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Supporting Communication and Argumentation in Urban Science Education: Hip-hop, the Battle, and the Cypher

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Abstract

This paper is based on an exploration of communication and argumentation in urban science classrooms, and provides a description of the role that Hip-hop based education plays in supporting these major components of science education. The paper is intended to both support, and critique conventional uses of hip-hop based education, and provide insight into the rap battle and the hip-hop cypher; two under-focused upon aspects of hip-hop culture that have tremendous pedagogical potential.

Keywords: Urban Science Education, Hip-Hop, Battle, Cypher

INTRODUCTION

Much academic work that considers hip-hop as a tool for improving instruction has considered rapping about a topic, or using rap lyrics as text to be studied as the primary model of hip-hop based education (Hill, 2009; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002). This process usually involves the creation of raps (sentences that rhyme and/or have a particular cadence usually performed over rhythm,) that contain academic content and/or the use of lyrics from rap songs to become the anchors of classroom lessons (Powell, 1991). While these efforts to bring rap into the classroom reflect a step in the right direction in regards to utilizing

hip-hop as a tool for instruction, the use of rap lyrics as the sole piece of hip-hop based education has become such a widespread practice that it truncates the potential of hip-hop culture to truly reflect the complexities of both pedagogy and urban youth culture. Much of what is described as hip-hop based education is merely rap-based instruction that is misnamed as hip-hop. In this paper, I suggest that while rap is an artifact of hip-hop that holds much symbolic value in hip-hop culture, it neither represents the full spectrum of hip-hopness (being hip-hop), nor the potential of hip-hop to reframe teaching and learning.

Urban youth of color, who engage in the complex and multi-modal culture of hip-hop, are often forced to engage in classrooms where the instruction is mostly uni-modal and one-dimensional (Emdin, 2011). This fact, combined with larger issues related to poverty and societal bias, cause urban youth disengagement in classrooms, and leads to low scores on conventional markers of academic success that are indicators of achievement (Corley, 2003; Felice, 1981; Jencks & Phillips, 1998).

While the creation and analysis of rap text within classrooms shows an appreciation for hip-hop culture and advancement from conventional instruction (Dimitriadis, 2001), in too many instances, it merely uses rap as a way for youth to memorize information. This use of rap as a memorization tool calls forth archaic modes of instruction like rote learning and bastardizes the potential of a cultural art form whose legitimacy as a learning tool has yet to be fully explored. I argue that the use of rap as the singular way to support hip-hop based instruction, particularly with youth of color whose culture is largely based on oral traditions with deeper meanings than words (Alim, 2004; Smitherman, 1997), misrepresents hip-hop culture, and reflects a superficial rendering of hip-hopness.

In an effort to expand the potential of hip-hop based education, I argue for the study of aspects of the culture that have yet to be fully explored in the field of education. In addition, rather than focus on the use of rap text in subject areas like English or Social Studies (as is most customary), I suggest a focus on its potential in science education. The hip-hop based pedagogical approaches I present in this paper consider the social, symbolic,

and cultural capital that students bring into the classroom as the point from which pedagogy is birthed (Freire, 1970; Ladson-Billings, 1994). More specifically, the work validates urban hip-hop youth practices as a legitimate culture, and emphasizes the capital students bring to the classroom as hip-hop youth as a key to communication and argumentation in the science classroom.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework that guides this work is sociocultural in nature and considers the fact that urban youth of color have a distinct culture with its own unique schema and practices (Sampson & William, 1995). It considers that urban schools have their own unique culture that is not necessarily aligned to that of urban youth (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998). The work is also grounded in the basic understanding that culture exists, and is enacted within social fields (Bourdieu, 1993) that collide with each other as participants from different cultures interact to produce or reproduce social life (Giddens, 1984). When this collision or combining occurs, the extent to which the schema and practices of each social field blends seamlessly with the other is dependent upon the shared understandings of people from each culture (Williams, 1981). In the case of hip-hop youth and urban classrooms, the schema and practices of hip-hop and school rarely converge seamlessly. Therefore, it is imperative that we find a mechanism to facilitate connections or weak ties (Granovetter, 1982) between the culture of youth and school. Hip-hop based pedagogy serves as a facilitator of weak ties that may evolve into strong connections between youth and the subject matter over time.

HIP-HOP YOUTH IN URBAN SCIENCE CLASSROOMS

Hip-hop youth listen to and create hip-hop music, and engage in distinct hip-hop practices on a regular basis. These are youth who can be identified by their modes of talk and dress, but also their embodiment of distinct non-traditional characteristics in their everyday interactions (Kitwana, 2002). Urban youth who are

engaged in hip-hop are usually immersed in practices related to the four main components of hip-hop (rapping, b-boying, graffiti, and dee-jaying). While this paper could focus on any of these four aspects, it focuses on rapping for the purpose of expanding how that strand of hip-hop (despite its seeming oversaturation in education) has been used in a limited scope.

Communication, Argumentation, and Science Education

In contemporary science education, science talk and argumentation are two approaches to improving student understanding that consistently emerge as viable approaches to connecting them to the discipline. Brown (2005) has discussed the importance of using students' ways of communicating as a tool to expand their scientific vocabulary. In addition, Rivard and Straw (2000) have discussed the importance of both writing and talking science and their significance to scientific understanding. These studies, as well as the many others that consider scientific communication in the classroom (e.g. Ballenger, 1997; Crowder, 1996) ultimately serve to support the notion that deep communication in and about science can evolve into comfort with the subject. This work suggests that ideally, exchanges in the classroom that foster argumentation, active debate, complex thinking, deep questioning, the demonstration of mastery, and defending one's position with appropriate words and content knowledge supports true science (Driver, Newton, & Osborne, 2000).

In hip-hop, exchanges among rappers that support argumentation (i.e., active debate, complex thinking, and deep questioning) are the norm in a piece of the culture called the rap battle. In the rap battle, lyricists compete against each other and create impromptu raps that have to be coherent, insightful, and/or draw from research on the opponent in an off the cuff yet heated manner (Alim, Lee, & Carris, 2010). In these battles, participants stand before a crowd, present with followers and supporters behind or next to them, and debate against a peer while using past and present information to articulate an argument that debunks their opponent. This practice supports complex thinking, deep questioning, and keen observation about the environment.

