better research regarding the impact that portfolios make. This adds emphasis to the need for this study to examine the assessment practices of the studied program through the lens of program evaluation.

Educators recognize that when conceived and conducted thoughtfully, program evaluation studies can provide essential information about the effectiveness of educational programs (Worthen & Sanders, 1991). As such, program evaluation methodologies can be adopted by researchers to evaluate and improve a variety of programs and processes, including standards-based assessment systems (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997) such as the one being evaluated in this study. Program evaluation methodologies can be used to frame studies, providing understanding of the methods and processes implemented by programs as part of their assessment plans. Understanding these data provides the researcher the opportunity to make sense

of the ramifications of those decisions and to understand the effects those decisions have on the overall validity of a program's assessment practices (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

As a methodological framework, program evaluation has been defined as "the identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object's value (worth or merit), quality, utility, effectiveness, or significance" (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 5). In more simple terms, program evaluation is a mechanism for accountability (Rhue & Boudreau, 2013), or a process of gathering information about an entity and evaluating its worth through value judgments (Keating, 2010). Furthermore, Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (1997) claimed that program evaluation is the process of determining the value of an evaluation object, which according to Rhue and Boudreau (2013), can help make thoughtful decisions regarding the future of programs or how to appropriately make program improvements.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the standards-based assessments derived from the use of an e-portfolio assessment tool by one instructional leadership program at SE University (pseudonym used, SE University) for the purpose of making programmatic change. Throughout this study, the evaluated institution will be referred to as a pseudonym, SE University. In this study, a program evaluation was conducted on one master's level educational leadership program's assessment practices. As part of this evaluation, data regarding student achievement of the ASIL were examined in order to determine if they were predictive of student success on the Praxis II content examination. Developing an understanding of the relationship between those data sources has led to an understanding of the appropriateness of using data from LiveText as a source for making decisions for programmatic change and for

satisfying accreditation requirements. In addition, through the mixed-methods design, qualitative data were collected to help explain the unique institutional and programmatic factors that shape the assessment practices within the program evaluated in this study. Such data could be used to provide the studied program with data to assist stakeholders in strengthening the policies, procedures and practices that guide their assessment efforts, ultimately leading to more informed decision-making, improved programs, and the facilitation of more meaningful accreditation processes. In addition, the researcher hopes that this study will add to the body of literature on institutional assessment practices, and close a gap in the literature concerning the use of assessment data for multiple purposes.

Research Questions

For the purposes of this study, a mixed-methods approach was conducted. Specifically, an explanatory–sequential, mixed–methods design was used to explore the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between evaluations of student achievement as measured in LiveText and student achievement as measured by student performance on the Praxis II content examination;
2. What are the faculty members' perceptions regarding their institutional assessment process, including policies and procedures; and
3. To what extent do program, institutional and external factors impact the assessments of student achievement as documented in LiveText?

Table 1

Research Questions Alignment Table

Research Question	Phase	Question Type
1	1	Quantitative
2	2	Qualitative
3	Integration	Mixed-Methods

Significance of the Research

The role of accountability for educational institutions is becoming increasingly complex as more people are demanding to better understand why problems exist and how to fix them (Jackson & Rodgers, 2012). As higher educational institutions struggle to meet requirements to develop a sustainable culture of evidence-based decision-making (Leimer, 2010), many in the field are now asking "how can we work with assessment evidence to create changes that improve student learning" (Blaich & Wise, p. 67, 2010). Further research is needed to add to the literature concerning the ramifications of using standards-based e-portfolio assessment data as a source of information for program improvement or for purposes other than their original intent. In addition, the college of education that governs the program evaluated in this study has recently begun processes to expand the use of LiveText to all of its certification programs, adding to the importance of understanding the use of assessment data as evidence for programmatic change.

Assumptions of the Study

This study incorporated the following assumptions:

1. Valid assessment scores of well-defined learning outcomes are predictive of student achievement as measured by standardized certification examinations;

2. Researchers can determine the worth of standardized assessment processes by analyzing student assessments and comparing them to valid measures of student achievement; and
3. Measures of student achievement in relation to well-defined outcomes can be captured through e-portfolio assessment processes.

Definition of Terms

Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders (ASIL) - A set of eight standards adopted by the Alabama State Department of Education in 2008. All school leadership preparation programs in the state of Alabama must evaluate all student students' performance in relation to these standards (Mendiola, Hardin, & Vaux, 2013).

AdvancED– A non-profit organization dedicated to assisting educational institutions with transformational change through the process of continuous improvement (AdvancED, 2011).

Continuous improvement- A systematic process of ongoing and incremental change of existing practices aimed at improving performance (Boer et al., 2000), leading to institutional transformation and a complete change in patterns of behavior and culture (Ni & Sun, 2009).

E-portfolio- An online method of collecting, assessing and displaying student work samples (Everhart & Hogarty, 2009). E-portfolios are commonly referred to in the literature as eportfolios, electronic portfolios, digital portfolios and efolios, among others (Matthews-DeNatale, 2014). For this study, the term e-portfolios will be used to refer to all of the various terms mentioned in the literature.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)– A program administered by the Council of Chief State School Officers that developed a framework for redefining school leadership through standards for educational leaders (Hackman & Alsbury, 2005).

LEADAlabama (LEADAL) - An Alabama State Department of Education supported evaluation system for its educational leaders (Southern Regional Education Board, 2014).

LiveText- LiveText is a company that provides academic institutions with e-portfolio tools for assessment, that allows for integration and data reporting to effectively measure outcomes-based learning goals and institutional objectives for accreditation and continuous improvement needs (LiveText, 2014b, para. 1).

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education- NCATE is a coalition of member organizations of teachers, teacher educators, content specialists, and local and state policy makers, and provides accreditation for teacher preparation programs (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2014).

No Child Left Behind- A congressional act intended to raise achievement and close achievement gaps (No Child Left Behind Act, 2014).

Online assessment tools- See e-portfolios.

Portfolio Assessment- The assessment of a collection of student artifacts that is gathered to demonstrate a student's abilities acquired through a learning journey over a period of time (Butler, 2006).

Praxis II- A subject specific assessment that measures K-12 content specific knowledge, as well as general and subject-specific teaching skills and knowledge (Educational Testing Service, 2014e).

Program- Combination of people, organization, management and resources that collectively comprise an educational endeavor dedicated to reach a goal (Worthen, Sander, & Fitzpatrick, 2011).

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on College (SACS COC)-The regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2014b).

Southern Regional Education Board – A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states to improve public education (Southern Regional Education Board, 2014).

Stakeholders- Any individual or group that has a direct interest in, or is affected by the results of a program evaluation (Worthen, Sander, & Fitzpatrick, 1991).

Standards-based assessment- A set of pre-defined criteria that outlines different levels of achievement. As part of a standards-based assessment plans, students are awarded grades based upon their level of performance or achievement relative to a set of pre-defined standards, meaning that student achievement is not measured in relation to other students, or a pre-determined system of grade distribution (University of New South Wales Australia, 2014).

Summary

In this study, a program evaluation was conducted on one master's level educational leadership program's assessment practices. As part of this evaluation, data regarding student achievement of the ASIL was examined in order to determine if they were predictive of student success on the Praxis II content examination. Developing an understanding of the relationship between those data sources led to an understanding of the validity of using data from LiveText as a source for making decisions for programmatic change and for satisfying accreditation requirements. In addition, data from faculty interviews were used to discover the underlying factors affecting the validity of assessment practices within the studied program. This chapter stated the problem that warranted investigation, provided an overview of the theoretical

framework, described the purpose and significance of the research, outlined the mixed-methods research questions that were answered and documented the assumptions and terminology for this study. Chapter II reviews literature pertinent to institutional research practices to identify how institutions have developed assessment practices to satisfy demands for accountability. Chapter III describes the instruments and methods for research for the study. Chapter IV presents the results of data collection and analysis. Chapter V states the conclusions, summarizes the limitations of the study, provides implications for practice and provides recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the standards-based assessments derived from the use of an e-portfolio assessment tool by one instructional leadership program at SE University for the purpose of making programmatic change. These data could be used to improve the program's assessment processes, policies, and their implementation of portfolio assessment practices. A review of the literature was conducted to provide foundational knowledge. Sources in this review include research articles published in various peer reviewed journals found through the use of the SCOUT and ERIC databases made available through The University of Alabama's library services, as well as Google Scholar. This review of the literature presents the theoretical framework upon which this study was based; as well as foundational knowledge to support this study by examining the existing research regarding e-portfolio assessment, digital institutional assessment, the Praxis II series and accreditation management systems.

After completion of the literature review, five areas were identified as the most prevalent in the literature and will be addressed in this chapter. Those five themes were accountability, competency, defining purpose, stakeholder perceptions/adoption and continuous improvement. In addition, a literature review was conducted on the history of portfolios, the Praxis II examination and e-portfolio assessment tools.

Accountability

When examining the implementation of e-portfolios, the concept of accountability plays a crucial role in the decision-making process (Xueguang & Rada, 2005), often guiding institutions through the design and implementation of assessment plans that provide important measures of accountability for student learning (Xueguang & Rada, 2005). The advancements of the World Wide Web have allowed "university departments to implement information systems that facilitate learning and assessment in a standardized way" (Xueguang & Rada, 2005, p. 93), ensuring that institutions have the ability to document student performance on important standards and key indicators. Furthermore, as improvement processes are enhanced and institutionalized to include diagnostic reviews, more institutions have access to tools and training that facilitate data collection (AdvancED, 2011). Due to increased demand for accountability from local, state and regional accreditation agencies, "teacher education programs are increasingly being asked to align curriculum and student outcomes with state and national teacher education standards" (Strudler & Wetzel, 2005, p. 412). Moskal, Ellis, and Keon (2008) have stated that standardized assessments assist institutions of higher education in meeting the necessary guidelines to maintain accreditation from governing bodies and to ensure high quality of higher education institutions' programs. In addition, these assessment practices have the ability to promote public confidence in an institution's academic programs ensure that educational standards are established, and foster an environment that encourages continuous quality improvement (Moskal, Ellis, & Keon, 2008).

Competency

With the creation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), educational leaders have had to rethink what they were doing to prepare graduates to enter the teaching field, and to ensure that new teachers had the skills and dispositions necessary for classroom success (Everhart & Hogarty, 2009). Electronic portfolios have the ability to advance student success, make student learning visible and support deep learning (Eynon, Gambino, & Torok, 2014). Berry and Marx (2010) claimed that electronic portfolios provide opportunities to learn more about the capabilities of the electronic medium for teaching. In addition, Carpenter, Seawell, and Raschig (2010) concluded that electronic portfolio assessment can promote reflection as well as provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their skills and experiences. It has been well documented that electronic portfolios help identify points of strengths not previously available with traditional assessment methods (Jackson & Rodgers, 2012). However, it is important to note that not only are electronic portfolios considered by many to be an effective means for learning, they also provide institutions with new avenues for the documentation and display of student growth, which allows students to demonstrate their competencies with respect to established standards (Everhart & Hogarty, 2009).

Defining Purpose

The concept of student portfolios is not new. However, the emergence of electronic portfolios has ushered in a “new phenomenon” (Strudler & Wetzel, 2012, p. 161). Many within the field of education openly support electronic portfolios as valuable means for assessment because of their ability to foster student learning, allowing student teachers to document their journey towards becoming a teacher (Strudler & Wetzel, 2005). Although e-portfolios provide many of the same features as traditional hard copy portfolios, many e-portfolio systems have

evolved into robust programs capable of providing rich documentation for program evaluation and accreditation management. These enhancements have caused some to wonder if using portfolios for program evaluation and accreditation purposes is compatible with the original intent of portfolios (Strudler & Wetzel, 2012). Everhart and Hogarty (2009) noted that modern electronic portfolio systems have provided institutions with the opportunity to enhance their data-driven decision making, monitor assessments and determine program strengths and weaknesses, and provide evidence for meeting rigorous accreditation requirements. As the use of electronic portfolios is expanding, "the issues of clarifying their purpose continue to plague teacher education programs" (Strudler & Wetzel, 2012, p. 161).

E-Portfolios

Over time, the traditional hard copy print portfolios that were meant to foster metacognition, reflective practice, and self-critique evolved into the e-portfolios that are commonly used in higher education today (Kahn, 2014). In 2002, Young stated that campus administrators believed that e-portfolios would be the next big thing in campus computing. Lorenzo and Ittelson stated in 2005(b) that e-portfolios were the biggest innovation in educational technology since course management systems were introduced. Kahn (2014) has stated that an increased use of the internet in educational settings in the 1990s, coupled with the steady development of learning management systems, aided the gradual shift of portfolio assessment from the hard copy print format to the variety of digital formats that exist today. In addition, Kahn (2014) indicated that the growing assessment movement in higher education has placed greater demands on institutions to provide direct evidence of student learning, which has served as a catalyst for the creation and implementation of e-portfolios in higher education. This

is particularly true for those disciplines that maintain specialized accreditation from either state or federal governments (Kahn, 2014).

Defining E-Portfolios

In the simplest terms, e-portfolios have been defined as electronic versions of paper-based portfolios, allowing users to integrate graphics and video, in addition to text (Butler, 2006), or as digital containers that allow for the storage of audio and visual content (Abrami & Barrett, 2005). Similar to traditional print-based portfolios, Barrett (2010) has defined e-portfolios as "an electronic collection of evidence that shows your learning journey over time" (p. 6). Similarly, Matthew-DeNatale (2014) has defined e-portfolios simply as online tools that assist in gathering work samples, also commonly referred to as artifacts or evidence.

Kahn (2014) stated that e-portfolios offer a distinct advantage over more traditional forms of portfolios due to the opportunities to include a variety of multimedia. Butler (2006) stated that skill development, robust documentation of learning, quick and continuous feedback, authentic assessment, cost effectiveness and portability are all factors which allow for e-portfolios to have longevity beyond a single course. According to Barrett (2010), although e-portfolios allow for the inclusion of key artifacts, such as writing samples, photos and videos, much like the traditional print-based portfolio, ultimately, the critical aspect of e-portfolios is the provision of opportunities within the e-portfolio process for student reflection.

Some scholars state that defining the term e-portfolio is difficult due to the many forms they can take (Matthew-DeNatalie, 2014). The term electronic portfolio, also commonly referred to in the literature as eportfolios, e-portfolios, digital portfolios and efolios, among others, can take many forms, with Matthews-DeNatale (2014) describing them as looking like a website or blog. Yancey (2009) highlighted the interactivity and the inherent social action of the digital

medium as key features distinguishing e-portfolios from their traditional hard copy predecessors. For this study, the term e-portfolios will be used to refer to all of the various terms used in the literature to describe the concept.

E-Portfolio Limitations

Although the literature is filled with volumes describing the benefits of e-portfolios, it is important to note that a comprehensive review of the literature on e-portfolios would not be complete without a review of the limitations of e-portfolios. First, due to the easy accessibility of e-portfolio platforms, and the relatively easy process involved with constructing e-portfolios, institutions have been presented with massive quantities of data (Challis, 2005). As a result, these institutions have had to develop practices and guidelines for handling these data. In addition, since e-portfolios are primarily housed online, institutions have struggled with determining how to appropriately grant access to student work, which has led to issues of online security and privacy, as well as matters of copyright infringement and intellectual property (Challis, 2005). Furthermore, as Tosh, Light, Fleming, and Haywood (2005) have stated, additional issues with students will arise in the e-portfolio process if the needs and attitudes of the students are not considered. Specifically, Tosh et al. (2005) mentioned the importance of buy-in, motivation, assessment and e-portfolio technology as factors that affect student engagement with the e-portfolio process. To help improve student buy-in, Tosh, Light, Fleming, and Haywood (2005) suggested that all stakeholders should have a good understanding of the benefits of e-portfolios and should be able to articulate those benefits to the students. In addition, they have suggested developing e-portfolio practices that explain to the students exactly how the e-portfolios will benefit them, as well as how it will be assessed.

E-portfolios as a Concept

Much like its traditional print-based predecessor, e-portfolios were originally conceptualized as showcase pieces, intended to display collections of student work over time. However, even though people still recognize portfolios for their ability to showcase student work, more recently the literature on e-portfolios has provided opportunities to conceptualize e-portfolios differently. Matthews-DeNatale (2014) described e-portfolios as a process, capable of serving a host of goals. In addition, some within education are now viewing portfolios as much more than a tool, and have come to refer to e-portfolios as an approach to learning that aligns closely with constructivist, experiential and connectivist pedagogies (Matthews-DeNatale, 2014).

Citing a report by the Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR), Kahn (2013) stated that since 2010, there has been a dramatic increase in the use of e-portfolios in higher education, with 57% of US postsecondary institutions indicating they used e-portfolios in at least some manner within the past year. The sheer increase in the variety and availability of e-portfolio platforms and vendors alone provides evidence of the growing use of e-portfolios (Matthews-DeNatale, 2014). According to Kahn (2014), “the increasing adoption of e-portfolios is driven in part by the range of educational purposes and priorities they can serve” (p. 2). E-portfolios can serve a host of goals, and can be conceptualized as technology, a pedagogical method and as a strategy for evidenced-based assessment of learning outcomes (Matthews-DeNatale, 2014). It is important to note that if institutions utilize e-portfolios to meet multiple goals, tension is likely to exist for those responsible for creating e-portfolio processes to meet rigid demands of accreditors, while simultaneously maintaining the creative rein of e-portfolios that fosters student engagement (Kahn, 2014). Regardless of the purpose for adopting e-portfolios, the e-portfolio concept embraces a constructivist epistemology placing students at the center of knowledge construction,

and generates high impact practices that require students to generate, integrate and apply knowledge, which supports improvement of learning and accountability efforts (Kahn, 2014).

