

Creating a Vision for Leadership: The University of Missouri and the University of the Western Cape Partnership

Carole Murphy
Kathleen Sullivan Brown
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Harold Herman
University of Western Cape

Osman Ozturgut
University of Missouri-St. Louis

This article describes a relationship between two universities that has resulted in a project to help disadvantaged principals in economically repressed areas of South Africa. More than 15 years ago, in the midst of a deeply divided society, the University of Missouri System made a momentous decision to support a Black university in Bellville, a suburb of Cape Town, South Africa called the University of the Western Cape (UWC). This support was important because UWC has prepared many of the Black leaders in South Africa, individuals who participated in the dismantling of the apartheid system.

While the United States was disinvesting in South Africa, the University of Missouri stood firm in its support of the University of the Western Cape. From its inception, the partnership has sponsored numerous faculty exchanges and shared resources and ideas. In this article we will discuss the development of a leadership academy for school principals in South Africa. Through this writing we share with the readers the problems and concerns of developing such a relationship.

After 4 years of building relationships to support the project and piloting leadership activities, funding was finally secured to sustain the project in the summer of 2005. This funding will give the writers an opportunity to gather primary data on the effects of professional development and/or training for principals as it relates to student achievement. Since there is very little data in the literature regarding the connection between the training of school principals and student achievement, this is a significant project for leadership both in the United States and South Africa.

This article describes a relationship between two universities that has resulted in a project to help disadvantaged principals in economically repressed areas of South Africa. More than 15 years ago, the University of Missouri System made a momentous decision to support a Black university in Bellville, a suburb of Cape Town, South Africa called the University of the Western

Cape (UWC). While the United States was disinvesting in South Africa, the University of Missouri stood firm in its support of the University of the Western Cape. From its inception, the partnership has sponsored numerous faculty exchanges and shared resources and ideas. This support was important because UWC has prepared many of the Black leaders in South Africa, individuals who participated in the dismantling of the apartheid system.

In 1999, the University of Missouri received a 4-year USAID grant entitled the Tertiary Education Linkage Project (TELP). As part of the School's Organizational Culture and Change section, a vision was jointly conceived by U.S. and South African educators for the establishment of a leadership academy to provide training, professional development, and mentoring for South African K-12 school administrators. As stated in the literature, the development of the Leadership Academy was seen as an important step in the preparation of educational leaders and effective schools (Barth, 1988; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 2001). The concept of the Leadership Academy is discussed later in this article.

For many years South Africa has experienced a severe shortage of teachers, classrooms, and other educational services. The political changes involved in moving away from government-sanctioned apartheid added tensions to the already deeply divided society, and the educational system itself was one of the hallmarks of a racially segregated country (Husen & Postlewaite, 1994). A partnership under these circumstances was a real leap of faith that education could bring about change and improvement, but because improving the "professional status of educators" was one of the 11 stated principles of South Africa's national education policy, the dialogue continued.

Early Development of the Partnership

During the first year of the TELP project, a team of faculty from the University of Missouri and the University of the Western Cape gathered at the University of Missouri-St. Louis to discuss and plan the future of the project. Involved in this initial discussion were Dr. Harold Herman from Western Cape; Dean Bernard Oliver, University of Missouri-Kansas City; and Dr. Carole Murphy and Dr. Kathleen Sullivan Brown of the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

The project took life and focus when Dr. Herman visited the fall conference of the Missouri Satellite Leadership Academy. The Missouri Satellite Leadership Academy is an organization that provides long-term, close-to-home professional growth activities for school leaders. Using the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards as the program goals (see the Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO] website address for ISLLC), participants have a unique professional development opportunity through school improvement, individual professional growth, collegiality, and personal skill development (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MDESE], 2003). At this leadership conference, sponsored by the MDESE under Dr. Doug Miller, the director of professional development for the State of Missouri, Dr. Herman saw an exemplary leadership academy which fosters a highly successful mentoring program and, by definition, becomes a "collaborative work culture" (Fullan, 2001, p. 82).

Returning to South Africa after spending a year as a distinguished visiting professor in the United States, Dr. Herman was "greatly disturbed by the deep erosion of the culture of teaching and learning" in his country. He felt that educational leaders were embattled within the historically disadvantaged communities of South Africa and were in desperate need of help.

