Research Based Course Design for Supervisors of Aspiring School Administrators: Effective Mentor Characteristics

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Research Question

1) What are the characteristics of an effective mentor across disciplines?
2) Given these characteristics, which characteristics are valued most by administrative interns pursuing school administrative license?
3) How can online training capture these characteristics to ensure effective mentoring?

Introduction

Strategies and processes used by effective supervisors will provide a solid foundation and level playing field for all administrative interns also addressing the under-representation of minority groups. They include: excellent communication skills, fairness, good organizational skills, knowledge, accountability, efficiency, adaptability, social skills, diplomacy, and self-discipline.

Methodology

Participants

Cross-section of 30 UNE graduates from EDU 791, a 15-week field-based administrative internship course.

Questions

1) What do you feel are the necessary characteristics for an effective on-site supervisor?
2) What other ideas and/or thoughts would you like to share that relate to an effective on-site supervisor?
3) How can online training capture these characteristics to ensure effective mentoring?

Procedures

Survey Monkey

Responses were confidential. Students identified their role in public education.

Cross Section of Practicing Administrators: Two Senior Staff and one Middle School Principal (who received Principal of the Year award) (One female and Two male)

From your administrative experience, what do you believe are effective characteristics of a supervising administrator?

Practicing administrators were interviewed face-to-face or through SKYPE

Implementation of Findings: The Development of Online Training Module

Outcomes

It is critical that school administrative interns have quality mentors. Mentoring is a primary focus in administrative preparation. The outcome of the survey results, interviews and literature review confirmed agreement on certain characteristics of mentors. Administrative interns stated that mentors should be “Organized, supportive, and willing to spend time working with intern” and “approachable, open communication, strong working relationship, both must be dedicated to helping you learn.” The data were used to design the content of training modules. These trainings will prepare mentors with essential skills to support educational interns and provide equitable opportunities as future administrators.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and Educational Implications

This study provides the foundation for colleagues in other geographic regions to conduct their own studies. This model informs the design and development of future high quality training modules for supervisors and others.

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