Stakeholder Perception/Adoption

With the recent increase in educational accountability,

> teacher education unit heads in the United States have faced a common problem over the last decade as they have had to decide how to showcase student work in a way that displays the performance levels of program completers while also providing evidence that professional standards are being met. (Everhart & Gerlach, 2011, p. 97)

Electronic portfolios have developed a group of supporters that tout their benefits, including the ability to provide more accurate pictures of student learning and ability longitudinally (McNamara & Bailey, 2006). As a result, Xueguang and Rada (2005) stated that nearly 95% of American schools and colleges use portfolios in some manner to make decisions concerning teacher candidates.

Despite the wide-spread adoption of e-portfolios in recent years, many scholars have described an ongoing resistance among faculty to authentically embrace institutional assessment practices (Shavelson, 2010). Furthermore, Ewell (2002) has stated that the movement towards mandated assessment has had little impact on most faculty members, and that they view these processes with suspicion and disregard. There are a variety of reasons cited for this continued resistance in the literature, with the most notable including the increased complexities of assessment practices and their corresponding terminology, and the heightened expectations for modern assessment processes (Daffron & Jordan, 2012). In addition, the current climate surrounding institutional assessment practices has led to a sense of being overwhelmed by assessment work among faculty members (Pringle & Michel, 2007).

Some scholars have indicated that a lack of faculty support is a significant barrier to the successful implementation of an assessment program (Ewell, 1996; Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009;

Steele, 1996). Palomba and Banta (1999) have stated that creating a culture of assessment within institutions that conduct assessment is critical if those institutions are going to have effective assessment practices. A critical element of creating and promoting a culture of assessment within an institution is getting your faculty involved in the assessment process (Magruder, McManis, & Young, 1997). Those institutions that have assessment practices that have been described as successful have indicated that assessment programs are better integrated if faculty members are involved in the design and implementation and fully embrace the process (Muffo, 2001). Although there is little empirical evidence in the literature regarding how to actively involve faculty in the assessment process, how the faculty perceive the value of the assessment process is recognized as a key element (Gray, 1997; Palomba & Banta, 1999; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). Scholars greatly value their time (Angelo, 2002), so naturally, faculty support of the assessment system decreases when the assessment process is perceived as a burdensome part of mandated assessment (Hutchings, 2010; Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009). In addition, it has been stated in the literature that faculty need to see greater value in assessment beyond meeting measures of accountability in order to become invested (Banta & Associates, 1993) and that if the faculty perceive the process as monitoring or as imposed from the outside, they often times fail to see the potential benefits (Mars, 2002).

Continuous Improvement

Historically, schools have been limited in their improvement efforts due to a lack of insufficient data and incomplete data collection process (AdvancED, 2014). However, as data collection tools have improved, continuous improvement has served as a catalyst for institutions of higher education to document why educational problems exist, identify the source of the problems, and create a plan for improvement (Jackson & Rodgers, 2012). Arnold (2011)

described this development as a result of accrediting agencies, legislators and educational professionals becoming enamored with applying continuous improvement to school data collection processes. There are a variety of educational accrediting agencies in the United States that provide assessment models, most of which incorporate continuous improvement as their core.

Deming's PDCA model is reflected in the model adopted by AdvancED, a non-profit organization that conducts on-site external reviews of p-12 schools (AdvancED, 2014). AdvancED (2014) advocated that effective models of continuous improvement are built around four elements: 1) setting standards for performance; 2) collecting, mining and analyzing data; 3) developing a deep understanding of performance successes and challenges; and 4) making meaningful change.

In the realm of higher education, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS COC) is the recognized accreditation agency in eleven U.S. states and Latin America, and provides an accreditation structure for degree-granting institutions of higher education (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2014). SACS COC presumes each member institution to be engaged in an ongoing program of improvement and expects accredited institutions to demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission and to document the quality and effectiveness of its programs and services (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2014a). Both AdvancED's model for continuous improvement and SACS COC's mandates for continuous improvement demonstrate the importance of incorporating appropriate assessment practices for educational institutions, and are reflected in the institutional assessment model followed by the program in this study.

History of Portfolio Assessment

Although the use of e-portfolios for pedagogical and assessment purposes is a fairly new phenomenon, the concept of portfolio assessment in higher education has a much deeper history and has become common place (Zeichner & Wray, 2000). Batson (2002) has described today's modern e-portfolios as direct descendants of the reflective hard copy print portfolios that have a much longer history with teacher education programs. According to Yancey (2009), traditional print portfolios became popular in teacher education programs, as well as a variety of college-level writing programs in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and quickly spread to other disciplines. When portfolios entered the field of higher education, they brought with them the hope that they would contribute to the development and growth of learners, and encourage students and teachers to think more deeply about their subject content (Bird, 1990). In addition, in 1996, portfolios were identified as one of the top three curriculum trends in the US and were lauded as an alternative approach to measure student learning and reflection (Wade & Yarborough, 1996).

Portfolios serve student and teacher purposes, providing students with opportunities to document and reflect, while at the same time allowing teachers to evaluate student growth and achievement (Wade & Yarborough, 1996). Wade and Yarborough (1996) stated that the term portfolio is broad and could mean anything from a vast collection of personal artifacts, including drafts, final pieces and odd items, to a trimmed and carefully selected collection of best works. Butler (2006) described portfolios as a "collection of evidence that is gathered together to show a person's learning journey over time, and to demonstrate their abilities" (p. 2). Furthermore, Yancey (2009) has defined portfolios as "collections of work selected from a larger archive of work, upon which the student has reflected" (p. 16), and stated that the strength of portfolios comes from three required activities: collection, selection and reflection. Regardless of the

definition, the literature is filled with portfolio supporters who, like Barrett (2010), believe the real impact of portfolios comes from the reflection documented within.

The original intent behind the adoption of print portfolios by institutions of higher education was to assist students with cultivating habits of metacognition, reflective practice and self-critique (Kahn, 2014). Butler (2006) stated that opportunities to increase learning is a major purpose of portfolios, due to the inherent opportunity for students to accumulate and reflect upon a large variety of evidence, which can include writing samples, projects, observations and evaluations, among others. According to Young (2002), the process of creating a portfolio allows students to develop a broader sense of what they are learning. In addition, Wade and Yarbrough (1996) have maintained that a portfolio assist students with translating theory into practice and provides opportunities for self-reflection. Furthermore, Brown (2002) stated that the process of developing portfolios helps students identify prior learning, leads to new learning outcomes, increases learning and enhances students' communication and organizational skills.

Portfolio Evolution

Portfolios have evolved since their initial introduction to higher education and now serve a diverse set of purposes and take a greater variety of forms (Yancey, 2009). According to Barrett, (2010) the original purpose behind the use of portfolios in education was to facilitate student learning and foster student reflection. Zeichner and Wray (2000) have labeled this as a learning portfolio. However, over time, new and varied purposes, as well as multiple forms of portfolios have since emerged in higher education, which have changed how some people conceptualize portfolios. Although a multitude of terminology exists, Zeichner and Wray (2000) have identified three distinct commonly referenced purposes for portfolios found in the literature.

These purposes are to maximize student learning, provide opportunities for credentialing, and showcase the student's best work for employment purposes.

Learning portfolios. Zeichner and Wary (2000) claimed that for teacher preparation programs, learning portfolios are designed to "engage student teachers in inquiry about their teaching, and to document growth in teaching over time" (p. 615). As cited by Brown (2002), Kohler stated that the construction of portfolios encourages reflection and writing about professional experiences, which results in greater self-knowledge. In addition, also cited by Brown (2002), social theorists such as Bandura, Dewey, and Vygotsky have stated that portfolios require students to analyze work and community settings as part of the learning process. Learning portfolios typically contain work samples from all stages of the learning process, including less than perfect work, which allows for the opportunity to observe student development and growth over time, providing assessors the opportunity to examine students' complete reflective learning experiences (Butler, 2006).

Credentialing portfolios. Eynon, Gambino, and Torok (2014) have stated that institutions of higher education are currently confronting new challenges driven by competing agendas; the completion agenda and the quality agenda. More than ever before, institutions are forced to use new tools and develop new structures to help students advance through their degree programs with greater speed and efficiency, while maintaining the ability to foster student learning and develop complex thinkers (Enyon, 2014). Much of the pressure driving the completion agenda stems from the growing stipulations and demands from accrediting bodies that state schools must conduct outcome and competency based assessments (O'Sullivan et al., 2012). These mandates have spawned a new purpose for portfolios, which is to ensure that competencies are achieved and educational goals are met (O'Sullivan et al., 2012). In the realm

of higher education, portfolio assessment practices have evolved to accommodate the evaluation of the readiness of teacher candidates to receive their teaching credentials (Zeichner & Wray, 2000). Similar to a learning portfolio, credentialing portfolios can include work samples of imperfect work as well as finished work (Butler, 2002), but the primary focus of credentialing portfolio is to document student performance in order to meet the demands of the growing assessment movement (Kahn, 2014).

The beginning of the credentialing portfolio has roots as far back as 2000, when Zeichner and Wray noted that some institutions used portfolios for credentialing purposes to document whether students had achieved a pre-determined level of proficiency on a set of standards. In addition, Zeichner and Wray (2000) also stated that the use of credentialing portfolios has become more common among institutions as requirements from state agencies demand to see that students are meeting defined levels of proficiency has increased.

Showcase portfolios. As new purposes and audiences for portfolios have grown, the demands for students to showcase their best work for employers have grown as well (Yancey, 2009). Showcase portfolios have become more common in recent years, as institutions are now preparing teacher education graduates to utilize their portfolios as showcases of their best work as they apply for teaching positions (Zeichner & Wray, 2000). These portfolios are designed only to showcase a student's best pieces of work, instead of including drafts or artifacts that demonstrate introductory level knowledge (Butler, 2006).

E-Portfolio Implementation Efforts

Butler (2006) stated that several important decisions must be made by institutions when implementing a new portfolio processes, such as why the portfolios will be constructed, how the process will be structured, what specific student evidence should be captured and what should

happen after the student portfolios have been completed. The literature indicates that as institutions attempt to answer these questions, conflict often exist over how the institution defines the philosophical goals of the portfolio process, typically regarding whether the process should suit the needs of students or meet institutional needs. In these conflicts, students are more concerned with the use of portfolios for employment purposes, while supervisors are more concerned with using portfolios for capturing professional development data and conducting assessments (Zeichner & Wray, 2001).

In addition to concerns among assessment experts regarding the purposes of portfolios, the literature indicates that concerns also exist regarding portfolio assessment practices (Butler, 2006). Most notably, Smith and Tillema (2003) have stated that tensions often exist within institutions that have attempted to implement portfolio processes designed to suit multiple purposes. In addition, Smith and Tillema (2003) have also stated that when institutions attempt to use portfolios for multiple purposes, there is often little agreement among assessment criteria and program goals. Butler (2006) cautioned that this could lead to tension among stakeholders regarding the purposes of assessment practices and could affect learning and lead to lost opportunities for student reflection.

Praxis II Examination

In addition to the requirement to evaluate student achievement in regards to the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders (ASIL) through e-portfolio efforts, in order to graduate from the instructional leadership program at SE University and to obtain their class A educational administration certification from the state department of education, students must pass the Praxis II content examination, which is created and administered by The Educational Testing Service (ETS). ETS is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing “quality and equity in education

for people worldwide by creating assessments based on rigorous research" (Educational Testing Service, 2014b). In addition to providing consulting services and technical assistance, ETS designs custom assessments for educational, business and government agencies. For the field of education, ETS designs tests for K-12, higher education and educator licensure, among others (Educational Testing Service, 2014d). ETS has designed a series of tests for individuals entering the teaching profession known as the Praxis Series (Educational Testing Service, 2014f). The Praxis series is designed to "measure teacher candidates' knowledge and skills" (Educational Testing Service, 2014a). In order for graduates of the program evaluated in this study to obtain certification from the Alabama State Department of Education in the field of educational administration, they must pass the Praxis II examination.

The Praxis II examination is a subject specific assessment that measures K-12 content specific knowledge, as well as general and subject-specific teaching skills and knowledge. The Praxis II series is required by state departments of education, as well as colleges and universities as part of licensure processes in more than 40 US states, including the state that governs the program evaluated in this study. These tests are designed to measure the academic achievement and proficiency of individuals entering or completing teacher preparation programs (Educational Testing Service, 2014e).

Individuals entering the field of K-12 education take the Praxis II as part of a certification process (Educational Testing Service, 2014e). All students admitted to the master's level educational administration program evaluated in this study have a minimum prior certification at the class B level in a teaching field, and have successful passed the Praxis II exam for their respective content area. In addition, upon completion of their educational leadership program, students must successfully pass the Praxis II exam in the area of educational

administration in order to obtain their Class A certificate from the Alabama State Department of Education in the field of educational administration.

How Praxis II Tests Are Created

Praxis II tests are created through a collaborative effort by educators, teacher preparation program faculty, and disciplinary specialists. All Praxis II test questions are developed and reviewed following standardized procedures, ensuring that test materials reflect the skills being tested and meet assessment standards outlined by ETS' *Standards for Quality and Fairness*, which meets requirements set forth by the American Educational Research Association, as defined in their 1999 edition of *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing.* All test questions are reviewed by ETS experts and an advisory committee of teachers and teacher educators. After test questions have been reviewed and revised, they are administered in trial situations and assembled into tests. These tests are then reviewed following ETS procedures to ensure that they are free of cultural biases. Furthermore, ETS conducts statistical analyses on individual questions to ensure they provide appropriate measurement information (Educational Testing Service, 2014e).

"Praxis II tests are grounded in current research, including a comprehensive analysis of the most important tasks and skills required of beginning teachers, as well as extensive surveys to confirm test validity" (Educational Testing Service, 2014e, para. 2). For each Praxis II test created, a job analysis survey is conducted to determine what a representative group of teacher and teacher educators believe newly certified educational professionals should know to competently perform the job. Using the results of the job analysis survey, in addition to other national disciplinary standards that apply to the test program, the advisory committee defines the

content to be covered in the Praxis II test and is responsible for conducting revisions of test materials and providing final approval of all test questions (Educational Testing Service, 2014e).

All Praxis II tests are designed to measure specific content and pedagogical knowledge expected of educators entering the field of practice, but do not measure students' potential for success (Educational Testing Service, 2014e). The Praxis II tests are designed to be comprehensive and inclusive, but are limited by the finite number of questions and question types made available in each test. To ensure that the content found in Praxis II tests remains current, each test is subjected to a multi-phase review process. In this process an analysis of relevant state and association standards is conducted, and the results of relevant job analyses are considered. Through this process, revised test questions are developed following the standards ETS' standards test development methodology (Educational Testing Service, 2014e).

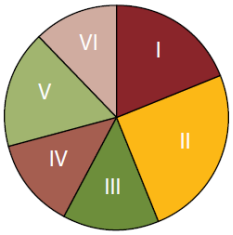
How Praxis II Tests Are Administered

ETS recently changed the delivery method for the Praxis II test exclusively to a computer-based method. Prior to this change, students had the option of taking the Praxis II exam in a paper/pencil format offered at a variety of on-site testing locations held around the Unites States, in addition to the computer-based option. The computer–based tests are administered via an international network of test centers, which includes Prometric test centers, some universities and other locations throughout the world (Educational Testing Service, 2014g).

Praxis II: Educational Leadership

Praxis test 5411, Educational Leadership: Administration and Supervision (ELAS) is a two-hour test, consisting of 95 multiple choice questions aligned with the Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 (Educational Testing Service, 2014c). The test is designed to measure "whether entry-level educational leaders have the standards-relevant

knowledge believed necessary for competent professional practice" (Educational Testing Service, 2014c, p. 5). The test covers six content areas; vision and goals, teaching and learning, managing organizational systems and safety, collaborating with key stakeholders, ethics and integrity and the educational system (Educational Testing Service, 2014c). The breakdown of the test content can be seen in Figure 1.



Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
I. Vision and Goals	18	19%
II. Teaching and Learning	24	25%
III. Managing Organizational Systems and Safety	13	14%
IV. Collaborating with Key Stakeholders	12	13%
V. Ethics and Integrity	16	17%
VI. The Education System	12	12%

Figure 1. Praxis Test 5411 Breakdown. This figure illustrates the breakdown of the Praxis II test 5411 content. Source: http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/5411.pdf

Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders

In 2008, the Alabama State Department of Education adopted a set of standards known as the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders (ASIL), which are aligned to Common Core. These standards were designed based upon recommendations from the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), SACS, and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to establish competencies which educational leaders should embody. This standard set serves as an integral part of an Alabama state department of education supported evaluation system for its educational leaders known as LEADAlabama (LEADAL). The Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders are comprised of eight standards (Southern Regional Education Board, 2014): 1) planning for continuous improvement; 2) teaching and learning; 3) human resources

development; 4) diversity; 5) community and stakeholder relationships; 6) technology; 7) management of the learning organization; and 8) ethics.