School leadership, especially in the poorer townships, was a chronically neglected area of the educational system. He began preparing the groundwork for establishment of a leadership academy that would address the pressing need for training of school leaders and aspiring school leaders in management and leadership roles. The academy would also provide a mentoring program that could help embattled principals by promoting “collaborative teams” (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 26) and providing for individual as well as organizational growth. The University of the Western Cape, widely referred to as a “Peoples” university, has a proud tradition of engaging and responding to the needs of disadvantaged communities. This would be one of its biggest challenges (Herman, 2002a) because of the difficulty as Fullan (2001) described of “unlocking the mysteries of living organizations” (p. 46).

The Missouri Satellite Leadership Academy (Academy) was started in 1985 and was based on the work of Roland Barth (1990). The mission of the Academy is to positively impact student performance by inspiring and developing highly effective school leaders. In July 2005, the Academy began its twenty-first year of existence. The vision of the Academy is to collaboratively create opportunities for members of the educational communities to seek high levels of learning and performance for all. The goals of the Academy are

1. *Professional Growth*. Participants improve their education leadership skills and knowledge.
2. *School Improvement*. Participants use validated change strategies and practices to strengthen their own school improvement efforts.
3. *Collegiality*. Participants will establish a network among themselves to encourage and support each other in clarifying their roles and implementing changes.
4. *Continuous Improvement*. Participants are encouraged to be life-long learners and realize that improvements are essential characteristics of effective school administrators.

The Academy is a statewide, year-long program where administrators meet for a minimum of 18 days per year. Regional meetings are held throughout the year at one of the nine Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDC). Participants sign up for the program at their nearest RPDC. Four times a year, the approximately 200 Missouri administrators come together at the Lake of the Ozarks to share experiences and participate in learning communities. In 2004 the Academy was selected by Stanford University as the second best professional development program for principals in the United States (D. Miller, Director of Professional Development, DESE, personal communication, 2005).

Beginning a Dialogue among Educational and Governmental Leaders

In March, 2001, Dr. Doug Miller, director of professional development for the State of Missouri, and Dr. Tom Hensley of the University of Missouri-St. Louis, traveled to Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape to explain to local educational leadership constituencies how leadership academies functioned to support school leaders in Missouri. Despite the political complexities and the fractious nature of leadership development in the Western Cape township schools, the idea was received favorably.

The Missouri Leadership Academy model of collegial development fits well with the needs of South African principals who receive no formalized training before assuming their administrative roles. Collegial development is important because it allows participants to work in groups to share successful practices and to learn from each other. Members of the Academy also

have the opportunity to participate in the design of the curriculum. Williams (2002) stated that educators in South Africa have differing levels of competencies and expertise. Leadership development programs that recognize these differences are required. He also stated the “transformation of the South African educational system since 1994 has resulted in what one school principal referred to as ‘policy overload.’ In an effort to deal with the transformational initiative, educators have generally become strained and spent, and increasingly unmotivated and frustrated” (p. 92). The Missouri model provides the support necessary to administrators to prevent such burnout.

Dr. Herman enlisted the help of his colleague, Dr. Clarence Williams, another faculty member from the University of the Western Cape. Dr. Williams was asked to sponsor Miller and Hensley during their visit to South Africa. He prepared an extensive itinerary that included conversations with 64 individuals representing 17 entities such as schools, universities, government agencies, non-government organizations (NGO’s), consultants, and labor unions. Hensley & Miller (2001) wrote, “Our intent was not to bring a model of school leadership for the Western Cape to adopt,” but to introduce the concept of principal academies.

Administrator Certification in South Africa

Historically, in South Africa, certification is not necessary for a teacher to move into an administrative position in a school. The normal route is to be a teacher, a head of a department, a deputy principal, and then a principal. In some cases, especially after the flight of administrators into retirement during the rationalization process in the 1990s, teachers were moved into administrative positions with no prior training in administration. Herman (2002a, 2002b) and Williams (2002) felt strongly that the professional development being given Missouri principals was needed by teachers who are moving into administrative roles without any type of preparation. The point of establishing an Academy in South Africa is to give teachers who are moving into an administrative role the background they need to be successful. The South African Leadership Academy, although modeled after the Missouri Satellite Leadership Academy, will have to be developed by the participants if it is truly going to meet their individual needs.