Consequently, I argue that a rap battle structured classroom provides students with opportunities to express skills and talents that are ideal for learning science that would not be otherwise expressed in the classroom. By using language/structures from the battle, hip-hop discourse is brought into the classroom, and hip-hop youth are provided with incentives to research science concepts discussed in class. This process provides youth with opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of scientific concepts as they get opportunities to repetitively discuss and debate them.

Science Talk and the Cypher

The cypher is a hip-hop practice where participants stand in a circle and a number of them, who rap; take turns presenting/performing until all people who are present get an opportunity to participate (Hill, 2011). In cyphers, some participants rap while others provide background rhythms that are rapped to. Others support the rappers by providing feedback when they rhyme, or supporting their raps by cheering. During cyphers, the multifaceted nature of the cultural and verbal exchanges among hip-hop youth lead to the building of camaraderie (Emdin, 2011). As rappers take turns rapping, and other participants enact their roles, certain rules of engagement that are not formally stated, but are clearly understood by all participants, get enacted. Over the duration of a cypher, unwritten rules and established norms such as subtle words and gestures that alert the person who is rapping that it is time to pass the verbal baton are enacted. Other unwritten rules such as the supportive noise made at certain parts of a rapper's rhyme, and the filling in of words or phrases when a rapper is out of breath, are also abided by.

In certain cyphers, the exchange between rappers (who may have formerly been strangers) is so seamless that the entire process appears rehearsed to people who are not familiar with the process. In most cyphers, the person who takes the turn from someone else will reference the previous person's lines, and begin rapping immediately after the previous person ends. In these types of scenarios, the rhythm from handclaps or ambient noise produced by other participants continues seamlessly and serves as a backdrop to the fluid exchanges among performers/rappers. In

cyphers, rappers mix memorized lyrics, completely impromptu rhymes, and descriptions of their realities in a turn-by-turn sharing of talents and skills. In these cyphers, there are equal turns at talk, head nods by people who are present who are not rappers, cheers by participants, and a person or group of people providing the background music for the verbal exchanges.

Lessons from the Cypher

One of the major lessons from the cypher is its physical structure. The cypher dictates that participants are organized in a way that facilitates eye contact, and has participants being positioned just about equidistant from each other. Therefore, I argue that the ideal classroom should be structured in a way that allows students to be in close proximity to each other and the teacher. The cypher teaches educators that in order to facilitate exchange among participants, the classroom should be organized in a circle, and the teacher positioned in a way that includes him or her in the classroom/cypher structure and not at the helm of the classroom. The cypher also informs educators about the need to structure the class in a way that any student, at any given time can have the floor while engaging in different activities that support the smooth functioning of the classroom. For example, there has to be the space within the classroom for a student to be working on a classroom assignment while another one is conducting a lab, and another is doing research. This set up would be analogous to the cypher where a student is rapping; another is creating the beat that is being rapped to, and another is just watching and providing feedback to the rapper.

Another significant lesson for teaching that comes from the cypher is based on studies of rappers in cyphers. By studying the ways that rappers in cyphers interact with their peers, and understanding the distinct use of language within the cypher, much information is provided to the teacher about how to interact with students, and orchestrate communication among them. In cyphers, the rapper at the helm can be compared to the teacher. This person, at the moment when he or she is leading the cypher, often draws analogies from the immediate surroundings during a rap performance. In addition, the rapper consistently ensures that the

general emotion during the cypher is positive by making references to the words and actions of other members of the cypher during his rap. This person is also willing at any indication that another person wants to take the helm to allow that to happen.

Finally, the pace and volume of the rap is rarely consistent. In order to draw cypher participants into the rap, the use of voice is significant, and the voice emphasis on lines that the rapper perceives to be memorable is distinct. Usually, a more animated voice indicates to listeners that they should pay closer attention to a particular part of a rap during a verse. In urban science classrooms, it is useful for the teacher to engage in a similarly complex use of inflection and volume during a lesson.

APPROACHING GENUINE CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION FOR URBAN YOUTH

Unfortunately, in many urban schools that predominantly serve students of color, the types of instruction described above; that foster argumentation, and consider artifacts of hip-hop like the battle and cypher are rarely implemented. In these schools, the general perception of student participation, and the type of practices that a "good student" should be enacting are skewed (Emdin, 2009). Teachers of hip-hop youth perceive students to be actively involved, constructively participating, and behaving appropriately when they enact behaviors that under normal circumstances in students' out-of-school worlds would indicate a lack of interest. For example, ethnographic studies in urban classrooms show that in traditional urban science classes, students are commended for blindly following instructions outlined by the teacher, sitting quietly, and getting prescribed results to lab assignments (Emdin, 2010). Conversely, students who do not talk much in the class, and who spend the entire class period copying notes are generally considered by teachers to be well behaved while those who indicate a need or desire to engage (by using a lot of gestures and speaking loudly) are considered to be a distraction and reprimanded (Emdin, 2009).

I argue that viewing actions that normally indicate disinterest outside of the classroom as active involvement or

communication in the classroom creates a terrible confusion for both the student and the teacher, and limits the students' ability to be fully involved in science. Students begin to perceive that the expected behavior in the classroom is to not question, to be quiet, and to be passive. Consequently, students and teachers rarely get to the point where fluid communication and argumentation becomes a classroom norm. With the absence of communication and argumentation, the achievement gaps in science persist because students never get to the point where the subject matter becomes important enough to engage in with the same passion and excitement they express in hip-hop.

For students in urban science classrooms, who are for the most part largely influenced by, or immersed in hip-hop, the separation between their out-of-school and in-school worlds persists because educators fail to recognize the connections between students' cultural understandings and science (Barton, 2001). When the relationship between students and the teacher mirrors that of power wielders and the powerless, and when teachers position students' experience-based understandings as outside of school science, students cannot be expected to have an interest in the discipline. Furthermore, when the rule by force ideology that dominates urban science teaching, and the current ethos of "doing science work" instead of discussing and engaging in science continues to dominate urban teaching and learning, urban youth of color who are immersed in hip-hop are at a disadvantage.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

For many educators, approaches to science teaching and learning that utilize hip-hop culture may be perceived as unconventional, inappropriate, and even unrealistic. However, they are the key to connecting youth who have been marginalized from academic success to school. If science education is to satisfy the passions and interests of the hip-hop generation, educators must be willing to withstand the pressure to maintain approaches to instruction that historically have not met the needs of urban youth, and explore new hip-hop based pedagogies that are more reflective of student realities.