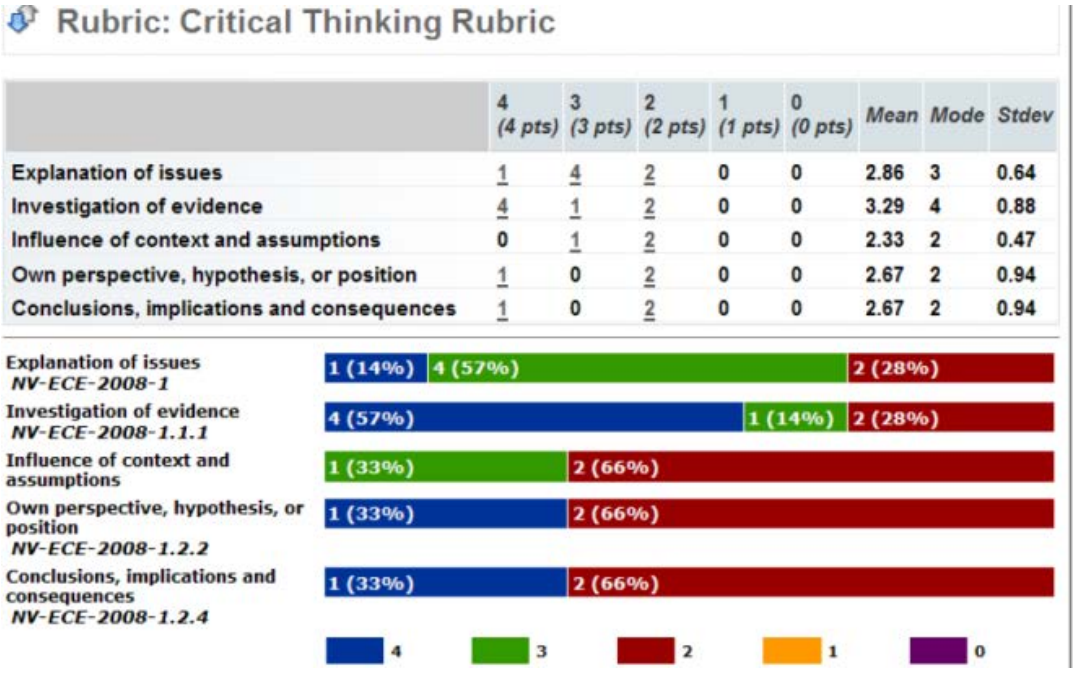
LiveText

In the past five years, all of the instructional leadership programs within Alabama have adopted some form of e-portfolio assessment system as a means for assessing student achievement in regards to the ASIL (Mendiola, Hardin, & Vaux, 2012). In 2008, the institution governing the program being evaluated in the study selected LiveText as their e-portfolio assessment tool. LiveText is a web-based suite of portfolio and assessment tools designed to assist institutions with their continuous improvement and accreditation needs (2014b). As part of this goal, the LiveText suite is designed to provide member institutions with a comprehensive solution for program planning, assessment of student learning outcomes, as well as program and college outcomes, and the ability to determine institutional effectiveness.

The LiveText suite of tools provide member institutions with customizable e-portfolio management options and the ability to conduct standards alignment, collect third-party assessments, generate disaggregated and aggregated data reports, which include a drill down feature for in-depth analyses, as well as formative and summative assessment capabilities, among other features (LiveText, 2014a). Each of LiveText's customizable web-based solutions is designed to allow institutions to gather collect data, generate data reports and conduct analyses that can be utilized to measure outcomes-based learning goals and institutional objectives (LiveText, 2014b).

LiveText reporting capabilities. LiveText's assessment tools provide programs the ability to generate a variety of data reports that visibly reflect the results of assessment processes, which is intended to assist institutions with making meaningful improvements at the course,

program and institutional levels. Through LiveText's suite of assessment tools, "individual and aggregated reports can be generated on student progress and the meeting of outcomes and standards" (LiveText, 2014b, p. 14). Some of the reporting capabilities available in the LiveText system include on-site generation of assessment reports including curriculum mapping reports, rubric statistics reports and standards/outcome reports, among others. The LiveText C1 suite of assessment tools can be utilized by program faculty members and the LiveText administrator to generate customizable reports to demonstrate, document and analyze student levels of achievement on course or program-level assessments. Aggregated C1 assessment reports provide a summary of student performance, as evaluated by program faculty assigned the role of evaluator, using standards-based rubrics. These reports provide users with aggregate summaries of assessment data, which includes the total number of students assessed at each performance level of the rubric per standard. In addition, the assessment reports provide the user with the assessment mean, mode and standard deviation, at each performance level of the rubric. An example of a LiveText C1 assessment report can be found in Figure 2.



Rubric: Critical Thinking Rubric

	4 (4 pts)	3 (3 pts)	2 (2 pts)	1 (1 pts)	0 (0 pts)	Mean	Mode	Stdev
Explanation of issues	1	4	2	0	0	2.86	3	0.64
Investigation of evidence	4	1	2	0	0	3.29	4	0.88
Influence of context and assumptions	0	1	2	0	0	2.33	2	0.47
Own perspective, hypothesis, or position	1	0	2	0	0	2.67	2	0.94
Conclusions, implications and consequences	1	0	2	0	0	2.67	2	0.94

Figure 2. LiveText Assessment Report Format. This figure illustrates the type of assessment reports generated in the LiveText system.

Program Evaluation

Due to the current climate of escalating accountability, program evaluations are becoming critical components of institutional accountability efforts as related to the measurement of performance outcomes (McNeil, 2011). In recent years, varieties of program evaluation methodologies have permeated the field of education and have been used as instruments to increase accountability. In the 1990s, program evaluation was described as a "pervasive force for educational improvement" (Worthen & Sanders, 1991, p. 3) that can provide stakeholders with essential information about the effectiveness of educational programs or processes. However, the modern field of program evaluation has not always been perceived in such favorable light. Decades of research, processes of trial and error, and continued persistence from countless scholars have developed the field into what it is today (Worthen & Sanders, 1991).

History of Program Evaluation

According to Worthen and Sanders (1991), the concept of program evaluation has roots that stretch back to the early 1800s when Horace Mann compared empirical research regarding schools in Massachusetts to the Boston Board of Education. As a result, the Boston school committee adopted the use of standardized essay examinations to assess student achievement and facilitate comparisons among schools. However, the results of the evaluation were never used. Many years passed after Mann's efforts before large-scale attempts at program evaluation were initiated again. In the early 1900s, advances in measurement technology gave rise to the educational testing movement which was spear headed by E.L Thorndike. By the 1930s, more than half of the US states utilized statewide standardized norm-referenced testing. Decades later, as a response to the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik, the US government issued a demand for more effective teaching of math and science. As a result, large sums of money were devoted to the development of educational programs, which also included processes for the evaluation of those programs. Research into these programs revealed the relative weaknesses of program evaluation concepts and methods, a need for more theoretical work, and a need for improved designs (Worthen & Sanders, 1991).

The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965* served as a catalyst for improved program evaluation methodologies. At that time, large sums of money were awarded to schools and universities, and concerns were raised by lawmakers regarding the lack of evidence indicating that these expenditures resulted in improvements of student learning. As a result, the ESEA required schools to document the results of the expenditures of federal monies, requiring for the first time in U.S. history that educators evaluate their own efforts, which revealed a need for new approaches to program evaluation. As a response to this growing need,

over time scholars provided a bounty of new research regarding program evaluation and called for new and urgent reform of current educational evaluation procedures and practices. Quite rapidly new evaluation concepts and methods were created and gradually educators began to accept evaluation practices as part of the efforts to improve schools (Worthen & Sanders, 1991).

In the last thirty years, program evaluation has matured as a field, and several trends have emerged that strengthened the evaluation movement. The emergence of new career opportunities in evaluation, the establishment of preparation programs for evaluators, the institutionalization of elevation in U.S. public education, and new methodological developments all served notice that program evaluation was now a legitimate field. In addition, a shift in program evaluator's allegiances towards alternative philosophical and methodological approaches was underway during this time, as evident by today's modern field of program evaluation, which now embraces qualitative research methods as an integral part of program evaluation practices (Worthen & Sanders, 1991).

Types of Program Evaluations

Worthen and Sanders (1991) stated that the purposes of program evaluation are to judge the value of an object, provide answers to evaluation questions, and provide a central purpose to guide program evaluation. However, within the field of program evaluation a variety of distinct roles exist, demonstrating the rich diversity of conceptions, philosophical orientations and methodological preferences among program evaluation practitioners, which provides researchers with different ways in which to use the answers derived from program evaluations (Worthen & Sanders, 1991). These roles have given rise to six alternative approaches to program evaluation that are diverse in nature and in some instances, conflicting in concept, leading practitioners potentially in a variety of different directions (Worthen & Sanders, 1991).

Worthen, Sanders and Fitzpatrick (1997) have described six alternative approaches to program evaluation: objectives-oriented, management-oriented, consumer-oriented, experience-oriented, adversary-oriented and participant-oriented. Within each approach, many program evaluation models have been generated, offering researchers a variety of methods from which to choose. Each of these six alternative approaches evolved over time as a result of theorists' different methodological preferences and the diversity of ways in which researchers look at evaluation objects.

The distribution of these six alternative approaches to program evaluation has been distributed on House's (1983) dimension of utilitarian to intuitionist-pluralist evaluation continuum, which provides visualization of the driving force behind each approach (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Utilitarian or management-oriented approaches to evaluation are located on the left side of House's continuum, and focus solely on identifying goals and determining the extent to which those goals have been meet. These approaches to program evaluation are more often formalized, impersonal and lend well to quantitative research methods. Conversely, naturalistic or intuitionist-pluralists approaches to program evaluation are located on the right side of House's continuum and more closely involves program stakeholders in the program evaluation process. These processes are less formalized, and the researcher spends more time in contact with program stakeholders, learning first-hand about the inner workings of the program being evaluated. These approaches are typically associated with qualitative research methods (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

This study was framed as an outcomes-based program evaluation, which is a process intended to evaluate the extent to which a program has achieved its desired results (McNeil, 2011). In order to maximize the benefits of the mixed-methods research design of this study, two

distinct approaches to program evaluation were adapted and implemented. In the quantitative phase of data collection, an objectives-oriented approach to program evaluation was implemented, focusing specifically on identifying the goals and objectives of the assessment process being studied, and determining the extent to which those goals have been attained (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Conversely, in the qualitative portions of the data collection, a participant-oriented approach to program evaluation was implemented, focusing on involving program stakeholders in the evaluation process to aid in determining the values, needs, and data for evaluation (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Using a combination of these two approaches to evaluation allowed the researcher to take advantage of the distinct benefits that each offers within a single program evaluation.

Objectives-oriented program evaluation. Objectives-oriented approaches to program evaluation began in the US in the 1930s and has since evolved to become widely employed by program evaluators because of the technically sound practices that they offer. Since its inception as an alternative approach to program evaluation, objectives-oriented approaches have dominated assessment literature, and as a result, this approach evolved greatly over time. Modern objectives-oriented approaches to program evaluation focus on specifying the purpose of program activities, processes and practices, and evaluating the extent to which those purposes are actually met. Highly regarded for its simple and straight forward procedure of letting achievement of objectives determine program success, this method of program evaluation is known for producing relevant information (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

Participant-oriented program evaluation. Participant-oriented program evaluation models evolved in the late 1960s as a reaction to the growing dominance of utilitarian approaches in the field, which were perceived by many to be insensitive and too focused on

classifying sound measurable objectives and creating defensible instrumentation, instead of developing an understanding of the values that comprise unique programs (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick 1997). These utilitarian methods of program evaluation have been criticized for their mechanistic approaches, which are inefficient for studying innovative educational programs (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick 1997). As a result, proponents of participant-oriented approaches to program evaluation have argued that researchers need to focus their efforts on developing a more intimate understanding of the phenomenon being evaluated and to actively portray the different values and needs unique to the program (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick 1997). In doing so, researchers need to balance the plurality of judgments in an intuitive fashion (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick 1997). As a result, participatory forms of program evaluation were designed to engage program stakeholders in the evaluation process, so that they can maximize their understanding of program evaluation findings (Preskill & Russ-Eft, 2005).

Illuminative evaluation. In 1976, Parlett and Hamilton introduced a new participant-oriented program evaluation model intended to allow program evaluators to shed light on program problems, features and issues (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick 1997). This approach to program evaluation involves intensive study of an entire program, including its rationale, evolution, operations, achievements and difficulties in the context in which the program operates. According to Worthen, Sanders and Fitzpatrick (1997), the process proposed by Parlett and Hamilton (1976) has three stages:

1. Observation- Develop thorough understanding of daily realities affecting the setting of the study;
2. Further inquiry- Identify and select issues that warrant further study; and

3. Explanation – Explain any discovered patterns, as well as any factors that affect the program.

Since a variety of factors affect programs (i.e., constraints and employee characteristics) the evaluator's job in this process is to illuminate by providing a thorough understanding of the complex realities that exist in order to document and discover, instead of passing judgment (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

Summary

As this chapter has indicated, e-portfolios assessment purposes have expanded in recent years, and institutional practices have evolved and rapidly become increasingly complex. In addition, there are heightened demands from accrediting agencies and other stakeholders to change educational assessment practices. However, despite the wide spread adoption of e-portfolio process by institutions of higher in recent years, many scholars have described a continued resistance among faculty to authentically embrace institutional assessment practices (Shavelson, 2010). In addition, some scholars have noted that e-portfolio processes have evolved in recent years, with greater emphasis being placed on accreditation management, instead of student learning, leading some to question the compatibility of these dual purposes (Strudler & Wetzel, 2012). The disconnect between the demands for standards-based assessment practices that provide data for continuous improvement and the assessment of student achievement raises questions for concern and underscores the significance for studying the validity of e-portfolio assessment practices (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

CHAPTER III:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In the past five years, all of the instructional leadership programs within the state of Alabama have adopted some form of e-portfolio assessment system as a means for assessing student achievement in regards to the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders (ASIL). Many of these programs have selected online assessment tools such as LiveText, TaskStream or TK20, among others, as their online program for managing their digital assessment processes (Mendiola, Hardin, & Vaux, 2012). Although the concept of portfolio assessment has a long history in the field of higher education, primarily as a student-centered approach to learning, the use of e-portfolio data as a data source for program improvement or for accreditation purposes is a relatively new phenomenon. In addition, many of the commercially available e-portfolio applications that were initially designed to support students with the process of creating e-portfolios have evolved into systems that place great emphasis on accreditation management. Some scholars in the field have noted this recent trend and have called into question the compatibility of using e-portfolios for both accreditation and student learning needs (Strudler & Wetzel, 2012).

These new processes have provided opportunities for new avenues of research into the e-portfolio assessment. The purpose of this mixed-methods program evaluation was to examine the standards-based assessment scores derived from the use of an e-portfolio assessment tool by a

master's level instructional leadership program at SE University for the purpose of making programmatic change.

Research Questions

The research questions explored in this explanatory-sequential, mixed-methods research design included the following:

1. Is there a significant relationship between evaluations of student achievement as measured in LiveText and student achievement as measured by student performance on the Praxis II content examination (Phase 1, Quantitative);
2. What are the faculty members' perceptions regarding their institutional assessment process, including policies and procedures (Phase 2, Qualitative); and
3. To what extent do program, institutional and external factors impact the assessments of student achievement as documented in LiveText (Phase 3-Mixed Methods)?

Research Design

As program evaluation practices evolved over time, the debate concerning appropriate methodological practices shifted. No longer did scholars solely debate the merits of quantitative and qualitative research methods, which were perceived as irreconcilable, some within the field began to discuss the benefits of using both methodologies within a single evaluation (Cook & Reichardt, 1979). In fact, by 1990, a growing chorus of scholars described optimism regarding the fruitfulness of using both methodologies as complementary approaches to evaluation (House). Furthermore, Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (1997) have stated that most evaluators have come to understand that insightful integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods is preferable. Therefore to understand the pertinent issues surrounding this study's critical topic,

a mixed-methods research design was implemented, which involved the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. Specifically, an explanatory sequential (see Appendix A and Table 2) study was conducted, allowing the researcher to examine the topic through a series of quantitative and qualitative studies that were sequentially aligned, with each phase building upon the previous phase to address the study's objective (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

This study's design was conducted in two phases. Phase one included a quantitative analysis of institutional assessment data generated from LiveText and data derived from student scores on the Praxis II examination. After analysis of phase I data, phase II commenced with a series of face-to-face interviews that were conducted with faculty members in order to uncover factors surrounding their assessment practices and to examine the results of the quantitative analyses. The faculty members that were invited to participate in the interview sessions are instructors in the studied program and have completed assessments regarding student achievement of the ASIL during the 2010-2014 academic years. See Table 2 or Appendix A for a complete breakdown of this study's design.