When describing the more formalized certification process in Missouri, Hensley and Miller were careful to honor the history of educational leadership in South Africa and not make recommendations for a parallel certification process for school leaders. However, there seemed to be a general agreement that a separate process for certifying school administrators in South Africa would be desirable given the ambitious goals of the country’s new educational policy.

Influence and Role of the ISLLC Standards

Since Missouri is one of the original partner states involved in the development of the ISLLC standards for school administrators in the United States, the role of the Interstate School Leaders’ Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders was discussed and an article about the ISLLC Standards was distributed. Formed in 1996, ISLLC was a consortium of educational associations that

worked cooperatively to establish an education policy framework for school leadership...based on the premise that the criteria and standards for the professional practice of school leaders must be grounded in the knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning. The purpose of the ISLLC Consortium was to provide a means

through which states could work together to develop and implement model standards, assessments, professional development, and licensing procedures for school leaders. The overarching goals of ISLLC were to raise the bar for school leaders to enter and remain in the profession, and to reshape concepts of educational leadership. (CCSSO, 2003)

The ISLLC standards are now in use in at least 35 U.S. states. Missouri, as one of the states that assisted in the development process, used these six broad standards as the basis for the creation of its Leadership Academy. Each seminar given by Hensley and Miller in South Africa included recurring references to the historical, political, and professional perspectives of the Missouri Leadership Academy and the ISLLC philosophy of embedding school leadership in knowledge of teaching and learning. Throughout these discussions, the length of time (15 years) for the development of the Missouri program and the original limited scope—a peer mentoring and support group for administrators—were stressed. One had to keep in mind that the South African Constitution was only 10 years old at this time, 5 years younger than the Missouri Leadership Academy. The ISLLC standards can be used as a model from which South Africa can build its own standards.

Hensley and Miller found that a primary political consideration was the issue of equity with the inevitable dilemma of quantity versus quality dominating a region with limited resources. Some circuit managers (state department personnel) offered opportunities for growth in leadership while others did not. Some schools provided a culture that encourages personal professional growth while others did not. Computers played a major role in some schools and in others technology was sparse. Government initiatives were limited and a feeling of distrust extended towards the state department. Resentment also surfaced regarding the government's awarding contracts to NGOs and paying individuals with funds that could have gone to schools. Clearly political, economic, and social factors in the Western Cape in 2001 contrast with the generally supportive context in which the Missouri Leadership Academy was formed in Missouri in 1985.

In their report of June 25, 2001, Hensley and Miller observed that there was general acceptance of the idea of the leadership academy, that there were other initiatives that could form the basis of collaboration, and that equity and political issues remain major obstacles to leadership development in the region.

After careful consideration, Hensley and Miller (2001) recommended that the time was right for the initiation of a leadership academy. Further, they said:

Participants must be screened and selected carefully, and initial goals must be realistic, for it is crucial that this first attempt to establish an academy be successful. Skeptics will question the value of the academy just as they did in Missouri. A strong leadership core built upon school leaders will be essential to maintain a positive and consistent direction for the academy and at the center of this core should be an individual leader who is trusted and respected throughout the province.

Developing Support during Political Transitions

After Hensley's and Miller's departure from South Africa, Drs. Herman and Williams met to strategize how to proceed to get full local support to establish the Academy. Unfortunately, there was great political uncertainty and changes of leadership in the Western Cape government and Ministry of Education that required careful consideration in the context of planning and stakeholder participation. A new political coalition took over the Western Cape

provincial government at the end of 2001 and a new minister of education and superintendent general of education were appointed. Herman and Williams continued to hold conversations with numerous individuals from stakeholder groups in order to gain support for the project.

In October 2001, Herman wrote a proposal to the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa to fund a project on Leadership Development in Schools. The idea was to get funds to assist research done through TELP on the Leadership Academy, but more particularly to focus on the school leadership cadre and professional development of teachers in the Western Cape. The NRF awarded R60,000 (about \$10,000 U.S.) for the project, which focuses on school-based interviews on leadership development.