For urban youth of color who are deeply immersed in hip-hop, deep study of their culture, with the goal of identifying tools within this culture that may support transformative pedagogical practices is necessary for education reform. This requires moving into new arenas in both urban and hip-hop based education, accepting yet moving beyond rap based pedagogy, and moving into disciplines like science where the instruction is stoic while the discipline itself is deeply aligned to hip-hop.

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An Evaluation Study of an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) Program in an Urban City: Examining the Transfer of Knowledge and Leadership Practices

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of the Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) degree program in terms of transfer of knowledge and leadership practices. Based on a review of literature related to adult learning theories, EMBA programs, the importance of evaluation practices, and leadership practices, this study was designed to determine whether an EMBA education can lead to the transfer of knowledge at workplaces to demonstrate and facilitate an employee's leadership skills. Findings from this study showed that the curriculum and the transfer of knowledge were the most significant predictors of the use of leadership practices. Age and gender were found influential in the development of leadership skills. A significant finding was that curriculum was the most salient factor in determining the effectiveness of the transfer of knowledge and in promoting the use of leadership practices.

Keywords: leadership, evaluation, curriculum, adult education, EMBA education

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In the past few decades, as business corporations have evolved to meet the needs of globalization, technological development, and the rapid exchange of information, the demand for advanced management education has increased. To succeed in these complex environments, managers cannot rely solely on what they learned as undergraduates and on what has been required by their employers if they are to enhance their management skills as team leaders, coaches, and mentors. Life-long learning in business organizations is not limited to management skills but also includes developing leadership skills that focus on enhancing the ability to apply knowledge to innovation and real-world problem solving. To satisfy the needs of corporate employers, business schools have developed degree or non-degree programs, as well as custom programs for current and future business leaders.

Clark and Estes (2002) noted the difference in business fields between education and information, job aid, and training. The benefits of information, job aid, and training are that they support employees' learning of how-to knowledge; whereas the benefit of education is that it provides trainees with the knowledge to solve novel and unanticipated problems. From the perspective of business organizations, Master of Business Administration (MBA) or Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) programs are long-term business investments for ensuring that leaders develop a set of leadership skills and possess the strategic management foresight to manage their teams.

MBA and EMBA programs provide their graduates with returns on investment by contributing to their fast-tracking careers. However, there is little research regarding the relationship between transfer of knowledge and leadership practices and the extent to which participants apply that knowledge to practice and achieve organizational goals. One of the most important objectives of EMBA programs is to prepare middle- or senior-level managers to be outstanding managers, leaders, and professionals. While large amounts of money are spent each year for executive education to develop leadership competency, the

outcome has not been satisfactorily proved (Boyatzis & Saatcioglu, 2008).

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Organizations and individuals make significant financial and human resource investments into MBA/EMBA programs. This high cost of training and education has caused Human Resource Development (HRD) and training practitioners to focus on measuring whether these programs help their employees to close gaps in their management and leadership knowledge (Foreman, 2008). Today, the assessment of management training programs is not limited to overall satisfaction or knowledge level, but also includes the transfer of learning to behavior and leadership practices.

Many specialists have found that the Kirkpatrick model, which describes four basic level models (reaction, learning, transfer, and results), has been useful in evaluating professional educational programs (Clark & Estes, 2002). Management education should provide participants with an expansive reservoir of knowledge in learning situations, as well as the tools to solve real-life problems that lead to an immediate application of knowledge at their workplace. However, the application of knowledge and the outcome of knowledge in the Kirkpatrick four-level model have been neglected due to the great cost and effort expended by educators to evaluate the attainment of goals that are linked to participants' achievements in professional education (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

According to Barbara Carpenter, head of Thunderbird's EMBA program, customized EMBA programs have been launched and developed in response to students' changing interests and companies' needs (Hansen, 2008). Hannum and Martineau (2008) emphasized the necessity of participants' critical knowledge, awareness, and ability to apply learning toward behavioral changes after the completion of leadership development programs. Chang-Chien (2005) reported that the EMBA curriculum was found to be positively related to training

transfer at the workplace. Consequently, universities should examine whether their programs meet the needs of business corporations to prepare future innovative business leaders and whether the programs satisfy the motivation of students in terms of their immediate and long-term desire to become effective managers.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of EMBA degree programs in terms of learning transfer and outcome factors at a large private four-year university in an urban city. This study sought to measure the degree to which participants in their leadership programs were able to transfer classroom learning to actual workplace behaviors and increase leadership skills. It also evaluated whether the EMBA programs, whose goals were developing leadership capabilities, met their objective by promoting the application of practical knowledge and tools to real-world situations to satisfy employers' needs.

Specifically, this study explored how current EMBA students and graduates responded to four levels of evaluation based on the Kirkpatrick models and how they demonstrate their leadership practices at their workplace based on the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI; Kouzes & Posner, 1988). Employees' expectations regarding additional benefits as a result of completing the EMBA program were measured via an open-ended question.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Adult education theory has focused on differentiating itself from children's education. Most theorists agree that adults learn from situational experiences in their informal or incidental learning circumstances; however, they note the limitation of informal or incidental learning in terms of the extent to which adult students are ready to learn or are motivated to learn. Andragogy theory, which is a well- known theory of adult learning, is based on several assumptions. Many andragogy advocates have emphasized self-directed learning, immediate

application of knowledge, and cooperative learning with colleagues and facilitators (Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, J. M., 2007). There are several debates regarding adult learning theories; however, adult learning theorists are in agreement that adult learning requires intellectual or manual processes as a means for change, development, and growth for the acquisition of professional knowledge or skills.

As EMBA programs have proliferated in recent years, effective curricula have been required to meet employers' need for competent managers and innovative team leaders. Thus, business schools have developed improved courses that are more immediately relevant to their students' careers. However, there is still controversy about the quality of managers in business fields (Smith, 2007), and some researchers claim that there are still problems in training students to become effective managers in some areas such as in leadership capabilities.