Table 2

Research Design

Phase	Action	Procedures	Product
I	Quantitative data collection	Collect Praxis II results and LiveText assessments	Results of Praxis II examinations and LiveText assessments
	Quantitative data analyses	Use SPSS to conduct linear regression models to analyze LiveText data for any predictors of student performance on the Praxis II	Descriptive Statistics
II	Interview Protocol Development	Identify Faculty members that taught courses that utilized LiveText and develop interview questions	A list of faculty members to interview and interview questions
	Qualitative Data Collection	Interview faculty members using results of quantitative analyses as a guide	Interview Transcripts
	Qualitative Data Analyses	Transcribe interviews, code data and develop thematic analyses	Thematic analyses
Integration	Integration of qualitative and quantitative results	Interpret results and explain qualitative and quantitative data	Discussion, implications, conclusions and future research

Setting of the Study

This study took place in the College of Education at SE University. As of the fall of 2014, the university had a total student population of 36,155 students, including 30,754 undergraduate students and 5,401 graduate students (SE University, 2014c). The university offers more than 80 undergraduate degrees through its 12 colleges, requiring an average of 120-146 credit hours for degree completion (SE University, 2014b). At the graduate level, the

university has more than 120-degree granting programs at the masters, educational specialist and doctoral levels (SE University, 2014c). The program selected for this study was chosen as a convenience sample. The researcher is currently employed at the institution as a clinical instructor of technology applications and assessment systems. Within this role, the researcher is highly involved with the college's assessment and accreditation processes, and works closely with the college's faculty, staff and students in regard to the implementation of their assessment plan.

The program evaluated in this study is a master's degree-level program in the college of education in the field of educational leadership. As a program that leads to certification from the Alabama State Department of Education, all students not only must meet all minimum graduate school admission requirements, but must also have a minimum of a Class B educator certificate and a minimum of three years of P-12 teaching experience. Upon completion of the program, all graduates receive a master's degree from the university and a recommendation from the college of education to receive a class A certificate in the field of educational leadership from the Alabama State Department of Education (SE University, 2014b).

Program Admission

The program evaluated in this study has a competitive admissions process, and for the last four years has admitted an average of 60 students per academic year (see Table 3). In addition, the program offers its prospective students opportunities for admission to one of two cohorts each year to accommodate students from different geographic regions of the state. One cohort is based on the main university campus and the other is based on a university owned and operated extension center located approximately 119 mile northeast of the main campus. Cohorts are limited to 25 students per year at each campus, with additional students admitted if there are

sufficient eligible candidates and available faculty members (SE University, 2014a). Data derived from the assessments of students from both cohorts were used in this study.

Table 3

Educational Leadership MA Program's Yearly Admission Numbers

	Academic Year				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
No. of students admitted	58	55	55	72	240

Program of Study

The students admitted to this program who were evaluated in this study follow a pre-defined program of study, consisting of 30 credit hours of coursework and are provided a recommended course sequence. Typically, students will complete all degree and certification requirements in five academic terms, with students taking an average of 6-9 credit hours per term. The program evaluated in this study mandates that students complete courses in quantitative research and educational foundations, as well as a variety of educational leadership courses that cover topics such as leadership for continuous improvement, ethics and law, data-informed decision-making and leadership for teaching and learning, among others (SE University, 2014a). The complete course of study can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Educational Leadership Program of Study

Course Number	Course Topic
AEL 520	Leadership for Communities and Stakeholders
AEL 521	Leadership for Continuous Improvement
AEL 522	Leadership for Teaching and Learning
AEL 523	Human Resource Development
AEL 524	Ethics and Law
AEL 525	Management of Learning Organizations
AEL 526	Data-Informed Decision-Making
AEL 527	Internship in Instructional Leadership
BER 540	Quantitative Research; Statistics
Any BEF graduate level foundations course	

The Assessment Process

In Alabama, all instructional leadership preparation programs which provide students with the opportunity to earn a Class A state certificate in the field of educational leadership are required to assess student achievement in relation to the ASIL as part of their state certification process (Mendiola, Hardin, & Vaux, 2012). The program evaluated in this study has developed a structured assessment process to ensure that all student artifacts are collected and faculty assessments are completed in accordance with their governing state department of education's mandates. As part of this assessment process, an outcomes/assessment map was created, which articulates an alignment between each of the 99 indicators that comprise the ASIL to at least one educational leadership course that covers content specific to that indicator. These alignments were made by the program coordinator in conjunction with the LEA partners and the faculty who taught in the program's courses in 2008, based upon an examination of the content taught in each course, and the content defined in the description of each indicator.

For each academic term during a school year, a corresponding assessment term is created in the LiveText system by the LiveText coordinator, who works in collaboration with the faculty, staff, and students of the program evaluated in this study. All assessments completed during this program's assessment process are permanently housed in an online exhibit center by LiveText, and are organized by academic term. The LiveText coordinator then generates the LiveText courses in the program's LiveText domain that corresponds to the official course catalog generated by the institution. These LiveText courses connect faculty and students by courses and terms in the LiveText system. Following this action each semester, program faculty members are responsible for working with the LiveText Coordinator to establish an assignment in their respective LiveText course. The LiveText assignment serves as a portal, allowing students to submit their required artifacts for assessment. In addition, when the LiveText assignment is created, faculty members insert the corresponding standardized LiveText rubric that is used during the assessment phase. To aid students in identifying the required artifact that must be submitted into the LiveText system, each faculty member defines in their course syllabi the mandated artifacts.

At the end of each semester, the college's LiveText coordinator works with students to ensure that student work samples and portfolios are successfully submitted into the LiveText system. Once a student artifact has been submitted in LiveText, the faculty member teaching the course accesses the student submission and completes the assessment process by assigning a score (4 = advanced, 3 = target, 2 = developing, 1 = unacceptable) for each element on the rubric. A complete listing of the alignment of ASIL indicators to the program of study can be found in Appendix B. After all mandatory assessments have been completed, the LiveText coordinator generates assessment reports from data captured in the LiveText system, which

aggregates and summarizes levels of student achievement in relation to each of the ASIL indicators. These reports include mean scores of student performance on each indicator, as well as standard deviations. Those data are shared with specific college level administrators in charge of assessment processes, the program coordinator, as well as the department head that governs the program evaluated in this study. In addition, each faculty member who taught a class that contains standards aligned to the ASIL receives a data report generated from their assigned courses.

Assessment Rubrics

The program in this study has devised a set of standardized rubrics in the LiveText system to capture student evaluation data in regards to the ASIL. A curriculum map has been developed aligning all 99 of the Alabama Instructional Leadership Standards to the eight core courses in the program of study. One rubric was created for each of the eight core courses in this study's program, each containing rubric elements aligned to the specific Alabama Instructional Leadership indicators, as mapped in the outcomes/assessment map. To see the complete curriculum alignment, see Appendix B.

The series of rubrics created for the assessment process generated by this study's program were constructed in an identical format, which includes standardized criteria for evaluating student performance. Specifically, all of the rubrics used in the studied program's assessment process are four-level rubrics that divide student evaluations of performance into four categories, which have been described previously in this chapter. An example of a standardized rubric from LiveText can be found in Figure 2.

Participants

In the summer of 2010, the LiveText coordinator and the department head of the program being evaluated in this study met to discuss, for the first time, the possibility of using data from LiveText assessments for the program's annual SACS report. As such, the 2010-2011 academic year was the first year that data collected in LiveText were used to write programmatic goals for accreditation purposes. In order to understand the assessment practices of the master's level Educational leadership program at SE University, purposeful sampling was used to select faculty participants based upon faculty status, knowledge of the program's assessment practices and use of LiveText.

Faculty Participants

Since the fall of 2010, eighteen individuals have served as an instructor for at least one of the educational leadership courses taught in the program evaluated in this study and have completed assessments of student achievement in regards to the ASIL using LiveText. Of those eighteen individuals, eight were part-time adjunct instructors, all of whom have experience in the field of K-12 educational leadership. The remaining ten instructors were full-time professors in the program evaluated in this study: Educational Leadership, Policy and Technology Studies. Of the ten full-time faculty members, eight were tenure-track faculty members and two were members of the clinical faculty. In 2012, one of the tenure-track faculty members who primarily taught doctoral level courses and only taught one course that utilized LiveText retired and was not invited to participate in this study. In addition, one of the clinical faculty members is serving on the dissertation committee of this study and did not participate in the data collection process. Finally, one tenured professor was on sabbatical during this study's data collection period and did not respond to the researcher's request to participate, leaving a total of seven faculty

members who participated in the one-on-one interview sessions. Participant names have been removed to protect their confidentiality. A brief description of each interview participant can found in Table 5. However, pseudonyms have not been included in this table to further protect participant confidentiality.

Table 5

Brief Portraits of Participants

Brief Portrait
• A full-time, non-tenured clinical professor who taught AEL courses within the studied program for three semesters.
• A full-time, non-tenured clinical professor who has taught graduate level courses in the studied program's department for many years, including the last three years in the studied program.
• A full-time, tenured associate professor who has taught graduate level courses in the studied program's department for many years and has been a part of the program's LiveText based assessment practices since its inception.
• A full-time, non-tenured clinical professor who has taught graduate level courses in the studied program from 2010-2011 and from 2013-present.
• A full-time, non-tenured assistant professor who has taught courses within the studied programs since 2012.
• A full-time, tenured full professor who has taught graduate level courses in the studied program's department for many years and has been a part of the program's LiveText based assessment practices since its inception.
• A full-time, tenured full professor who has taught graduate level courses in the studied program's department for many years and has been a part of the program's LiveText based assessment practices since its inception.

Student Participants

Although students were not directly involved in the data collection process in this study, statistical analyses of student achievement in regards to the ASIL and the Praxis II examination were conducted. In the academic years of 2010-2014, 240 students took educational leadership

courses in the evaluated program. This number does not reflect the number of program graduates, but simply the number of students that were admitted to the program and enrolled in at least one educational leadership course during this study's time period. Of the 240 students that have been assessed in LiveText at least one time, 134 have taken the Praxis II examination. Praxis II examination 0411 was first offered in November 2010. Prior to November 2010, students in the program evaluated in this study were required to take Praxis II examination 0410. Thirty students from this study's time period took the Praxis II examination 0410. Data from those students' examinations were not used in this study. One hundred thirty-four students from this study's program had taken Praxis II test: 0411. Data from those examinations were used for phase I data analyses.

Instruments

Standards Alignment

All students enrolled in the program evaluated in this study were assessed on all of the 99 knowledge and ability indicators, which are sub-standards of the eight ASIL. The evaluation of students in relation to these indicators is completed in stages as the students matriculate through their graduate program by the program's faculty using a series of standardized rubrics in LiveText. LEADAlabama (2012) has created a crosswalk that aligns the ASIL to the ISLLC standards, which are measured during the Praxis II examination. This crosswalk has been created so that student performance, as measured in LiveText, can be compared to student performance on the Praxis II examination. The alignment of ASIL and ISSLC standards can be found in the data management plan (see Table 3).

Data Collection and Analyses

There were two phases of data collection in this study. Data collection began following approval by the researcher's institutional Internal Review Board (IRB). A copy of this study's IRB approval is in Appendix D. In Phase I of the study, statistical analyses of student achievement in regards to the ASIL, as measured by the faculty members who completed evaluations in LiveText, and student achievement in regards to the ISLLC standards, which are measured through the Praxis II examination were conducted. Following the statistical analyses of those assessment data, in phase II, the researcher conducted interviews with faculty members of the program evaluated in this study concerning their assessment practices and the program's collected assessment data. In addition, in the second half of each faculty interview, the researcher shared the results of the statistical analyses with the participants. During the interviews, a series of guiding interview questions, which can be viewed in Appendix C, were used. These questions were designed to aid the researcher in keeping the interview focused on answering the study's research questions.

Phase I

A combination of simple linear regression and multiple regression analyses was used to determine if students' scores from LiveText assessments were predictive of the students' scores on the Praxis II examination. The Praxis II test was selected as a measure of student achievement in this study because it is a mandatory exam that serves as a culminating certification benchmark that all students must pass in order to obtain their Class A educator certificate in educational leadership from the Alabama State Department of Education.

Phase I - data collection. Two hundred and forty students (see Table 3) were assessed on the ASIL in LiveText during the 2010-2014 academic years. These sample years were selected for this study because they span a time of change in the institution that governs this study's program. During this time period, a variety of new institutional assessment practices were implemented by institutional administrators to ensure validity of assessment practices. All of the data derived from the assessments conducted in LiveText and students' scores on the Praxis II during this time period were included in the statistical analyses conducted during phase I.

For each student, the researcher generated assessment reports in LiveText indicating student achievement as documented by faculty members on each of the 99 ASIL indicators. Student scores on each of the 99 indicators were then exported to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and grouped by ASIL standard. Those scores were entered into LiveText using a four-point rubric that was described earlier in this chapter. The researcher then calculated mean scores by ASIL standard to obtain a single numeric value to represent student achievement of each ASIL standard.

Since the researcher is employed as a faculty member in the office of student services at the institution in which this study was conducted, electronic copies of student scores on the Praxis II examination were obtained through a request to the Associate Dean of Certification in charge of the institution's office of student services. Student scores on the Praxis II exam are reported in two ways, as a single composite score and as raw scores for each of the five ISLLC standards. A crosswalk created by LEADAlabama (2012) demonstrating an alignment of the ASIL and ISLLC standards can be found in Table 6. Each ISLLC standard measured on the Praxis II examination has a unique maximum raw point value, which can also be seen on table

three. In addition, the composite score for each test taker has a possible score range of 100-200. The minimum passing score is 149. Both the raw points and overall score were recorded on the spreadsheet and used during the statistical analyses conducted in phase I. After all scores from LiveText assessments and the Praxis II reports were recorded on the spreadsheet, they were imported into SPSS, version 22, which was used to conduct all statistical analyses for this study.

Phase I - data analysis. Seven statistical analyses were conducted in phase I to determine if a linear relationship between student achievement of the ASIL, as measured by the assessment scores entered into LiveText, and student achievement in regards to the ISLLC standards, as measured by student performance on the Praxis II content examination, exist. For each statistical test calculated in this study, student performance on the ASIL, as measured in LiveText, served as the independent or predictor variable(s) and student performance on the ISLLC standards, as measured by the Praxis II, served as the dependent variable.

The initial analysis calculated by the researcher during phase I consisted of a simple linear regression equation, which was used to explore the relationship between students' composite scores on the ASIL and students' composite scores on the Praxis II. Following the initial analysis, a multiple-regression analysis was conducted to determine if the linear combination of all the independent variables were predictive of students' composite scores on the Praxis II. Finally, in order to examine the individual relationships between each of the aligned standards, five simple linear regression equations were calculated, one for each of the five dependent variables, to determine the unique ability of LiveText scores broken down by ASIL standard to predict student performance on the aligned ISLLC standard. A data management plan illustrating the alignment of variables can be found below in Table 6.

Table 6

Data Management Plan

Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders (IVs)		Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (DVs)		
Standards (Avg. Score) ordinal	Variable Name	Standards (Raw Score) ordinal	Maximum Raw Point Value	Variable Name
I	Planning for Continuous Improvement	I	18	Vision and Goals
II	Teaching and Learning	II	23	Teaching and Learning
V	Community and Stakeholder Relationships	IV	12	Collaboration with Key Stakeholders
VII	Management of Learning Organizations	III	12	Managing Organizational Systems and Safety
VIII	Ethics	V	18	Ethics

Phase II

Qualitative research is an umbrella concept that helps us understand and explain social phenomena and unique situations as part of a particular context. As such, qualitative researchers seek to understand the meaning that people have constructed (Merriam, 1998). Following the completion of phase I data analysis, phase II commenced with the goal of using qualitative research methods to uncover the unique factors that have impacted and shaped the assessment process that was evaluated in this study and to provide understanding of the statistical results of the phase I analyses.

Phase II – data collection. Through the interview process, which Merriam (1998) describes as a "conversation with a purpose" (p. 71), the researcher attempted to uncover what was in the participants mind in order to find the information needed to address this study's qualitative research questions. During phase II data collection, a series of one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with faculty members from the studied program to gather insights into their assessment practices, procedures, policies and attitudes towards assessment. Each interview session lasted approximately thirty minutes to one hour. A consent form was presented to the participant at each interview session, and was signed by both parties. Each interview session was conducted on the campus of SE University, at the participant's chosen location. Six of the seven interview participants consented to allow the researcher to audio record the interview to aid the researcher during the transcription process. One of the participants did not give the researcher permission to audio record the interview, so the interview was conducted without audio recording. After the interview sessions were conducted, they were transcribed by the researcher and the audio recordings were deleted. All transcripts were stored on the researcher's computer, which is located in the researcher's office in a locked filing cabinet. In an effort to prompt the interviewees to discuss factors relevant to this study's program's assessment practices, a series of guiding questions (see Appendix C), were utilized by the researcher during the interviews.