Continued Faculty Exchanges

On September 30, 2002, Dr. Clarence Williams, University of the Western Cape, and Mr. Edwin Jansen, Principal of Kasselsvlei Comprehensive Secondary School, came to the University of Missouri-St. Louis to participate in the TELP Project exchange and to further their understanding of the leadership preparation in Missouri. Dr. Williams and Mr. Jansen spent 2 weeks attending academy meetings and visiting administrators who had participated in academy activities and their schools. To help Williams and Jansen understand the Missouri Professional Development for Leadership program, a flow chart was designed (Figure 1). Each piece is like that of a puzzle. Each piece depends on the other, and when they are put together they give one a clear picture of stakeholders that need to be involved in a systemic leadership preparation program. Faculty exchange visits and email conversations contributed toward developing a similar overview of leadership development stakeholders in South Africa.

On October 16, 2002, another leadership team consisting of Dr. Carole Murphy, chair of the Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and Dr. Beverly Nance, director of the St. Louis Principal's Academy, traveled to Cape Town, South Africa to conduct additional workshops on leadership for approximately 75 participants throughout the country and to provide expert testimony regarding leadership academies.

Upon the arrival of Murphy and Nance, a planning meeting was first held to discuss lessons learned from previous exchanges and to design a plan that would further the initiation of a leadership academy in South Africa during this visit. Attending this meeting included: Murphy, Nance, Herman, Williams, and Mr. Joe September, the newly designated coordinator of the TELP Project.

According to Mr. September, historically there has always existed a need for institutionalized, comprehensive training of K-12 administrators of public educational institutions in South Africa. In addition, very little time, energy, and finances are spent by South African educational authorities on in-service training or mentoring of the heads of K-12 institutions (September, 2002a).

After discussing the needs of the participants at the in-service training given by Murphy and Nance, and after surveying a number of principals in the Cape Region, it was decided that training for principals would need to cover the following content: (a) organizational leadership and management, (b) instructional and curriculum leadership, (c) human resources management and leadership, (d) financial management and leadership, and (e) community leadership.