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) have noted the importance of the evaluation process in checking the effectiveness of a program. Their evaluation process emphasizes how the program has contributed to an organization's objectives and goals, whether to continue or discontinue the program, and how to improve the program. Kirkpatrick's four- level model (reaction, knowledge, transfer, and results) is still the most frequently used evaluation method in leadership development programs since the system measures overall satisfaction, improvement of transfer of learning, and outcome in business sectors. Evaluation at the *results* level measures organizational growth, such as increased sales, productivity and profits, as well as personal growth, such as improved interpersonal communication skills/ human relations, the quality of work life, leadership, time management, and decision-making capabilities.

American companies spend over 100 billion dollars each year on training and development activities (Fareman & Ban, 1993). However, there are still doubts as to whether the financial resources were well spent toward achieving positive changes in individual and organizational behavior. Surprisingly, there are few systematic evaluation practices to test the linkage between

training and transfer of learning to behavior in the workplace. Newstrom (1986) claimed that too much money and attention has been spent on the design and delivery of programs and that little time and money have been allocated to evaluation practices for measuring the transfer of learning to the work environment. Likewise, there still has been little attention paid to assessing whether participants are changed in their attitudes, behavior, and performance through management education.

There have been arguments among academics and practitioners regarding evaluation practices. There is little empirical evidence linking the transfer of learning to changes in performance and there is limited guidance on how to conduct evaluations (Fareman & Ban, 1993). Over the past decades, public and private organizations have initiated the measurement of outcome factors to justify the effectiveness of the adult education or training programs; consequently, they have been interested in evaluating the impact of training programs. Evaluators in business corporations and private consulting companies have relied on the Kirkpatrick four-level evaluation to measure and improve organizational productivity and to enhance leadership capabilities.

In EMBA programs, few studies have examined evaluation practices in regard to transfer of knowledge and leadership abilities due to the perceived complexity of level3 (transfer) and level 4(results) in Kirkpatrick's (1994) four-level model. There has been debate regarding Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation in terms of feasibility and the fact that there is little empirical evidence to support the success of four-level evaluation in public or private sectors. However, Kirkpatrick's (1994) model is important in attempting to measure behavior change and outcomes for evaluating the success of the programs in adult education.

Kouzes and Posner have created wealth of practical suggestions, commitments, exercises, and examples of leadership behavior in many fields (Middlehurst, 1989). Their interest in leadership practices focuses on leaders' behavioral changes which instill motivation in their followers. They have stressed that leadership can be learned and developed through trial and error, people, and education in the process of managing and leading.

They have emphasized *soft skills* such as managing people (Sumner et al., 2006) through values, motivation, and encouragement rather than *hard systems* such as rules, controls and procedures (Middlehurst, 1989). However, some researchers have pointed out that both hard and soft systems are prerequisites for organizational success. Kouzes and Posner (2007) have proposed five guidelines to would-be leaders who want to take on the challenge of implementing exemplary leadership practices: *Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart*. These guidelines are invaluable in that the assessment process offers information to supervisors or managers about their strengths and weaknesses in terms of personality traits and ways to enhance their overall leadership capabilities. The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) developed by Kouzes and Posner (1988) has been widely used to measure leadership skills in business organizations. Despite some disputes regarding the five leadership practices, they are looked upon as a useful guide to academics and practitioners for thinking about leadership capabilities.

METHODOLOGY

This study explored how current students and graduates responded to the four levels of evaluation based on Kirkpatrick's (1994) model and how they demonstrated their leadership practices at their workplace based on Kouzes and Posner's (1988) framework. As an evaluation measurement was not created by Kirkpatrick, Chang-Chien's (2005) four levels (expectations, curriculum, work environment, and transfer of knowledge) as independent variables were applied to the conceptual framework of Kirkpatrick's four levels (reaction, learning, transfer, and results), and used as surrogates for Kirkpatrick's four levels. Kouzes and Posner's (1988) leadership practices were used as dependent variable (see Figure 1).

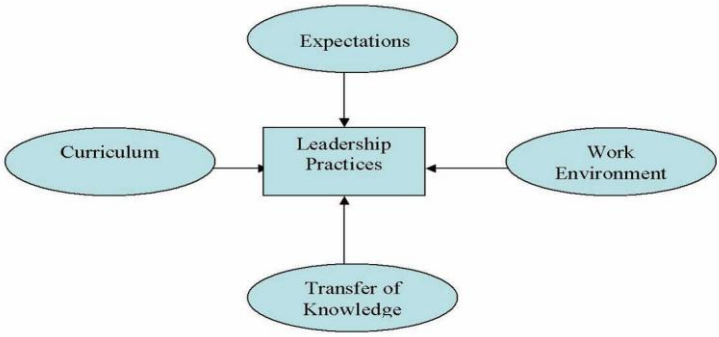

Figure 1. **The basic research design.**

Sample and Population

The sample consisted of 148 current EMBA students (43 "students") and recent graduates (105 "graduates") of EMBA programs at a large private university in Southern California, where the curricula cover both traditional programs and application of knowledge to develop leadership capabilities. The mean age of the respondents was 40.75 years, and they averaged 18.26 years of work experience. The majority of those of participants (86.0%) were male.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were administered to all participants: Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model modified by Chang-Chien (2005) and the LPI (see Figure 2). In addition, a demographic questionnaire was included to provide information regarding age, gender, and years of work experience. The two questionnaires were used as major instruments in this study after receiving permission from Chang-Chien and Kouzes and Posner.

The survey instrument, based on Kirkpatrick's (1994) evaluation model, was a questionnaire adapted and modified from an instrument developed by R. F. Chang (2002) that was later modified and translated into English for a doctoral dissertation study at the University of Idaho by Chang-Chien (2005). She

modified the instrument to evaluate the effectiveness of Taiwan's current EMBA programs. In her measurement expectations, curriculum, work environment, and training transfer were utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of the EMBA curricula and delivery.

Although her measurement levels are not exactly equivalent with Kirkpatrick's levels, Kirkpatrick's (1994) four-level framework was used as a benchmark for evaluation in her study (Chang-Chien, 2005). Chang-Chien conducted a pilot survey on the Internet using the translated questionnaire. Cronbach's alphas for sections 1 (expectations), 2 (curriculum), 3 (work environment), and 4 (training transfer) were .85, .81, .92, and .91, respectively. As the reliability of the instrument ranged from .81 to .96 in the pilot study, her measurement was used as the major instrument for this current study.