Phase II – data analysis. The individual experiences of the faculty members who utilize the LiveText assessment system hold information that could be potentially useful in understanding the results of the phase I statistical analyses. These lived experiences, as well as the daily interactions among stakeholders were of great importance to this study, so great strides were taken in order to develop an understanding of these factors and the impact they have on the

institution and their assessment systems. This approach to qualitative research provided the opportunity to examine the "experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals" (Creswell, 2013, p. 70). After each interview was conducted, the researcher transcribed the interview notes into Microsoft Word documents and began to take notes regarding key phrases or themes that emerged. Following the transcription process, the transcripts were entered into the NVivo, version 10 qualitative software package to aid the researcher in arranging, codifying and categorizing the data.

The act of qualitative coding is a cyclical process that requires the researcher to view, code, and recode data through an analytic lens that shapes how the researcher perceives and interprets the data (Saldana, 2009). The constant comparative method, which involves the constant comparison of interview data to other data from the same data set to develop tentative categories, allows for constant comparisons within and between levels of conceptualization, were used to guide the researcher during the coding process (Merriam, 1998). In an attempt to remain open to all possibilities while reading the data, an initial coding process, which consisted of the researcher generating detailed line-by-line codes (Charmaz, 2006), was conducted to break down the data into its discrete parts so that the researcher could closely examine them and compare them for any existing similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The initial coding process produced four tentative main themes, six sub-themes and 213 codes.

Following the initial coding process, the researcher reflected on the emergent patterns, and continued with second stage coding (Saldana, 2009). Specifically, axial coding was conducted, which Wicks (2010) described as the process of disaggregating and reassembling the data in a way that highlights the relationships between and within categories. The researcher used this method to identify central themes from the data. According to Strauss and Corbin

(1998), axial coding allows the researcher to answer important questions such as when, why, who, how and with what consequences. In addition, axial coding allowed the researcher to compare the codes and categories identified in stage one coding, adjust and redefine the categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and to reassemble the data to provide coherence to the emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2006).

Integration

The purpose of the explanatory-sequential design is to use qualitative methods to explain the findings from the study's initial quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). After the collection and analysis of data in phases I and II, the researcher integrated the results to answer the third research question regarding the program, institutional and external factors that impact the assessments of student achievement as documented in LiveText.

Validity

Validity has been established in the qualitative portions of this study through researcher positionality, triangulation, thick description and member checking (Creswell, 2013). As discussed in Chapter III, the researcher has reported his employment as the LiveText coordinator at the studied institution to introduce any possible biases. Qualitative data analyses included the triangulation of sources from seven interview participants to validate the qualitative findings. Furthermore, the data analyses include thick descriptions of faculty members' perceptions and understanding of the program's assessment process to provide context for the reader. Finally, after examination of the interview transcripts and completion of the coding process, member checking was conducted in which the participating faculty members were provided with a summary of the themes the researcher created from the interviews in order to support the accuracy and credibility of the findings.

Summary

The implementation of electronic portfolio assessment systems is a relatively new, exciting and complex development in the field of education. These processes are of great importance to students, faculty members, institutions and lawmakers alike. The increased demands from stakeholders for accountability in assessment practices have presented new avenues for research that should be explored. This study investigated the one master's level educational leadership program's assessment processes and use of e-portfolio assessment data as a data source for programmatic change. In addition, this chapter outlined the explanatory-sequential, multiphase mixed-methods design that was implemented by the researcher in this study to gather and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the standards-based assessments derived from the use of an e-portfolio assessment tool by one master's level instructional leadership program at SE University. In phase I of the study the researcher collected and examined the standards-based assessment scores regarding student achievement of the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders (ASIL), which were entered into an e-portfolio assessment tool known as LiveText. These data were analyzed to determine if they are predictive of students' performance on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, which are measured by the Praxis II content examination. Seven statistical analyses, which have been described in detail in Chapter III, were conducted during phase I. In phase II of the study the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the program's full-time faculty members. These data were coded and analyzed to help explain the unique institutional, programmatic and external factors that shape the program's assessment practices. The process of analysis conducted in phase II is detailed in chapter III. After phase I and phase II data were collected and analyzed, the findings were integrated. A data collection chart depicting the research design and sequence can be seen in Appendix A.

The findings of the quantitative and qualitative methods used in the mixed-methods, exploratory-sequential study are reported in this chapter. The data are presented for each research question. The following research questions guided the study:

1. Is there a significant relationship between evaluations of student achievement as measured in LiveText and student achievement as measured by student performance on the Praxis II content examination;
2. What are the faculty members' perception regarding their institutional assessment processes, including policies and procedures; and
3. To what extent do program, institutional and external factors impact the assessments of student achievement as documented in LiveText?

Description of the Samples

As described in the methodology, the total study population examined during the quantitative analyses conducted in phase I included 240 students who were enrolled in the master's level instructional leadership program at SE University from 2010-2014. However, data from students who had not been assessed on each of the ASIL, had not taken the Praxis II, or taken the Praxis II test, 0410 (an older version of the Educational Leadership: Administration and Supervision content test) were not considered in the data analyses. Of the 240 students enrolled during this study's time period, only 181 had been assessed by the programs' faculty members on at least one ASIL indicator through the LiveText system. Furthermore, only 81 students had been assessed on each of the ASIL and had taken Praxis II test 0411(the current versions of the Educational Leadership: Administration and Supervision content test). Data from those 81 students' assessments, as recorded in LiveText and test results, as reported by ETS were used for the quantitative analyses conducted in phase I.

Also described in the methodology, the study population examined during the qualitative analyses conducted during phase II included eighteen individuals who have served as an instructor for at least one of the educational leadership courses taught in this study's program and

have evaluated student achievement of the ASIL using LiveText. Of those eighteen individuals, eight were part-time adjunct instructors and were not invited to participate in the interview sessions. The remaining ten instructors are full-time professors in the program evaluated in this study. In 2012, one of the full-time professors in the studied program retired and was not invited to participate in the interview sessions. In addition, one other full-time professor is serving on the dissertation committee of this study and was not invited to participate in the interview sessions, leaving eight full-time professors that were invited to participate in the interview sessions. One of the tenure-track professors invited to participate in the interview sessions was on sabbatical during data collection, and did not respond to the researcher's request to conduct an interview session. The remaining seven invited participants completed the interview process.

Results

Phase I

Data for the quantitative analyses conducted during phase I of the study were compiled in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Students' scores on each of the 99 ASIL indicators were retrieved from LiveText and recorded on the spreadsheet. After those scores were recorded on the spreadsheet, they were grouped by ASIL standard, and a composite score was calculated for each student in order to obtain a single numeric value for each of the 5 ASIL that were analyzed in phase I. A complete list of ASIL indicators is included in Appendix B.

Once student scores from LiveText were recorded on the spreadsheet, student scores on the Praxis II examination were retrieved by a request for records sent to the College of Education's office of student services. Those data were then recorded on the same spreadsheet that contained the LiveText data. Student performance on the Praxis II test is reported in two ways; as a raw score for each of the ISLLC standards and as a scaled composite score, which is

used in determining if the student passed the examination. Each ISLLC standard measured on the Praxis II examination has a unique maximum raw point value (see Table 6). The composite score for each test taker is reported with a possible score range of 100-200. The minimum passing composite score is 149. Both the raw points and composite scores were recorded and used during the statistical analyses conducted during phase I. Once data collection from these two sources was complete, student names were removed from the spreadsheet and replaced by a unique number for data analysis. Then, both the ASIL and ISLLC data were imported into SPSS version 22, which was used to conduct all statistical analyses for this study.

Research question one. *Is there a significant relationship between evaluations of student achievement as measured in LiveText and student achievement as measured by student performance on the Praxis II content examination?*

Research question one sought to determine if student performance as measured in LiveText is predictive of student performance on the Praxis II. Seven statistical analyses were conducted in order to examine this relationship. First, a simple linear regression equation was calculated to determine if the students' overall composite scores on the ASIL, as measured in LiveText, were predictive of student performance on the ISLLC standards, as measured by the students' Praxis II composite scores. Next, a multiple regression analysis was calculated to assess the predictive ability of students' achievement of the individual ASIL standards on students' composite Praxis II scores, and to determine if the linear combination of those results is predictive of students' Praxis II composite scores. Finally, five simple linear regression equations were conducted, one for each of the aligned ASIL and ISLLC standards examined in this study, to determine the predictive nature of students' scores on each ASIL standard on the aligned ISLLC standard.

Test 1 - simple linear analysis of composite scores. A simple linear regression equation was calculated to determine if the students' overall composite scores on the ASIL, as measured in LiveText were predictive of student performance on the ISLLC standards, as measured by the students' Praxis II composite scores. For this analysis, a single composite score on the ASIL were identified in SPSS as the predictor variable for each student, and student composite scores on the Praxis II were identified as the dependent variable. After all partial data sets were removed; the final sample consisted of 81 students from the educational leadership program.

An examination of scatter plots indicated no curvilinear relationship existed between the predictor and outcome variable. Additionally, there was no evidence of homoscedasticity in a plot of standardized residuals with standardized predicted values. An examination of a histogram of residuals revealed a relatively normal distribution, and a Durbin-Watson value of 2.097 indicates that residuals are independent.

The model was not significant, $R^2 = .043$, adjusted $R^2 = .030$, F (1) = 3.507, (p =.065), indicating that students' ASIL composite scores were not good predictors of students' Praxis II composite scores. Students' composite scores on the ASIL account for only 4.3% of the variance in students' composite scores on the Praxis II.

Test 2 - multiple-regression analysis. After determining the predictive ability of students' ASIL composite scores on students' Praxis II composite scores, next, a multiple regression analysis was computed to assess the predictive ability of students' achievement of the individual ASIL standards on students' composite Praxis II scores, and to determine if the linear combination of those results is predictive of students' Praxis II composite scores. Each of the five ASIL standards were entered into SPSS as predictor variables, students' composite Praxis II scores were entered as the dependent variable and a general linear model was conducted. After

all partial data sets were removed the final sample consisted of 66 students from the educational leadership program.

Table 7, which is displayed below displays the correlation between all variables, the non-standardized (*B*) and standardized regression coefficients (β), the semi-partial correlations (sr^2), the multiple correlation coefficient (R^2) and the adjusted *R2*. An examination of scatter plots indicated no curvilinear relationship existed between predictors and the outcome variable. Additionally, there was no evidence of homoscedacity in a plot of standardized residuals with standardized predicted values. Multicollinearity was not evident given all predictor TIF values were greater than 0.2 and all VIF values were substantially less than10. An examination of a histogram of residuals revealed a relatively normal distribution, and a Durbin-Watson value of 2.161 indicates that residuals are independent.

The linear combination of the IVs were not good predictors of students' composite scores on the Praxis II content examination, F (5, 60) = 2.195, (p =.066), indicating that that the linear combination of all variables were not good predictors of students' composite scores on the Praxis II examination. The multiple correlation coefficient (I =.155) and adjusted multiple correlation coefficient (Adj. R^2 = .084) indicated that around 15% of the variability in students' composite Praxis II scores can be explained by the linear combination of the IV.

Further examination of the beta weights of the individual predictor variables suggested that only one of the IVs were significantly different from zero. Students' scores on ASIL standard II: Teaching and Learning, was a good predictor of students' composite scores on the Praxis II, (β = .257, t = 2.018, p = .048). All other predictor variables were not significant.

These results suggest that the linear combination of students' scores on the ASIL is not a good predictor of students' Praxis II composite score. However, one predictor variable, ASIL

standard II: Teaching and Learning was a good predictor of students' composite scores on the Praxis II. All of the variables account for only15.5% of the variance in students' composite scores on the Praxis II.

Table 7

Multiple-Regression of Five IVs on Praxis II Composite Scores

Variables	Praxis Composite	Planning for Continuous Improvement	Teaching and Learning	Community and Stakeholder Relationships	Management of Learning Organizations	Ethics	B	β
Planning for Continuous Improvement	.259	1.000	.014	.029	-.319	.251	5.232	.251
Teaching and Learning	.282	.014	1.000	.215	-.087	.274	5.699	.257
Community and Stakeholder Relationships	.106	.029	.215	1.000	.200	.216	.328	.017
Management of Learning Organizations	-.046	-.319	-.087	.200	1.000	.054	1.296	.049
Ethics	.220	.251	.274	.216	.054	1.000	3.609	.081
Means	164.59	3.43	3.46	3.27	3.34	3.02		
Std. Dev.	9.93	.476	.447	.501	.374	.221		

Note. R2 = .155, Adj. R2 = .084, R= .393a

Tests 3 - 7 (simple linear analysis by standard). Finally, five simple linear regression equations were conducted, one for each of the aligned ASIL and ISLLC standards examined in this study, to determine the predictive nature of students' scores on each ASIL standard on the aligned ISLLC standard. Each of the five ASIL standards were entered into SPSS as independent variables and five general linear models were conducted. The results of each simple regression analysis are listed below and labeled according to the aligned ASIL and ISLLC standards.

For ASIL I - ISLLC I, after all partial data sets were removed; the final sample consisted of 67 students from the educational leadership program. An examination of scatter plots indicated no curvilinear relationship existed between the predictor and outcome variable. Additionally, there was no evidence of homoscedasticity in a plot of standardized residuals with standardized predicted values. An examination of a histogram of residuals revealed a relatively normal distribution, and a Durbin-Watson value of 1.956 indicates that residuals are independent.

The model was not significant, $R^2 = .039$, adjusted $R^2 = .024$, F (1,) = 2.604, (p =.111), indicating that students' ASIL I composite scores were not good predictors of students' Praxis II raw score on ISLLC standard I. Students' ASIL I composite scores account for only 3.9% of the variance in students' composite scores on the Praxis II.

For ASIL II – ISLLC II, after all partial data sets were removed; the final sample consisted of 68 students from the educational leadership program. An examination of scatter plots indicated no curvilinear relationship existed between the predictor and outcome variable. Additionally, there was no evidence of homoscedasticity in a plot of standardized residuals with standardized predicted values. An examination of a histogram of residuals revealed a relatively

normal distribution, and a Durbin-Watson value of 1.940 indicates that residuals are independent.

The model was not significant, R^2 = .043, adjusted R^2 = .029, F (1,66) = 2.967, (p =.090), indicating that students' ASIL II composite scores were not good predictors of students' Praxis II raw score on ISLLC standard II. Students' ASIL II composite scores account for only 4.3% of the variance in students' composite scores on the Praxis II.

For ASIL V – ISLLC IV, after all partial data sets were removed; the final sample consisted of 67 students from the educational leadership program. An examination of scatter plots indicated no curvilinear relationship existed between the predictor and outcome variable. Additionally, there was no evidence of homoscedasticity in a plot of standardized residuals with standardized predicted values. An examination of a histogram of residuals revealed a relatively normal distribution, and a Durbin-Watson value of 2.216 indicates that residuals are independent.

The model was not significant, R^2 = .025, adjusted R^2 = .010, F (1,65) = 1.641, (p =.205), indicating that students' ASIL I composite scores were not good predictors of students' Praxis II raw score on ISLLC standard I. Students' ASIL I composite scores account for only 2.5% of the variance in students' composite scores on the Praxis II.

For ASIL VII – ISLLC III, after all partial data sets were removed; the final sample consisted of 67 students from the educational leadership program. An examination of scatter plots indicated no curvilinear relationship existed between the predictor and outcome variable. Additionally, there was no evidence of homoscedasticity in a plot of standardized residuals with standardized predicted values. An examination of a histogram of residuals revealed a relatively

normal distribution, and a Durbin-Watson value of 2.046 indicates that residuals are independent.

The model was not significant, $R^2 < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = -.015$, F (1, 65) = .001, (p =.979), indicating that students' ASIL I composite scores were not good predictors of students' Praxis II raw score on ISLLC standard I. Students' ASIL I composite scores account for 0% of the variance in students' composite scores on the Praxis II.

For ASIL VIII – ISLLC V, after all partial data sets were removed; the final sample consisted of 57 students from the educational leadership program. An examination of scatter plots indicated no curvilinear relationship existed between the predictor and outcome variable. Additionally, there was no evidence of homoscedasticity in a plot of standardized residuals with standardized predicted values. An examination of a histogram of residuals revealed a relatively normal distribution, and a Durbin-Watson value of 1.649 indicates that residuals are independent.

The model was not significant, $R^2 = .020$, adjusted $R^2 = .002$, F (1,55) = 1.135, (p =.291), indicating that students' ASIL I composite scores were not good predictors of students' Praxis II raw score on ISLLC standard I. Students' ASIL I composite scores account for only 2% of the variance in students' composite scores on the Praxis II.

Phase II

As stated in Chapter III, the purpose of phase two of this study was to help explain the unique institutional and programmatic factors that shape the program's assessment practices. Data for the qualitative analysis conducted during phase II were collected through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews conducted with the program's full-time faculty members. After completing all of the interview sessions, the researcher transcribed the interviews into a

Microsoft Word document using voice recognition software. Following the transcription process, the transcripts for all seven interviews were then uploaded into the NVivo qualitative analysis software. The data were then coded and analyzed for significant themes. The specific methods of collection and codification utilized during this phase of the study have been described in detail in chapter III.

Research question two. *What are the faculty members' perceptions regarding their institutional assessment process, including policies and procedures?*

Participating faculty members overwhelmingly indicated that they had either a negative perception regarding their intuitional assessment practices, or at least for some, a feeling of indifference. Only two of the participants indicated that they had a positive perception of the program's assessment process. When asked to describe their perceptions regarding their assessment practices, the responses from the participants included such examples as: "it's a waste of our time" or "LiveText is not important to the instructors." In addition, comments were made that the assessment process is viewed as "busy work" or "layering," which creates "extra steps for students and faculty" and is accepted by faculty members only as a "necessary evil." Although a few of the faculty members who are newer to the program voiced more positive perceptions regarding the assessment practices, by-in-large, the full-time faculty members in this program have developed concrete ideas in regards to assessment that are negative in nature.

When trying to describe the reasons why some faculty members hold such negative perceptions regarding the assessment process, Professor D stated that for many faculty members, the LiveText based assessment practices are viewed as an activity that creates more work for both faculty and students without providing any added value. After repeated analysis of the conversations with the participants regarding their perception of assessment practices, two

underlying themes emerged that highlight the sources of their negative perceptions; the studied program's assessment practices are viewed as "highly bureaucratic" in nature, which restricts faculty autonomy, and ultimately, faculty members view the entire assessment process as "unimportant" or "inauthentic."

Bureaucratic nature. With regard to the highly bureaucratic nature of the assessment process, many of the participants stated that over time, the amount of mandated assessments required of them has increased dramatically, which accordingly requires a greater amount of their time and effort. Furthermore, many of the participants stated that they believe that these decisions have largely been made without any direct discussions with the faculty members themselves and "has been pushed or forced upon them." Professor D noted that

> The bureaucracy of certification has generated a great deal of contention among faculty members feeling that they have lost a degree of influence or ownership over the curriculum, and that the curriculum is being micromanaged in a way that de-professionalizes the faculty member.

Professor D continued to describe the source of faculty resentment towards the LiveText-based assessment practices by stating that without the demands placed upon them by the bureaucracy, the whole concept of standardized assessments is not something that "the faculty alone would have ever chosen." Professor F echoed these sentiments when he described how the LiveText-based assessment practices were adopted. During this discussion he lamented that

> There was never any discussion that I know of with the faculty. They just said that this is what we're going to do, and then if the whole thing ended up being embraced and used by the faculty, then it's kind of a miracle. University faculty are [sic] incredibly independent and it's highly unlikely that they're going to embrace something that they feel like they don't have any say-so in.

As a result of the program's faculty members believing that they had no voice in the adoption of the program's assessment practices, some faculty members view the assessment process as an intrusion of their academic freedom and view the mandated use of LiveText as a method to

conduct an “evaluation of them as individuals and their intelligence.” This belief has led to a sense of discomfort among some of the program’s faculty members concerning the assessment process, resulting in Professor D’s statement that some faculty members view the entire process as a “necessary evil” or ‘just another cumbersome bureaucratic activity in which they have to engage.” Professor A stated that many faculty view mandated assessment practices as the state department of education’s attempt to take over their freedom of speech and their autonomy as a researcher.

In conjunction with the faculties’ perceived increase in the level of bureaucratic involvement with their program’s assessment practices, the faculty members also believe that the requirements for how the LiveText-based assessments are supposed to be completed have become too prescriptive as well. There is common belief among many of the faculty members in this program that “meaningful assessment is not done through LiveText” because “you can’t assess everything by machine.” Professor F stated that to him, there are now “too many different types of assessments from too many quarters” and that it appears that assessment seems much more important than performance.” Professor G believes that through the increased quantity and the regimented methods of conducting mandated assessments, the state department is trying to make education “teacher proof,” which is “forcing teaching to look like this little rubric that’s thin and never gets too complex and deep thinking about any content.” Professor G continued by describing the type of rich, in-depth assessments that constitute meaningful assessments which in her opinion are subjective in nature, and that creating rubrics to assess everything reduces the artful, complex nature of teaching to a simple level. As a result, Professor G stated that at this point in her career, she is not interested in “proceduralizing teaching,” which has only served to make some faculty members pessimistic and cynical about the entire process.

Inauthenticity. Beside the problems associated with the increased bureaucratic nature of the current assessment process, faculty members also have concerns regarding its authenticity. Due to the nature of how the assessment process was established in this program, collecting authentic assessment data is difficult. Professor C, who has been a faculty member in the studied program since before the LiveText-based assessment practices began, stated

> I think that when LiveText [the program's assessment process] was first developed, it was not developed by faculty members. And if you want authentic assessment, and this goes for anything, you have to actually involve the people that are doing the task.

She continued by questioning whether the assessments are authentic, and stated that she would not know what to do with the data, because they are meaningless to her. In addition, she expressed doubt that other than the evaluations that the program's coordinator has to do, that anything positive comes out of the LiveText based assessment practices for the program. Echoing Professor C's thoughts, when asked to describe how the program's assessment practices have changed over time, Professor B matter-of-factly stated that "we've gotten much better at knowing we have checked the box."

Integration of Results

Program evaluations can be used to provide understanding of the methods and processes implemented by programs as part of their assessment plans (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). This study was framed as an outcomes-based program evaluation, which is a process intended to evaluate the extent to which a program has achieved its desired results (McNeil, 2011). In order to maximize the benefits of the mixed-methods research design of this study, two distinct approaches to program evaluation were adapted and implemented. In the quantitative phase of data collection, an objectives-oriented approach to program evaluation was implemented, focusing specifically on identifying the goals and objectives of the assessment

process being studied, and determining the extent to which those goals have been attained (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Conversely, in the qualitative portions of the data collection, a participant-oriented approach to program evaluation was implemented, focusing on involving program stakeholders in the evaluation process to aid in determining the values, needs, and data for evaluation (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Using a combination of these two approaches to evaluation allowed the researcher to take advantage of the distinct benefits that each offers within a single program evaluation.

Research question three. *To what extent do program, institutional and external factors impact the assessments of student achievement as documented in LiveText?*

When discussing with program faculty members the processes, policies and procedures that impact their program's assessment practices, a variety of assessment issues were discussed. Through the coding process and the outlining of this chapter, three themes emerged that address this research question: 1) a discrepancy among faculty members concerning the purpose of the assessment process exist; 2) faculty members use different methods when assigning assessment scores; and 3) a lack of communication among assessors regarding assessment practices exist.

Discrepancy concerning the purpose of the assessment process. A discrepancy among faculty members' perceptions regarding the purpose of the program's assessment process exists. This discrepancy has led to inconsistencies in how the program's assessment plan is implemented by different faculty members, which affects how assessments are completed from course to course. From the interview sessions it became evident that two competing perceptions exist. First, to some faculty members, the program's assessment process is designed to be a student growth model in which the assessors utilize LiveText as a tool to facilitate student development and document students' growth in regards to broad competencies and mandated

outcomes continuously as the students matriculate through the program's course of study. Those who view the assessment process through this conceptual lens are more concerned about students' development throughout the entire program, instead of capturing students' mastery of individual required standards. In contrast, other faculty members view their assessment process as a simple "competency-based model" in which faculty members utilize LiveText as a checklist to simply document that students have mastered mandated concepts and outcomes at a specific point in time, rather than facilitating student growth and development. These faculty members are more concerned about documenting student mastery of each of the state mandated outcomes that are aligned to the specific courses that they teach.

This discrepancy regarding the purpose of the program's assessment process became evident when the interview participants were asked to describe the purpose of the program's assessment practices. For example, in response to this question, Professor E immediately replied that it was strictly for accountability purposes and indicated that satisfying requirements from accrediting bodies such as NCATE and the Alabama State Department of Education was the basis for how she views the entire process. This perception was a common theme echoed by many of the program's faculty members when discussing the nature of the program's assessment practices. In fact, for many of the faculty members in this program, their assessment practices are part of what Professor D described as a larger "competency-based" assessment model, in which the faculty members are simply documenting students' performance in regards to specific outcomes aligned to their course at one specific moment in time. Furthermore, Professor D stated,

> For many of us [the studied program's faculty members] it [the program's assessment process] is about documenting and capturing mastery of an objective, where it [how the assessment scores are completed] is a yes or no, rather than showing growth over time.

Furthermore, Professor B stated that when the LiveText-based assessment process was originally created, it was his understanding that

> it [the assessment scores entered into LiveText] would be used to determine if a student was accomplished enough to exit the program. We [the program's faculty members] were talking about skills and competency. The score [for each student] is posted [in LiveText] for each skill and knowledge [ASIL] and LiveText was to determine if they meet criteria. Either they did or did not.

Professor B continued by stating that he views the process simply as the process as "communication of your thoughts of fitness [student worthiness] of entry into the profession [K-12 educational leadership]."

In contrast to the competency-based model that some faculty members perceive their assessment process to be, other faculty members in the program view the assessment process as an academic growth model. To those faculty members, LiveText is much more than an opportunity to simply document mastery of content knowledge, to them; it is viewed as a tool to aid in capturing and facilitating student growth and mastery of broad concepts and key outcomes continuously throughout the students' entire course of study. While discussing the purpose for the program's assessment practices, Professor A described her understanding of the program's assessment process in this way: "This [the program's assessment process] is a growth opportunity. This is not to hurt a student [if low assessment scores are given], they're just supposed to have mastered all of the standards by the end of the program." Professor C echoed that sentiment when she stated during her interview that she believes the assessment process is "intended to be used as a way to look at the end of the program and to see if students have made adequate progress [from the beginning of the program to the end]." Furthermore, through discussion with the faculty members, it became evident that not only did a discrepancy exist between faculty members in how they view the purpose of the assessment process, but for some

faculty members, there is an internal discrepancy in what they believe is the intent of the process, and how they actually conduct assessments. Even though some of the faculty members indicated that they utilize LiveText as a tool to conduct competency-based assessments, some of them acknowledged that their practices were not in agreement with the original intent behind its creation. Professor D described this as being one of the biggest concerns he has regarding the program's assessment practices:

> They [the instructional leadership program] are using a model in which they would like to show growth, but I think it is a basic competency model. Although some noted that the original concept behind the process was intended as an academic growth model, that is not how many actually utilize it.

Professor D continued by stating that as a program:

> We have struggled and had the conversation repeatedly about multiple points of assessments and being able to show progress or improvement, and if that be the case, where in the course in the sequence of the students' instructional program of the ten courses required for the master's [do they show improvement]?

Different methods for assigning assessment scores. While discussing with faculty members the manner in which they complete their mandatory assessments in LiveText, it became apparent that how faculty members conceptualize the purpose of the program's assessment process has a direct impact on the manner in which they enter their assessment scores. As a result, a wide variety of strategies are used by the faculty members that determine how they interpret student mastery of skills and how they translate that mastery into a score on a standardized rubric in the LiveText system. In addition, other factors exist that affect how faculty members enter assessment scores into LiveText. These include discrepancies in how faculty members interpret the meaning of the point values associated with the program's standardized assessment rubrics and constraints placed upon them from outside constituents, such as the Alabama State Department of Education.

Professor E voiced a concern during her interview session regarding the lack of uniformity in the methods used by the program's faculty members for completing their standardized assessments. Specifically, she stated that each professor in the program rates students' performance and interprets assessments differently. Professor G and Professor A voiced similar concerns when they explained that there is too much subjectivity in the program's assessment process and that there is no method of control for this. In addition, Professor E expressed concern regarding the ambiguity of the directions that accompany the program's standardized rubrics, stating that each faculty member could interpret the meaning of the rubrics' directions in their own way. Professor F reinforced this notion when he stated that when each professor assigns assessment scores, "it [the assessment score] has meaning to them," indicating that the meaning of the assessments scores is unique to each assessor. Ultimately, Professor E believes that this lack of uniformity "affects construct validity" at the program level. This lack of uniformity stems, in part, from the differing perceptions regarding the purpose of the assessment process. Professor D admitted that he has "personally struggled" when completing his assessments on whether he is supposed to show student growth over a period of time, or whether he is supposed to be "capturing master of a particular skill." In addition, Professor D also mentioned that conceptually, when he completes assessments, he struggles with, "am I comparing student to student, or am I comparing student to an objective?" Ultimately, professor D believes that regardless of how the assessment process was conceived, most of the program's faculty members actually complete their standardized assessments as "legalistic, very basic competency documents."

Through the process of collecting phase II data, no programmatic mandates regarding the nature of how the standardized assessments are to be completed by faculty members were

discovered. As a result, a variety of methods used by faculty members to assign assessment scores were uncovered during the interviews. For instance, some professors use a method of block grading, where students are assigned the same score for each element on the standardized rubric, based upon a cumulative evaluation of the students' entire coursework. Similarly, some faculty members assign assessment scores based upon a simple correlation to students' course grades, meaning that a student's final course grade would determine the score that the student would receive for each element of a standardized assessment rubric. As an example, Professor F described his assessment routine in this way:

> The way I score, is generally everybody gets a three [a score of "target"] in all objectives, and then students that stand out in particular get a four. Seldom does a student drop to a two [a score of "developing"], but it does happen on occasion.

Professor F went on to state that "an A or a B [students' grades for a course], in my mind translates out to a three on a four point scale", and that he "almost loathed to give fours [a score of advanced]." Professor F justified his methods for completing the mandated standardized assessments by stating that

> If a person were a four [a score of "advanced"] they don't need the course. They're already functioning beyond the course. And if they get a two [a score of developing], with that particular objective, that means something malfunctioned.

In addition, Professor D echoed Professor F's philosophy when he stated that in this program, for the most part,

> there is the expectation that everyone is going to master it [the objectives] in the course. And so, the real struggle is, do you get a three or four [a score of target or advanced]. There are a few people, if they don't master it, they shouldn't be continuing through the program, and so [I am] struggling with a scale that may not reflect true growth.

Similar to Professors F and D, Professor G described her process for completing mandated assessments as a correlation to students' course grades. In this scenario, Professor G assigns students' final course grades, and then she tries to "make it fit the rubric." She continued

by describing her assessment process as a struggle with the confines of the process to find something that she can live with. She stated,

> It's what I can live with. It's what I can do. I can't live with rating everybody a four [a score of advanced], so I don't. I can't live with rating everybody a 2 [a score of developing], so I don't. So I have to split it between twos and threes and an occasional four.

In contrast, other faculty members take a more individualistic approach to completing their mandated assessments of student performance. For example, Professor A stated that it took her longer [to assign assessment scores] "as I made sure I don't just assign group grades. I look at the individual work," because in her mind, this process is meant to provide students with "growth and learning opportunities." She went on to voice her disagreement with group grading in this way:

> I think it's [the assessment process] too subjective and if professors think that it is layering, or it reflects on their teaching, that they grade higher, and they set up a student to not be as great and wonderful as they could be if it [the assessment process] was more of a learning opportunity rather than giving a grade.

As another example of how each faculty member has his or her own unique method for completing assessments, Professor C stated that when she completes assessments in LiveText, she is only looking at specific pieces of student evidence to determine student mastery of key concepts and outcomes, not the totality of the students' entire semester's body of work. So she is "assessing the assignment, not the student per say." For Professor C, her method of assessment involves "somewhat of a paradigm shift …because the rubrics that we might be using to grade the assignment are not necessarily the same as what is in LiveText."

In addition to the variety of assessment strategies already mentioned, it is believed by some faculty members in the program that assessments are often completed by some with little genuine effort, which makes them less reflective of actual student achievement. Professor G

stated that “we have faculty who don’t want to do any of that [participate in the mandated assessment process], and so they just check [check a box in the rubric to assign an assessment score].” In addition, Professor A insinuated that many faculty members do not give authentic scores when completing the assessments in order to avoid conflict. According to Professor A, “a lot of people [program faculty members] just do threes and fours [assign students’ scores of target and advanced] because nobody questions a three or four.”

Finally, it is important to note that during the interview sessions, faculty members frequently made references to outsides sources and the influence those sources have on their assessment practices. Many of the participants noted that pressure from accrediting bodies such as NCATE and the Alabama State Department of Education have served to increase the “proceduralization and standardization” of the assessment process. Professor B summarized his feelings regarding this situation matter-of-factly by stating that “NCATE says we must follow rules and regulations. I would be insubordinate if I did not follow them.”

As a result of the increasing “standardization” of the process, Professor G commented that she feels that she is restricted from using all of the possible assessment scores available on the program’s standardized rubrics. She maintains that it is difficult to give students or lower assessment scores because “it’s hard to give them less than competent [a score of developing on the standardized assessment rubric]. Otherwise they cannot get their certification. She went on to say that faculty members are truly “limited to those top three grades if we want to our students to ever work as an administrator [in the K-12 setting].”

Lack of communication among assessors. Finally, through the discussions held with the program’s faculty members concerning their assessment practices, it was discovered that there is a low-level of communication between the faculty members regarding the program’s assessment

process, indicating that the faculties' assessments of student performance are largely completed in isolation as independent efforts by each faculty members as they teach their specific course(s). This issue, in part, supports the findings that there is a discrepancy in how faculty members' perceive the program's assessment process and that there are a wide variety of methods used by faculty members to assign assessment scores.

When discussing their assessment practices, many faculty members repeatedly stated that they are not familiar with how other faculty members complete the assessment process, or could only offer assumptions, and stated that they can only speak for themselves, indicating that the faculty members in this program are not approaching the assessment process as a collaborative effort. As an example, while Professor F discussed during his interview how LiveText is used by the program, he stated that he does not know if we [the program's faculty members] ever had a discussion about what they [data derived from LiveText-based assessments] mean. In addition, when discussing faculty members' perceptions of the program's assessment practices, he stated that he does not "know how they are perceived [by other faculty members]," and that each completed assessment has meaning to them [the faculty member who completed the assessment], indicating that as a program, assessment data is not analyzed and discussed.