Covariates (Control Variables)

Leadership practices cannot be examined solely from Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation. For this current study, in addition to the variables of expectations, curriculum, work environment, transfer of knowledge, and leadership practices, demographic variables (age, gender, and work experience) were used as controls. This enables the determination of the contribution of the predictor variables above and beyond the contributions of age, gender, and prior experience.

Data Analysis

This study used descriptive and inferential statistical data analyses to measure the transfer of knowledge and leadership practices. All quantitative data were coded and prepared for computerized analysis via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS®), Student version 15.0. Zero-order Pearson product correlation, two-tailed independent samples *t* tests, analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Welch statistics, and hierarchical multiple regression analysis were conducted.

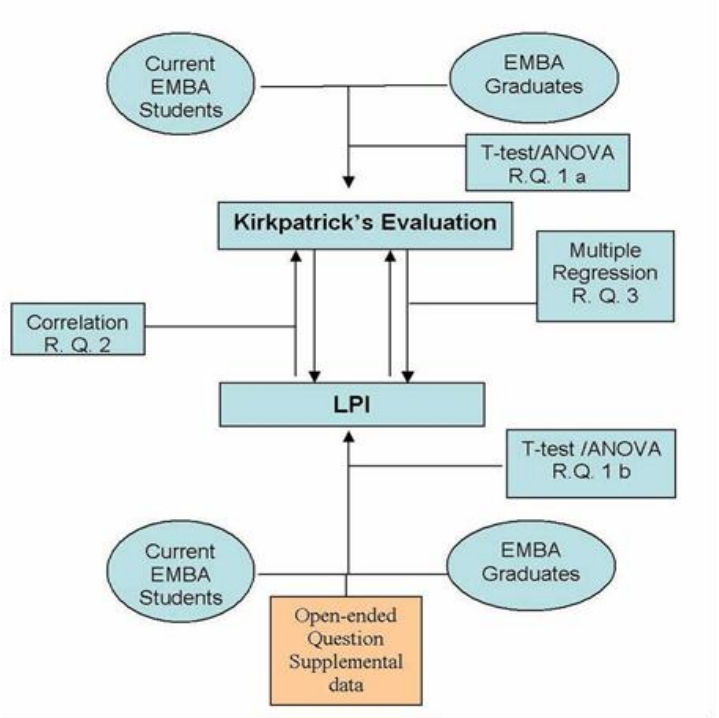

Figure 2. **The detailed research design.**

RESULTS

All leadership practices were significantly related to one another at the .01 level. Curriculum was significantly correlated with all leadership practices at the .01 level, while transfer of knowledge was not related to any leadership practices except to *enable others to act*, $r = .18$, $p < .05$.

Research question 1 asked: *Do current students and graduates of the EMBA program differ in Kirkpatrick's (1994) four-level evaluation scales as measured by expectations, curriculum,, work environment, and transfer of knowledge and Kouzes and Posner's (1988) five leadership practices (modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart)?*

It would be expected that two-tailed *t* tests of independent samples, presuming a normal distribution, would have approximately the same variance. The results of the *t* tests in the present study showed different group variances in some variables. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA with Welch's statistics was conducted because it is insensitive to equality of variances and similarity of sample sizes. The results of the ANOVA showed that *expectations* differed significantly between current students and graduates, $p = .05$, and that the between-group difference in *transfer of knowledge* was marginally significant, $p = .07$.

Results related to research question 1 showed that most of the leadership practice subscales, except *model the way,* were significantly different between groups (current students and graduates), indicating that graduate students were more likely to demonstrate leadership capacities after completion of the EMBA program. This result indicates that EMBA programs may improve the strategic skills and performance management of their graduates and increase their insight into their personal development as leaders. This is consistent with findings reported by London and Mone (1999) that EMBA programs promote leadership development.

Research question 2 *asked: To what extent are the four levels of Kirkpatrick's evaluation (1994) related to Kouzes and Posner's (1988) five leadership practices?*

Results of these correlation statistics for current students indicated that there were no significant relationships between Kirkpatrick's evaluation levels and exemplary leadership. However, curriculum was significantly associated with work environment $r = .55$, $p < .01$ and transfer of knowledge $r = .32$, $p < .05$.

These results for the graduates showed that exemplary leadership had significant correlations with all evaluation variables. The support for the hypothesis that evaluation scales and leadership practices are significantly correlated was found in the case of graduates.

Research question 3 asked: *Do the four levels of Kirkpatrick's (1994) evaluation predict leadership practices?* Hierarchical

multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict Kouzes and Posner's exemplary leadership practices as an outcome variable based on the responses of the four variables (expectations, curriculum, work environment, and transfer of knowledge) and the covariate variables (age, gender, and work experience) as predictor variables. As there was a significant difference between current students and graduates in exemplary leadership as mentioned in research question 2, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted separately for current students and graduates. There were no predictors found for current students; however, there were significant predictors found for graduates.

Results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis for graduates showed that the R^2 value (.527) indicates that about 52.7% of the variance in exemplary leadership was explained by the seven predictor variables. The β values indicate the relative influence of the entered variables; that is, curriculum had the greatest influence on exemplary leadership (β =.498, $p < .001$), followed by transfer of knowledge (β = .275, $p < .01$), gender (β = .203, $p < .05$), and age (β = -.341, $p < .05$).

Supplemental Data

There were 15 responses from current students and 33 responses from graduates. The results were as follows: 15 respondents expected to increase new knowledge and skills, 18 expected to gain social networks, and 14 expected to achieve career advancement.

When taking into account the limitation of this study, a potential challenge was sample size only if there were insufficient results. As the sampling frame for current students and graduates was limited to one EMBA program, a low response rate could reduce the statistical power. Thus, the ability to detect real differences between the two groups may have been affected by the small and unequal sample sizes.