In addition to the lack of communication regarding the program's assessment practices among the full-time faculty members, a lack of communication among the program's full-time faculty members and the program's adjunct faculty members, who also participate in the program's assessment practices, also exist. Although the program's adjunct faculty did not participate in data collection during phase II of this study, Professor F explained that adjunct faculty members constitute a large portion of the program's teaching load, and are responsible for completing a significant number of the program's mandated assessments. He stated that at

least one-third of the program's courses are taught by adjunct instructors, and he stated that he has no idea of what they are doing in regards to their mandated assessments, nor does he know how they conceptualize the purpose of the program's assessment process.

Summary

This chapter presented data collected from multiple sources, which included assessments of student performance in LiveText, student test scores on the Praxis II and interviews with faculty members to answer the study's research questions. In phase I the researcher determined if there is a correlation between students' performance on the ASIL as measured in LiveText and student performance on the ISLLC standards as measured by the Praxis II. Results from the simple linear regression models, as well the multiple regression model conducted during phase I were not significant. During phase II, data from faculty interviews were coded and analyzed to determine faculty perceptions of the program's assessment practices. Overwhelmingly, the faculty members in the program revealed that they have either a negative perception of the assessment process or a feeling of indifference towards the assessments. Many of the faculty members view the mandated assessment process as a waste of their time or as "busy work." Finally, after phases I and II were completed, data from both the quantitative and qualitative sources were integrated and analyzed to examine the factors that affect the program's assessment practices. The integration of phase I and phase II data revealed three themes that affect the program's assessment practices: 1) a discrepancy among faculty members concerning the purpose of the assessment process exist; 2) faculty members use different methods when assigning assessment scores; and 3) a lack of communication among assessors regarding assessment practices exist.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the standards-based assessments derived from the use of an e-portfolio assessment tool by one instructional leadership program at SE University. Institutions of higher education now face demands from a variety of sources to provide evidence of institutional and student achievement (Jackson & Rodgers, 2012). As a result, many institutions have adopted the use of standards-based assessment practices as part of their efforts to meet their continuous improvement needs (Hendry, Armstrong, & Bromberger, 2012), and some have questioned whether these practices are compatible with program assessment and accreditation efforts (Strudler & Wetzel, 2012). In this study, a program evaluation was conducted on one master's level educational leadership program's assessment practices, in which the researcher examined the standards-based assessment scores entered into an e-portfolio assessment tool (LiveText) and conducted interviews with the program's faculty members in order to understand faculty perceptions of the program's assessment process and to examine the factors that influence the program's assessment practices.

This chapter presents a summary of the study, followed by a discussion of the findings, as well as the implications of the findings for the studied program. In addition, limitations of the study, as well as recommendations for future research are presented in this chapter.

Summary of the Study

Educators now recognize that when conceived and conducted thoughtfully, program evaluation studies can provide essential information about the effectiveness of educational programs (Worthen & Sanders, 1991) and can be used by researchers to evaluate and improve a variety of programs and processes, including standards-based assessment systems (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). The researcher conducted a program evaluation of one master's level program's assessment practices, combining objectives-orientated and participant oriented approaches. The application of this approach enabled the researcher to gather data from multiple sources to investigate the factors that affect the studied programs assessment practices.

In phase I of the study, the researcher collected and analyzed quantitative data from two sources: the assessments of student achievement of the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders (ASIL), as recorded in LiveText and student scores on the Praxis II content examination, as reported by ETS, which demonstrates student achievement of the Interstate Schools Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. Seven statistical analyses, which were described in Chapter III, were conducted during phase I to determine if students' achievement of the ASIL, as evaluated in LiveText, are predictive of students' achievement of the ISLLC standards, as reported by the Praxis II.

In phase II of the study, the researcher collected, coded and analyzed the responses provided by faculty members during the one-on-one semi-structured interviews conducted with the program's full-time faculty members who have taught courses in the program and have utilized the LiveText system to assess student achievement of the AISL. These data were examined to understand faculty perceptions of the program's assessment process.

After phases I and II were complete, the research integrated the statistical analyses of test data and the participating faculty members' responses to the interview questions collected during phases I and II, respectively to examine the factors that impact the program's assessment practices.

Discussion

This explanatory-sequential mixed-methods study was guided by three research questions, which are discussed here. It is important to note the value of the mixed-methods approach in this part of the study. Using qualitative data collection methods helped, perhaps, inform the reasons why the quantitative data were not statistically significant. Further, the qualitative data helped inform and lead to the implications brought forth in this study, which will be discussed later.

Research Question One

Is there a significant relationship between evaluations of student achievement as measured in LiveText and student achievement as measured by student performance on the Praxis II content examination?

With institutions of higher education facing pressure to be more accountable for supporting and documenting student achievement of learning outcomes, many institutions of higher education have adopted the use of standards-based assessment practices as part of their efforts to meet their Continuous Improvement (CI) needs (Hendry, Armstrong, & Bromberger, 2012). Furthermore, Hackman and Alsbury (2005) have maintained that faculty members in educational leadership programs should constantly engage in self-assessment of the effectiveness of their administrator preparation programs to identify areas in which they can better prepare students to assume leadership roles, a process in which many programs traditionally do not

participate. As a result, many higher education institutions, including the one evaluated in this study now depend upon assessment data derived from e-portfolio based assessment practices to initiate curriculum-based and programmatic change processes to satisfy stakeholders (Jackson & Rodgers, 2012). However, Strudler and Wetzel (2012) have noted this recent trend and have called into question the compatibility of using e-portfolio assessment data for both accreditation and student learning needs.

Many institutions of higher education now focus their assessment efforts on accreditation management, instead of student learning. As a result, Strudler and Wetzel (2012) have questioned these dual purposes, as well as some of the faculty members in the program evaluated in this study, who have previously questioned the validity of using the data generated from their e-portfolio assessment system for means other than its original intent (Mendiola, Hardin, & Vaux, 2012). As such, phase I of this study sought to examine the meaningfulness of the assessments completed by the program's faculty members by examining the assessment data entered by the program's faculty members into LiveText to see if the data are predictive of student performance on the Praxis II examination. The results of the statistical analyses revealed that there is no significant relationship between the evaluations of student achievement of the ASIL, as measured in LiveText and student achievement of the ISLLC standards, as measured on the Praxis II content examination. This lack of correlation between the two forms of assessments may indicate that the data entered into LiveText by the program's faculty members may not be meaningful when used for purposes other than their original intent, which was to document student achievement of key content objectives.

These findings are consistent with Strudler and Wetzel's (2012) beliefs, when they raised questions regarding the appropriateness of higher education institutions using e-portfolio

assessment data from mandated assessment practices as a data source for their continuous improvement and accreditation management needs. At a minimum, the lack of statistical significance found in the phase I analyses brings into question whether the evaluated program's assessments are meaningful, and if so, in what context. If they are not meaningful, what are the ramifications for using these data for accreditation purposes? In addition, for the program evaluated in this study, this finding is particularly significant considering that the college that governs this program has made concerted efforts in recent years to improve their standards-based assessment practices and the ability to collect, analyze and report assessment data for accreditation purposes.

Research Question Two

What are the faculty members' perceptions regarding their institutional assessment process, including policies and procedures?

Analysis of the interview data collected during the qualitative portion of the study in phase II indicated that a large portion of the faculty members in the evaluated program have either a negative perception of their program's assessment practices, or at least a feeling of indifference. When asked to describe their perceptions regarding their program's assessment practices, participants offered such descriptions as *it's a necessary evil; unimportant; it's a waste of time; it's layering;* or *busy work.* These perceptions provided by the program's faculty members are confirmed in the literature by what Shavelson (2010) has described as an ongoing resistance among faculty members in higher education to embrace their institution's assessment practices. Although there is no indication that the faculty members in the program evaluated in this study actively resist their institution's assessment process, their responses do no indicate that they view it or support it as an integral part of their program, which is a common theme among

institutions of higher education, as noted by Ewell (2002). Ewell (2002) has also stated that the recent standards-based assessment movement in higher education has had little impact on most faculty members, who often view mandated assessment practices with disregard.

Bureaucratic nature. There were several factors that emerged from the coding process that took place in phase II that explain the negative perceptions that faculty members in the evaluated program have for their assessment process. First, many of the faculty members in the evaluated program perceive their program's assessment practice as highly bureaucratic in nature. As an example, Professor D stated that some of the faculty members in their program view their assessment practices as "just another cumbersome bureaucratic activity in which they have to engage." Furthermore, many of the interview participants mentioned that over time, the amount of mandated assessments required of them has increased dramatically, which accordingly has required a greater amount of their time and effort. It should be noted that this study was conducted during the institution's preparation for their NCATE review visit. Many of the institution's assessment processes had been examined and new ones created as part of their CI efforts during this time. The additional time and effort contributed by faculty members during this time could have contributed to the negative opinions they expressed. Angelo (2002) has indicated that scholars greatly value their time, which could, in part explain why the faculty members in the evaluated program have come to view their assessment practices so negatively. In addition, many of the faculty members in the studied program view the mandated assessment process as a burden. As an example, Professor's G misgiving regarding the program's assessment practices, which she claims is the state department's attempt to make education "teacher proof," added further evidence regarding the lack of support among the evaluated program's faculty members for their program's assessment practices. Again evidence for this is

abundant in the literature, as some scholars have previously indicated that burdensome assessment mandates often lead to decreased levels of faculty support for assessment processes (Hutchings, 2010; Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009).

Inauthentic assessment. In addition to the perceived bureaucratic nature of the evaluated program's assessment process, many of the faculty members of the evaluated program believe that their program's assessment practices are inauthentic. As an example, Professor C indicated that the data derived from the program's assessment practices are meaningless to her. These sentiments were echoed by Professor B when he commented that as a result of the program's assessment practices, they have learned that they have "gotten much better at knowing that they have checked the box." Again, these findings derived from the faculty interviews are consistent with what has been found in the literature. Many scholars have indicated that how faculty members perceive the value of their program's assessment practices is a key element in establishing authenticity (Gray, 1997; Palomba & Banta, 1999; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). Furthermore, some scholars have expressed that there is a need in higher education for faculty members to see greater value in their program's assessment practices, beyond meeting measures of accountability, so that they will become invested (Banta & Associates, 1993). It is evident in this study's findings that for many faculty members in the evaluated program, the data derived from the program's mandated assessment practices do not authentically capture their students' abilities. Furthermore, this lack of authenticity has led to faculty disengagement from the program's assessment program, which could contribute to the lack of statistical significance discovered in the analyses conducted in phase I.

Faculty input. Finally, in addition to the negative perceptions that many of the evaluated program's faculty members have regarding their program's assessment practices, several of the participating faculty members indicated during their interviews that they were dissatisfied with how the assessment process was "forced" upon them without their input. For example, one professor stated his belief that the entire assessment process was doomed from the beginning, since it was established without the input of the faculty members. In addition, when asked to describe how their perceptions of the programs assessment process were developed, several participants indicated that they believe the creation of the program's assessments process was done without the input of the faculty, which according to at least one participant is not how you get "faculty buy-in." Professor F noted that there was no discussion with the program's faculty members concerning how the program's assessment process was established. Of the seven interview participants, four were employed at the time that LiveText was adopted and the assessment process was established. These faculty members' views regarding their lack of involvement in the creation of the assessment program is consistent with Muffo's (2001) finding, who stated that in order for faculty members to fully embrace the assessment process and to develop a successful institutional assessment process, it is critical that the faculty members be involved in the processes design and implementation of their programs assessment policies, practices and procedures.

Through the interviews conducted with the evaluated program's participating faculty members, it is obvious that there are several factors that affect faculty perceptions regarding their assessment practices. The identification of these factors will be significant for the assessment leaders in the evaluated program as they attempt to move forward and improve their assessment practices, especially since many scholars have indicated that a lack of faculty support for

assessment practices is a significant barrier to the successful implementation of a successful assessment program (Ewell, 1996; Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009; Steele, 1996). It has been noted in the literature that these barriers lead to a lack of faculty buy-in, which often leads to the failure to create a culture of assessment within institutions, a critical component of any successful assessment program (Palomba & Banta, 1999). These negative perceptions by faculty members should be addressed by those involved with the evaluated program's assessment process in order to ensure that successful assessment practices that foster positive faculty perception and buy-in are created.

Research Question Three

To what extent do program, institutional and external factors impact the assessments of student achievement as documented in LiveText?

After the integration of phase I and phase II data, three themes emerged that help explain the program, institutional, and external factors that impact the assessment practices of the evaluated program. These might also help explain the lack of correlation between the program's assessment data collected in LiveText and the Praxis II test data found in the statistical analyses conducted in phase I. These themes are a discrepancy among faculty members' perceptions regarding the purpose of the program's assessment process; the different methods for assigning assessment scores; and a lack of communication between faculty members concerning the program's assessment practices.

Multiple perceptions regarding the purpose of assessment. One of the findings that emerged from the integration of phase I and phase II data is the discrepancy in how faculty members view the purpose of their assessment practices. This discrepancy is described in the literature as a competition of competing agendas, which is driven by demands from accrediting

agencies (Enyon, 2014). Today, institutions are forced to utilize available tools to develop processes that assist students in meeting degree requirements with speed and efficiency, while at the same time ensuring student learning (Enyon, 2014). In congruence with the literature, several faculty members in the evaluated program discussed the significant impact that accreditation processes have had on their assessment practices.

At the heart of this issue uncovered during the interviews conducted with faculty members is the existence of two contrasting perceptions regarding the purpose of the program's assessment practices. This competition, among the purposes of assessment, was described by Enyon (2014) who stated that institutions of higher education are currently confronting new challenges driven by competing agendas, the completion agenda and the quality agenda. Some of the faculty members in the evaluated program view their assessment program is as an academic growth model, which aligns to the quality agenda, and for other faculty members, it is viewed as a competency-based model, which aligns to the completion agenda. This discrepancy has implications for how faculty members value the program's assessment practices, and how they enter assessment scores. This discrepancy could explain, in part, the lack of significant correlation found in the statistical analyses conducted in phase I of this study.

The fact that there is inconsistency in how faculty members in the evaluated program perceive the purpose of their assessment practices is not surprising since it has been noted in the literature that the increased demand from external constituents for quantitative assessments has left many post-secondary instructors confused regarding the nature and purpose of standards-based assessments Ascouch (2011). In addition, although modern electronic portfolio systems have provided institutions with the opportunity to enhance their data-driven decision making, monitor assessments, determine program strengths and weaknesses, and provide evidence for

meeting rigorous accreditation requirements (Everhart & Hogarty, 2009), Strudler and Wetzel (2012) have stated that some higher education assessment programs are plagued by a lack of clarity concerning the purpose of the portfolio assessment process. This lack of clarity has caused some in the field to wonder if using portfolios for program evaluation and accreditation purposes is compatible with the original intent of portfolios (Strudler & Wetzel, 2012), which was to assist students with cultivating habits of reflective practice and self-critique (Kahn, 2014). Furthermore, as seen through the interviews conducted in phase II, the literature indicates that tensions exist when institutions implement portfolio processes designed for multiple purposes. These tensions are due to the disagreement among the differing assessment criteria and program goals (Smith & Tillema, 2003). As institutions attempt to answer these questions concerning the purpose of their assessment practices, it is important for the assessment leaders of the program evaluated in this study to understand that conflict often arises concerning how the institution defines the philosophical goals of the portfolio process (Zeichner & Wray, 2001).

Multiple methods for entering assessment scores. The evidence from the interview data indicates that the method faculty members use to enter assessment scores in LiveText is directly related to their perceptions of the assessment program's purpose. For example, Professor F, who views the assessment practices as a competency-based practice, enters scores in block format in accordance with students' course grade, meaning that students' assessment scores are directly correlated to their course grade. He uses this method as a means to simply document mastery of outcomes, which is similar to the completion agenda (Enyon, 2014). In contrast, Professor A enters assessment scores on an individual basis. Each outcome is assessed separately from others and independent of course grades, which conforms to the quality agenda (Enyon, 2014).

This inconsistency in how data are entered into LiveText seems significant and could contribute, at least in part to the lack of statistical significance found in the test conducted in phase I. Unlike the findings that address the previous research questions, there is no evidence found in the literature that specifically addresses this finding. Since this finding is not currently found in the literature, it will add to the literature base concerning consistency in standards-based mandated assessment practices.

Lack of communication. Finally, the lack of statistical significance found in phase I of this study could also be attributed in part, to the lack of communication that exists among the program's full-time faculty members and the program's full-time and adjunct faculty members. Since adjunct faculty members were not interviewed for this study, future research interviews with adjunct faculty members could inform this area. Once again, there is no evidence found in the literature that addresses lack of communication as a concern regarding assessment practices and this finding will add to the current literature on standards-based assessment practices.

From the interviews conducted with the full-time faculty members, it was evident that little time is spent by the faculty members discussing their assessment procedures, policies, practices, or their perceptions of the assessment process. In addition, throughout the series of interviews conducted with the faculty members, many participants repeatedly stated that they could not speak for other faculty members because they were unfamiliar with others' practices and perceptions regarding assessment. Finally, it was also noted in the interviews that full-time faculty members do not communicate or collaborate with adjunct faculty members concerning the program's assessment practices. In order to bring consistency to the assessment process, this issue will need to be addressed through a collaborative effort of all stakeholders as the programs moves forward with their assessment practices.

Limitations

This study contained several limitations that warrant consideration. First, data collection during phase II of the study were only conducted with the program's full-time faculty members. Since the studied program adopted LiveText as the tool for conducting its mandatory assessments, eight adjunct faculty members have been employed by the program to teach content courses and conduct assessments of the ASIL. Although the data entered into LiveText by these individuals were used in the statistical analyses conducted during phase I of the study, phase II focused specifically on understanding the perceptions and practices of the full-time faculty members. As such, the adjunct faculty members were not invited to participate in the one-on-one semi-structured interviews that were conducted during phase II. However, these adjunct faculty members conduct a significant portion of the program's mandated assessments, and they may possess information vital to the understanding of why no correlation was found between student achievement of the ASIL, as documented in LiveText and student achievement of the ISLLC standards, as documented by the Praxis II content examination. In addition, these individuals may also hold unique insight into the factors that affect the program's mandated assessment practices that should be explored.

In 2010, ETS, which creates, administers, and reports the Praxis II series examinations, introduced Test 0411, a new version of the test required for all students applying for certification from the Alabama State Department of Education in the field of educational leadership. This test was designed to replace Test 0410, the previous certification test for students applying for certification from the Alabama State Department of Education in the field of educational leadership. From September 2010 through August 2011, there was a period of time in which students were allowed to take either test. Since, the objectives of those two tests are different,

only the test scores from test version 0411 were examined in this study, which decreased the sample population examined in the quantitative measures conducted in phase I.

Lastly, in 2012, ETS introduced Praxis Test 5411, which is a computer-based alternative to Test 0411, which is offered in the traditional paper and pencil format. Test 5411 measures the same objectives as test 0411. Students' scores on both tests 0411 and 5411 were used in the statistical analyses conducted in phase I of the study. However, the two tests were not distinguished in the statistical analyses, eliminating the ability to determine if test format is a factor that affects students' scores on the Praxis II content examination.

Implications and Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the current study, the following implications and recommendations for policy, programmatic change, and practice related to the evaluated program's standards-based assessment practices are made.

Implication # 1

Since faculty involvement is critical to the establishment of successful assessment programs (Muffo, 2001), as a program, the faculty members should discuss with their institution's leadership the purposes of their assessment practices, and clarify the purpose. For example, if assessments are to reflect growth over time, multiple assessment points should be included since students are currently assessed at only one point. If the model is to reflect mastery, the group must determine who defines mastery and at what point in the program these indicators are assessed should be addressed as well. Once the purpose of the program's assessment practices has been clearly articulated, this information should be shared with all involved stakeholders.

Implication # 2

Since competing agendas in assessment programs cause tension among faculty members (Enyon, 2014), a purposeful and unified assessment plan, should be created in order to facilitate the collection of assessment data that will achieve the program's stated goals. This unified assessment plan needs input from the program's full-time faculty members, adjunct faculty members, the governing college's assessment leadership and any other stakeholders in the program, in order to reflect authentic assessment, that can affect programmatic change.

Implication # 3

Considering there are a variety of methods used by faculty members to enter assessment scores into LiveText, once a unified assessment plan has been created, the program's faculty members should develop a unified method for entering assessment scores into LiveText. In addition, all faculty members, full-time and adjunct, should participate in rubric norming sessions in order to ensure the reliability of the assessment results across the program's core curriculum. For example, students are currently scored on a scale of 4, 3, 2, 1 (4 = advanced, 3 = target, 2 = developing and 1 = unacceptable). It is important for these point values to have relatively the same meaning for each assessor, since data is compared across the program as part of their programmatic change efforts.

Implication # 4

Since the program in this study does little to provide new or adjunct faculty with information regarding their assessment practices, the program should orient new faculty members, including adjunct faculty members, to the program's assessment program and to provide meaningful information and training that will acclimate new assessors to the assessment

process. Furthermore, the assessment process should be revisited periodically to foster continued collaboration and buy-in from faculty members.

Implication # 5

This study found that there is little communication, at all levels of the program, regarding assessment practices. A system to facilitate on-going communication among full-time faculty members and between full-time and adjunct faculty members regarding assessment practices needs to be developed. Considering that roughly one-third of the program's assessment data is derived from adjunct faculty, it is of great importance that those individuals are aware of the significance of the assessment process.

Implication # 6

The program should provide more continued training and support for all faculty members regarding best practices for assessment. Specifically, in-depth training needs to be provided that continuously ensure that faculty members are conducting assessments in accordance with the program's unified assessment plan. Given the faculty members' negative perceptions of the process, including concerns about time and busy work, this will take careful planning.

Implication # 7

This study found that there is no correlation between student achievement, as documented in LiveText and student performance on the Praxis II examination. Furthermore, discrepancies concerning faculty members' perceptions of the assessment process, and how scores are entered into LiveText were discovered. As such, the program should stop using data derived from their LiveText-based assessment process for programmatic change purposes.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the current study, the researcher makes six recommendations for future research.

Recommendation # 1

The program evaluated in this study is just one of the educational leadership programs at institutions of higher education in the state of Alabama. Each of these institutions must follow assessment mandates from the Alabama State Department of Education to assess the ASIL and to require that all students pass the Praxis II content examination. Future studies should be conducted to replicate this study with other educational leadership programs in the state of Alabama that offer degrees that lead to class A certification from the Alabama State Department of Education. The replication of this study at other institutions that are striving to meet similar assessment mandates would provide data to determine if the results discovered in this study are common across the state of Alabama, or if they are unique to the institution evaluated in this study.

Recommendation # 2

Since the goal of the graduate program evaluated in this study is to train K-12 school administrators, future studies should be conducted to investigate the correlation of students' assessment scores on the ASIL and performance in the field as a K-12 administrator. Such studies could help determine if the assessments conducted by the program's faculty members are predictive of performance as a K-12 school administrator. Researchers should examine K-12 administrator evaluations in their first years as an administrator to see if there is a correlation between performance as an administrator and performance as a graduate student on the ASIL.

Recommendation # 3

Given the concerns regarding "busy work" and wasted time, an exploration of ways to streamline the process might help with negative attitudes. Those involved in the institution's assessment process should examine all possibilities for capturing needed assessment data in a way that minimizes the burden of time and effort on the part of the faculty members. This could include changing curriculum alignment and exploring new or unused software features, among others.

Recommendation # 4

Considering the wide discrepancy discovered in how program faculty members enter their assessment scores into the LiveText system, future studies should re-investigate the assessment data used in phase I of this study to see if the assessment scores entered by faculty have a significant correlation to their students' performance on the Praxis II. This study did not identify the source of the evaluation when performing the statistical analyses, so no effort was made to determine if the lack or correlation between assessment sources that was found in this study was representative for all faculty members in the program or if assessment scores by certain faculty members do have a significant correlation.

Recommendation # 5

Since the program evaluated in this study is just one of many programs in the institution that conducts standards-based assessments as part of a unit-wide assessment system, similar studies need to be conducted with other programs in the assessment system, both at the graduate and undergraduate level to determine if similar results are discovered.

Recommendation # 6

Once the evaluated program has implemented change within their assessment program, a follow-up study should be conducted to determine if the changes improved the correlation between assessment students' achievement of the ASIL and students' achievement of the ISLLC standards. In addition, this follow-up study should also include a qualitative element to determine if the changes made to the assessment program have changed the faculty members' perceptions regarding their assessment practices.

Summary

This study contributed to the literature on mandated standards-based assessment practices, particularly as related to assessment practices in higher education. This study also examined the factors that impact assessment practices, including the perceptions of faculty. In phase I, no statistically significant correlation was found between student achievement of the ASIL and student achievement of the ISLLC standards. Phase II indicated that faculty have a negative perception of their assessment program. During the integration of results, it was discovered that faculty perceptions of the assessment program's purpose greatly impacts how they conduct assessments in their courses. A discrepancy in how faculty enter assessment scores into LiveText and a lack of communication among assessors also were contributing factors that affect the program's assessment practices. These findings are particularly important at this university due to the recent and planned expansion of LiveText-based assessment practices to other programs in the institution. This expansion is the result of the institution's needs to capture authentic assessment data for accreditation purposes. The researcher in this study would caution others adopting a similar assessment process to utilize the results of this study to guide the implementation process to prevent issues that have been revealed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Research Design

Phase	Action	Procedures	Product
I	Quantitative data collection	Collect praxis results and LiveText assessments	Results of praxis examinations and LiveText assessments
	Quantitative data analyses	Use SPSS to conduct linear regression models to analyze LiveText data for any predictors of student performance on the Praxis II	Descriptive Statistics
II	Interview Protocol Development	Identify Faculty members that taught courses that utilized LiveText and develop interview questions	A list of faculty members to interview and interview questions
	Qualitative Data Collection	Interview faculty members using results of quantitative analyses as a guide	Interview Transcripts
	Qualitative Data Analyses	Transcribe interviews, code data and develop thematic analyses	Thematic analyses
Integration	Integration of qualitative and quantitative results	Interpret results and explain qualitative and quantitative data	Discussion, implications, conclusions and future research

Appendix B

ASIL Indicators

ASIL Indicator	Standard Description	Course Alignment
48.2.a.1.1	Planning for Continuous Improvement Knowledge	AEL 521 & AEL 526
48.2.a.1.2	Planning for Continuous Improvement Knowledge	AEL 521
48.2.a.1.3	Planning for Continuous Improvement Knowledge	AEL 521
48.2.a.1.4	Planning for Continuous Improvement Knowledge	AEL 521
48.2.a.1.5	Planning for Continuous Improvement Knowledge	AEL 521
48.2.a.2.1	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 521
48.2.a.2.10	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 526
48.2.a.2.11	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 526
48.2.a.2.12	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 526
48.2.a.2.13	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 526
48.2.a.2.14	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 526
48.2.a.2.15	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 521
48.2.a.2.2	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 521
48.2.a.2.3	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 521
48.2.a.2.4	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 521
48.2.a.2.5	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 521
48.2.a.2.6	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 521
48.2.a.2.7	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 521
48.2.a.2.8	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 521
48.2.a.2.9	Planning for Continuous Improvement Ability	AEL 521
48.2.b.1.1	Teaching and Learning Knowledge	AEL 522
48.2.b.1.2	Teaching and Learning Knowledge	AEL 522
48.2.b.1.3	Teaching and Learning Knowledge	AEL 522
48.2.b.2.1	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 522
48.2.b.2.1	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 526
48.2.b.2.10	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 526
48.2.b.2.11	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 526
48.2.b.2.12	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 526
48.2.b.2.13	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 526
48.2.b.2.2	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 522
48.2.b.2.3	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 522
48.2.b.2.4	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 522
48.2.b.2.4	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 526
48.2.b.2.5	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 522
48.2.b.2.6	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 522
48.2.b.2.7	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 522
48.2.b.2.8	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 522
48.2.b.2.9	Teaching and Learning Ability	AEL 522

48.2.c.1.1	Human Resources Development Knowledge	AEL 523
48.2.c.1.2	Human Resources Development Knowledge	AEL 523
48.2.c.1.3	Human Resources Development Knowledge	AEL 523
48.2.c.1.4	Human Resources Development Knowledge	AEL 523
48.2.c.2.1	Human Resources Development Ability	AEL 523
48.2.c.2.10	Human Resources Development Ability	AEL 523
48.2.c.2.11	Human Resources Development Ability	AEL 523
48.2.c.2.2	Human Resources Development Ability	AEL 523
48.2.c.2.3	Human Resources Development Ability	AEL 523
48.2.c.2.4	Human Resources Development Ability	AEL 523
48.2.c.2.5	Human Resources Development Ability	AEL 523
48.2.c.2.6	Human Resources Development Ability	AEL 523
48.2.c.2.7	Human Resources Development Ability	AEL 523
48.2.c.2.8	Human Resources Development Ability	AEL 523
48.2.c.2.9	Human Resources Development Ability	AEL 523
48.2.d.1.1	Diversity Knowledge	AEL 526
48.2.d.1.2	Diversity Knowledge	AEL 520
48.2.d.1.3	Diversity Knowledge	AEL 523
48.2.d.1.4	Diversity Knowledge	AEL 520
48.2.d.1.4	Diversity Knowledge	AEL 522
48.2.d.1.5	Diversity Knowledge	AEL 520
48.2.d.1.5	Diversity Knowledge	AEL 522
48.2.d.2.1	Diversity Ability	AEL 524
48.2.d.2.2	Diversity Ability	AEL 523
48.2.d.2.3	Diversity Ability	AEL 527
48.2.d.2.4	Diversity Ability	AEL 527
48.2.d.2.5	Diversity Ability	AEL 527
48.2.e.1.1	Community and Stakeholder Relationships Knowledge	AEL 520
48.2.e.1.2	Community and Stakeholder Relationships Knowledge	AEL 520
48.2.e.2.1	Community and Stakeholder Relationships Ability	AEL 520
48.2.e.2.1	Community and Stakeholder Relationships Ability	AEL 522
48.2.e.2.2	Community and Stakeholder Relationships Ability	AEL 520
48.2.e.2.3	Community and Stakeholder Relationships Ability	AEL 520
48.2.e.2.4	Community and Stakeholder Relationships Ability	AEL 520
48.2.e.2.5	Community and Stakeholder Relationships Ability	AEL 520
48.2.e.2.6	Community and Stakeholders Relationships Ability	AEL 520
48.2.e.2.7	Community and Stakeholder Relationships Ability	AEL 520
48.2.e.2.8	Community and Stakeholder Relationships Ability	AEL 520
48.2.f.1.1	Technology Knowledge	AEL 525
48.2.f.1.2	Technology Knowledge	AEL 525
48.2.f.2.1	Technology Ability	AEL 527

48.2.f.2.2	Technology Ability	AEL 525
48.2.f.2.3	Technology Ability	AEL 520
48.2.f.2.3	Technology Ability	AEL 522
48.2.f.2.3	Technology Ability	AEL 525
48.2.f.2.4	Technology Ability	AEL 523
48.2.f.2.5	Technology Ability	AEL 521
48.2.f.2.6	Technology	AEL 521
48.2.f.2.7	Technology Ability	AEL 526
48.2.g.1.1	Management of Learning Organization Knowledge	AEL 524
48.2.g.1.2	Management of the Learning Organization Knowledge	AEL 525
48.2.g.1.3	Management of the Learning Organization Knowledge	AEL 525
48.2.g.1.4	Management of the Learning Organization Knowledge	AEL 525
48.2.g.1.5	Management of the Learning Organization Knowledge	AEL 525
48.2.g.1.6	Management of the Learning Organization Knowledge	AEL 525
48.2.g.2.1	Management of the Learning Organization Ability	AEL 525
48.2.g.2.2	Management of the Learning Organization Ability	AEL 525
48.2.g.2.3	Management of the Learning Organization Ability	AEL 525
48.2.g.2.4	Management of the Learning Organization Ability	AEL 525
48.2.g.2.5	Management of the Learning Organization Ability	AEL 525
48.2.g.2.6	Management of the Learning Organization Ability	AEL 525
48.2.h.1.1	Ethics Knowledge and Ability	AEL 524
48.2.h.1.2	Ethics Knowledge and Ability	AEL 524
48.2.h.1.3	Ethics Knowledge and Ability	AEL 524
48.2.h.1.4	Ethics Knowledge and Ability	AEL 524
48.2.h.1.5	Ethics Knowledge and Ability	AEL 524
48.2.h.2	Ethics Knowledge	AEL 524
48.2.h.3	Ethics Ability	AEL 524

Appendix C

Phase I-Guiding Interview Questions

1. To your knowledge, how are the data entered into LiveText used?
2. What do you perceive as the general opinion of faculty concerning the program's LiveText based assessment practices?
3. How have you used data derived from LiveText to guide your instructional practices or for program planning purposes?
4. What is your opinion of the validity of the assessment scores derived from LiveText as a snapshot of student learning?
5. What factors, such as college policies and unofficial directions have influenced the assessment sores that you have entered into LiveText?
6. What are your concerns regarding mandated assessment practices?
7. How has the assessment process evolved since 2010?
8. Describe any events that have occurred since 2010 that have changed how faculty members view the assessment process or how they have entered assessment scores into LiveText?
9. Can you identify a time point when you think assessment practices became more valid?

Appendix D

January 23, 2015

Office for Research

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA RESEARCH

James Hardin
College of Education
The University of Alabama
Box 870231

Re: IRB # 15-OR-020, "E-Portfolio Assessment: A Mixed-Methods Study of an Instructional Leadership Program's Assessment System"

Dear Mr. Hardin:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your application will expire on January 22, 2016. If your research will continue beyond this date, please complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, please complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, please complete the Request for Study Closure Form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved stamped consent forms to obtain consent from your participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

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