The demographic information included age, gender, and work experience; however, additional data such as educational

background, certification, job category, and years in current position were overlooked in measuring leadership capabilities. Measuring leadership is complicated. It is possible that additional demographic information would have given a more holistic view of leadership skills and the effect that various demographic factors have on these skills.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Several implications emerge from the results of this study. First, curriculum appears to play the most significant role in predicting the use of leadership practices, reflecting a positive correlation. According to Robinson and Wick (1992), researchers have estimated that 70% of all leadership development occurs through informal, on-the-job experiences, while formal education programs contribute less than 10% to leadership development. Therefore, the finding of this study is important in pointing out that the role of formal education should be addressed because well-organized curricula are more likely to address the needs of business organizations in developing leadership. As with earlier formal learning theory, this study supports the importance of formal education.

Second, Ormrod (2006) noted the importance of delivery and practice in adult education. If the objective is application, teachers should focus instruction and assessment methods on activities involving real objects and hands-on measurements for discovery learning that requires fostering transfer, problem solving, creativity, and self-regulated learning. Curriculum was the most significant predictor in terms of the use of leadership in this study; this is important because it gives practitioners or administrators in business schools a strategy for promoting best practices for the transfer of knowledge in EMBA programs.

Third, the responses to the open-ended question support the practical needs of adult learners. Respondents' expectations included new knowledge/skills, access to broader social networks, and career advancement after the completion of their EMBA programs. This implies that adult learners are more likely to need

immediate achievement in a myopic way. The findings may guide administrators to consider how they can balance the curriculum by applying pedagogical and andragogical approaches.

Last, the outcome assessment study based on Kirkpatrick's evaluation levels focusing on the learning process was conducted in management education. The results of this study should encourage school administrators to conduct outcome assessment studies to determine what their students are learning and what blocks the school mission of preparing people to manage and lead (Boyatzis & Saatcioglu, 2008).

CONCLUSION

Ottoson (1995) stated that educators and learners should consider the process by acknowledging the value of education and understanding that application and daily work are related but not synonymous concepts or theories. Hoffman (1981) labeled application as a key factor in adult education. In management education, application is most often understood as putting theories, principles, concepts, and ideas into practice. It deals with what is feasible, adaptable, and workable rather than with theoretical concepts.

Adult learners are required to have contextual application knowledge, which entails flexibility. Glaser (1990) referred to a worker who demonstrates effective application of knowledge as a skillful thinker. However, application does not guarantee outcomes (Ottoson, 1995) in terms of how learners transfer what they have learned to novel workplace tasks or other situations.

This study examined the relationship between EMBA students' transfer of knowledge and leadership practices to the workplace. The study investigated the major characteristics of EMBA programs regarding expectations, curriculum, work environment, and transfer of knowledge—all factors that may impact leadership skills.

The findings of this study imply that universities are still an invaluable source of knowledge and learning to produce successful outcomes in adult education. In other words, the curriculum design has a positive effect on students' transfer of knowledge that is closely related to the use of leadership practices. The results for the open-ended question show that approaches that are less theoretical and more practical are more likely to be welcomed by EMBA students. However, management education programs must balance academic and practical approaches in order to offer specific step-by-step instructions using an algorithm and a heuristic way of learning. This would enable students to seek not only to improve their self-development for credentialed job opportunities but also to develop long-term visions to be outstanding leaders in a turbulent globalized society.

Few studies have examined evaluation practices based on Kirkpatrick's four-level model (reaction, learning, transfer, and results). By linking the level of expectations, curriculum, work environment, transfer, and leadership practices to covariate variables (age, gender, and work experience), this study provides an empirical investigation showing that developing leadership skills is not simple and that knowledge and skill should be in place to facilitate the process of developing leaders. The results of this study are a significant step toward predicting and explaining the leadership development process in business organizations through evaluating the effectiveness of executive education programs.

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Critical Perspectives on Urban Teaching and Learning: Four Projects in One Urban College of Education

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Abstract

This study encompassed four different projects implemented in one urban College of Education. Projects included discussions in the faculty diversity self-study group, teaching and learning about culturally responsive pedagogy in an early childhood methods class, the use of fieldwork as a site for student learning about educational change, and teaching and learning about critical literacy in professional development sessions conducted at an elementary school. Following the descriptions of individual projects, joint analysis of these projects is offered by using lenses from a four-dimensional critical perspective (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002; Van Sluys, Lewison, & Flint, 2006).

Keywords: Urban, Diversity, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Critical Literacy, Qualitative Pattern Analysis

"We were told that our cat had fleas; I had never seen a flea in our place, ever. But once you had the Borax down, then suddenly, every now and then you could see fleas hopping…

~Edward
Faculty Member

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This paper's purpose was to provide a reflective analysis describing four projects, all conducted within one urban College of Education, and collectively analyzed against a critical framework. What was truly unique about our work was that we've analyzed these projects on two levels encompassing both individual project analysis and cross college analysis. From our analysis, it was revealed that all projects pointed towards similar directions and through this paper, our aim was to share insights about problems encountered and uncovered and how we attempted to deal with these issues.

Our urban college of education has a strong mission statement concerning diversity. In 2007 a group of education faculty formed a self-study group focused on diversity. This group's discussions and subsequent actions were similar to putting Borax on a cat with fleas which emphasized racism and classism present but invisible, ignored, and/or denied. In-house research indicated that students gain knowledge of culturally-responsive urban education but have few opportunities to practice it (Peterman & Beebe, n.d.). An analysis of pre-service teachers' field placement evaluations (Thomas-Alexander, 2009) found no statistically significant differences between interns' positive ratings on a Likert scale of *experiences* in urban and suburban placement sites; however, some interns wrote

negative comments on evaluations about *being placed in urban schools*. Despite positive experiences, students expressed honest feelings by asking "Why would I request to go to the ghettos of [the city]?"; "I don't want to teach Black children."

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This paper was grounded in Critical Pedagogy and used a framework for analyzing interrelated dimensions of projects described (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002; Van Sluys, Lewison, & Flint, 2006).

Critical perspectives on pedagogy examine ways that unequal relations of power and privilege are entwined through interactions of teachers, parents, children, teacher educators, and pre- and in-service educators in school contexts and beyond (Apple, 2010). This requires critically examining perspectives and ideologies, both invisible and visible, frequently identified as "natural" (Anderson, 1989; Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007). Also relevant to critical pedagogical perspectives and practices is self-reflection engaged in by *all* participants. Children, pre- and in-service teachers, and teacher/researchers interrogate their histories, practices, and beliefs as well as those of others (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996; Rogers, 2003).

Lewison et al. (2002) and Van Sluys et al. (2006) provided a framework of dimensions for understanding varied critical approaches. These dimensions are: "disrupting the commonplace," a process of providing new lenses on taken-for-granted occurrences by problematizing them and raising questions; "interrogating multiple viewpoints" by bringing to the fore the "multiple and contradictory" voices of participants, particularly those often excluded from interactions where decision-making and other

activities of the powerful occur; "focusing on sociopolitical issues" by making visible "outside" forces in society and the ways they are embedded in learning interaction; and"taking action and promoting social justice" through agency in which participants use knowledge and understandings generated through collaboration, activity, and self-reflection to create greater equity.

METHODS

All projects were grounded in the concept of teacher as researcher and critical reflector (Craig, 2009; Milner, 2007). Qualitative means were used to analyze data collected in the form of recordings of discussions; written reflections by teachers and teacher education students; student presentations; teacher artifacts such as lesson plans and action research projects; children's artifacts; pre/post questionnaires; and evaluation protocols. Project analyses used multilayered pattern analysis (Gregory & Williams, 2000) and constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998) to identify patterns and themes within data. Our joint cross analysis used dimensions of a critical pedagogical framework (Lewison et al., 2002; Van Sluys et al., 2006).

Project Descriptions

This section provides description of each project and includes its goals, data, and individual analysis highlighting emerging themes (Falk & Blumenreich, 2005, pp. 117-118).

Project #1 - Exploring Diversity: Lessons Learned From an Education Faculty Self-Study Group in an Urban College of Education by Grace H. C. Huang

A group of faculty was formed through a study group, called The *Diversity Self-Study Group*. Project #1's goal

was to analyze the study group's discussions occurring during two years. Fourteen members from four of the college's departments and two offices attended bimonthly meetings. Group members included 4 African Americans, 9 European Americans, and 1 Asian American; 11 females and 3 males.

Emerging Themes

Programmatic fragmentation within the college. Participants highlighted lack of continuity in the college and lack of support for students' developmental processes in exploring diversity issues. Course offerings and content did not provide seamless connections for students to engage in and reflect on diversity. Courses lacked developmental design to progressively introduce diversity knowledge.

Faculty concerns about student "deficits" and their own knowledge and skills. Faculty described students as lacking diversity knowledge, ability to self-reflect, and motivation (e.g., emphasizing subject area content while ignoring diversity issues). Participants recognized students' learning was developmental. Faculty recognized they lacked experiences and confidence with diversity and were motivated to look for learning opportunities and resources to enhance skills and repertoire for teaching diversity.

Gap between urban mission and urban practices. As participants examined urban mission and practices, they discovered discrepancies despite a recent accreditation process. Incongruity was identified from students' work, feedback, and faculty teaching practices. Sam conveyed negative messages regarding urban teaching. He said, "I kind of told them a horror story. I was not selling this right. I would say: I cried in my car a lot; . . . I didn't think I was

going to make it. But I wasn't telling them how I grew. All I'm telling them is how bad it was and yet I still survived."

Discussion in relation to social, cultural, gender, and political issues. The 2008 election opened up dialogue concerning hidden issues of ethnicity, gender, and politics rarely discussed. A metaphor (fleas and borax) was used to describe this phenomenon (see the excerpt on p.3).

Taking action to address the issues. Action steps to address diversity issues were initiated including identifying programmatic fragmentation within the college and forming an ad hoc committee examining urban practices. The committee initiated discussion through college departments, faculty needs assessment, diversity presentations, the College's partnership conference, and then organized a publication team.

Project #2 - Kidwatching and Reconceptualized Home Visits by Dinah Volk

This project investigated an assignment where students observed and interacted informally with two children to practice culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002). Students who were recent immigrants were involved through an early childhood methods course spanning four semesters. Sixty-nine immigrant students were undergraduates and 14 were graduates; 21 were African American and 56 White, with 1 Jordanian American, 1 Egyptian American, 1 Indian American and 2 Chinese, and 1 Saudi.

Undergraduate students completed 20 hours in a classroom and graduates conducted a visit and interacted with families at home or in community settings.

Emerging Themes

Making strengths visible and valued. This assignment was effective by challenging deficit assumptions and giving skills and confidence for seeing children in new ways. Basheera discovered a child making books at home and asked him to share during a book-making project. Talia learned that a child helped his father with yard work and when the school participated in a park clean up, asked him to teach the class the names of tools he used.

Seeing race. Developing understandings of diversity followed differing trajectories. White students learned they could talk about race and other aspects of diversity. Susannah's comment was typical of the White students: "I learned that being open and honest is better than avoiding a 'pink elephant' that is lingering around the room that everyone sees that no one wants to talk about." African American students were practiced at talking about race but challenged to address race *as teachers.*

Seeing the teacher education students. The course instructor was challenged with listening to her students and acknowledging developing ideas and skills. It was easier to focus on pre-planned messages or issues of child development rather than responding to perspectives addressing complexities of power and privilege.

Helping mentors and parents see students as learners from parents. Students' implementation of family and community engagements was mixed. Some connected with families but difficulties arose for others: mentor teachers had trouble understanding the importance of the experience; parents were cautious; students felt they lacked language to communicate with teachers and parents. Despite challenges, graduates found interactions eye-opening and challenged

assumptions. The instructor and students reworked the assignment for effectiveness.

Project #3 – Fieldwork: A Space of Commitment and Quandry by Anne Galletta

This project took place at Lake Elementary School, a diverse K-8 school with families of African American, Asian American, Latino, and White, and Appalachian roots. During an after-school program, fieldwork involved teacher candidates supporting participatory action research with youth and the arts.

Emerging Themes

"Not entirely sure before about what exactly we would be doing." Beyond logistics, additional anxieties persisted. Teacher candidates were a diverse group – some from the city and graduates of Lake's district, others from inner ring suburbs, others from eastern, western, and southern suburbs. This journal reflected uncertainties and dissonance for being"not entirely sure before about what exactly we would be doing."

> Upon walking into Lake, I felt as if I were walking into a prison. It was my first time entering a school which had a metal detector. Stepping into the classroom and sliding the door shut behind me felt as if I were in a jail cell. Then the warden spoke. Turns out, he was no warden at all, at least not from what I could tell. He was the principal of the school, the father, who looked after all of his children. (White female student, 2011)

"This is a problem . . . it is apparent in our own backyard." Teacher candidates were encouraged to analyze

educational problems from multiple angles and apply ecological frameworks to understand how students were located within nested contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This journal entry was from a White male student:

> After the past few visits I have noticed how these students' experiences at school are similar to some of the readings we are doing each week in the online part of our course. These are also some of the struggles that many students across the nation face at urban schools . . . . The fact that these problems face some students and not others makes our education system unequal. (White male student, 2010)

This project stretched imaginations of teacher candidates and held great promise for important ingredients in growing prospective teachers. The need for more work connecting conditions of lives of urban middle and high school youth and educators to history and contemporary policy context was evident.

Project #4 - Nurturing Critical Literacy by Mary Gove & Kristine L. Still

Nurturing Critical Literacy was a multiyear project leading urban teachers in on-site professional development sessions developing Critical Literacy. Urban teachers explored themes of diversity and multiculturalism and ecology through action research.

Emerging Themes

Breaking the status quo. The status quo was expressed by two teachers during a professional development session: each verbalized they would not incorporate books like *The Other Side* by Woodson, telling the story of a possible

friendship between a White girl and an African American girl over a fence separating their yards. Teachers expressed their first and second graders "loved each other" and they did not want to disrupt this perception. A very skilled literacy coach participant explained how she insightfully used *The Other Side* to teach a class of African American children. It was a powerful moment presenting a "new frame" for talking about interactions between culturally diverse groups of people. This emerged from a teacher participant rather than suggested by literacy professors facilitating the session.

Seeing life through new lenses. One team used books about children displaced to the U.S. by war specifically, *The Color of Home* by Hoffman and *Angel Child, Dragon Child* by Surat. Teachers reported after reading and discussing each story that it would be valuable to have children from other countries share stories with native born second graders. The native born second graders developed interview questions for students from Kenya and Somalia. Students realized while from different backgrounds they shared similarities. Honesty of student interviewers and interviewees opened barriers and newfound acceptances and understandings flourished.

Walking through life in others' shoes. One team read *Grandfather's Journey* by Say to a class of special education children. Students did not realize a person could move from one country to another and want to be in both places. Children dialogued about how transient people view things differently than those who stay in one country.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

We used a framework of inter-related dimensions (Lewison et al., 2002; Van Sluys et al., 2006) to cross analyze these four projects.

Disrupting the commonplace. In-house research (Thomas-Alexander, 2009) revealed gaps between the mission of our college and negative comments of prospective teachers. Issues emerged when commonplace views of race, culture, gender, and politics were challenged and teaching and research practices examined. Concerns of the college were seen as unpacking the institution's strengths as well as its rigidity, lack of self-examination, and hierarchical relationships.

Considering multiple viewpoints. All projects revealed teachers and students struggling to recognize multiple perspectives. Pedagogical challenges encouraging voices of all were central as was nurturing abilities to listen and see others.

Focusing on the sociopolitical. All projects focused on the sociopolitical. Helping teachers and students understand educational implications and individual bias through systemic analysis of societal power and privilege has been reported in other studies as researchers, faculty, students, and teachers sometimes constructed insights and colluded to avoid issues (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Marx, 2006).

Taking action. The self-study group explored teaching practices and became an action-oriented group by coordinating presentations and workshops emphasizing diversity.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

Within each project, discussions highlighted the need for safe learning spaces urging others to critically reflect and interrogate practice. We uncovered a few such participants we called *trailblazers,* working to transform negative, quietly resisting attitudes about urban teaching into energizing,

healthy interactions. These included members of the self-study group examining teaching practices and spearheading initiatives to engage faculty and staff in dialogue, the few prospective and in-service teachers in the *Kidwatching* project incorporating into their lesson plans an understanding of the link between culturally responsive teaching and achievement, the two teachers in the *Nurturing Critical Literacy* study engaging immigrant school mates from Somalia in talking about their experiences before and after coming to the U.S. to break down barriers between children from differing cultures, and the "pioneers" in the *Fieldwork* project hoping and planning to create change.

Each project engaged participants in social action although a few participants held a transformationalist orientation like the trailblazers. Each of the four projects constructed a more sophisticated understanding of cultural diversity, change, and children's achievement.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This paper suggested the need for similar cross-college collaborations investigating different aspects of individual institutions from a critical perspective. Living up to mission statements and diversity goals often means change needs to be programmatic and institutional, curricular, and structural. Doing so makes it imperative to have critical and ongoing analyses and dialogues spanning programs which can be mined for insights into challenges and action plans and which provide directions for deep-seated change going beyond the "tweaking" of accreditor-approved programs. This collection of projects pinpointed the need to delve further in bringing a critical lens to preparation for prospective and in-service teachers in urban contexts.

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All manuscripts submitted to the Yearbook of ULTR are blind-reviewed by at least three members of the Editorial Review Board. For acceptance and publication in the Yearbook of ULTR, manuscripts must be recommended for publication by at least two of the three reviewers. The review process generally takes about three months from the submission due date.

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2. The manuscript title and abstract should appear in the body of the manuscript. To facilitate the blind review process, no authors' names or institutional identifiers should be noted in the manuscript. If they are included in the paper, the manuscript will be returned to the author(s) without a review.
3. The recommended manuscript length is approximately 1,500 to 3,000 words.
4. Figures, tables, charts, and graphs must be camera ready.
5. All manuscripts must conform to the stylistic guidelines of the most recent publication manual of the American Psychological Association.
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2. The manuscript's content is of high interest to professors, administrators, researchers, teachers, and other practitioners in urban learning, teaching, and research.
3. The content of the manuscript is current and/or innovative and adds to the body of knowledge about urban learning, teaching, and/or research.
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6. The manuscript is free of biases/stereotypes.
7. The manuscript has correct calculations, figures, graphs, and/or tables.
8. The manuscript is of the recommended length (approximately 1,500-3,000 words).

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