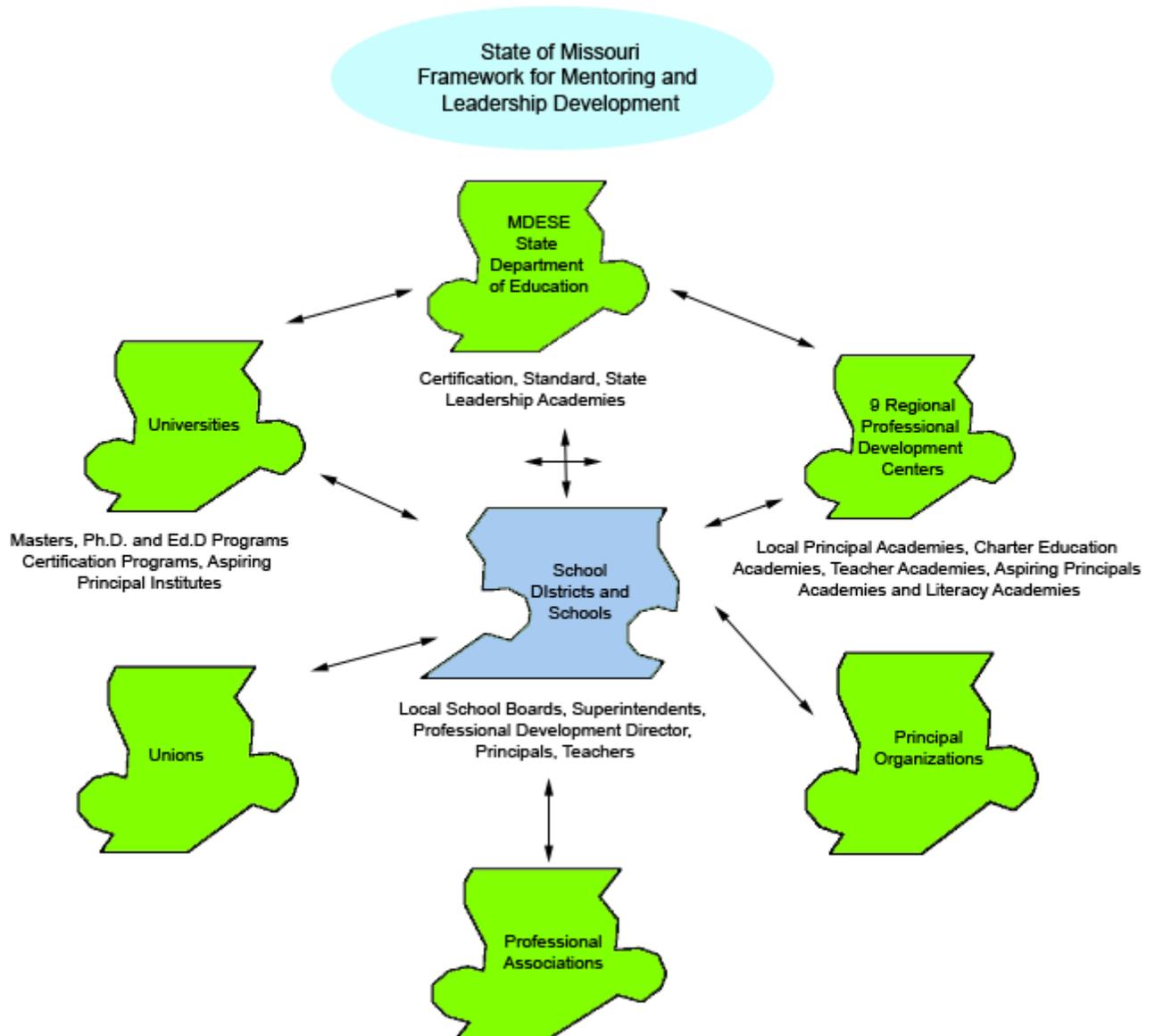


Figure 1. State of Missouri framework for mentoring and leadership development.

September, having been an administrator in a disadvantaged South African school, felt that the training program should contain generic content; however, special consideration also needed to be given to the unique context within which particular schools have to function. For example, township schools, rural schools, and special schools have their own unique situations that must be dealt with by any academy. Because of this, it would be important to allow participants in the academy to give input into the course content. This would enable participants to feel that the course content is relevant to their particular needs and that it addresses the challenges they have to face in the course of a normal workday.

A major challenge for South Africa's schools is the dearth of aspiring principals. Over the last 5 years the educational authorities have embarked on severe staff cutbacks due to

national directives. Schools in advantaged areas responded by massively increasing their school fees. This is not a possibility for schools located in disadvantaged areas where unemployment rates are above 50%. This lack of funding means that teachers in these disadvantaged areas have 45 to 60 students in one classroom. This causes teachers to feel burned-out and ineffective. A major goal of any leadership academy in South Africa would be to address these motivational issues. Addressing these relevant issues would help in the process of recruiting new administrators.

Lack of financial resources extends to all phases of K-12 education and must be dealt with by K-12 administrators in South Africa, as in other educational settings. Many of the South African schools are old and require funds for repair. Some township schools experienced new safety and security problems and have found it necessary to hire security staff. The Western Cape Education Department openly acknowledged that they are aware that the amount allocated to particular schools is inadequate for the effective running of the school.

Regardless of these problems, each new generation of children must be taught, and schools must continue to do the best they can. With these challenges in mind, it was decided that the two workshops scheduled would focus on effective dialoguing. This is a system of mentoring discussed in a book by Ellinor and Gerard (1998) entitled *Dialoguing: Rediscover the Transforming Power of Conversation*. While dialogue does not remedy the problem of scarce resources, it does promote the more effective and efficient use of existing resources by allowing input from all stakeholders.

Presently, approximately 75 principals and key stakeholders who attended the workshops are participating in a survey that asks for their response to these and other questions of importance:

1. Is the establishment of a Leadership academy in the Western Cape a vision that needs to be pursued?
2. What benefits could the establishment of a Leadership academy have?
3. Who should be served by a Leadership academy?
4. Who could be involved in the establishment and management of a Leadership academy?

It is imperative that stakeholders in any such collaboration be involved in all areas of planning and needs assessment and for continual development of their sense of ownership of the process. It is no less than a miracle that all stakeholders participated in the two workshops given by UWC in October 2002.

Potential for Learning about International Dimensions of School Leadership

Barth (1988) and more recently Lambert (1998) and Senge (2000) have supported the idea of mentoring and leadership academies as a way to help public school administrators do a better job. In the United States every state has some type of certification process and most states have academies to support the professional growth and development of administrators. Creating a new system of academies in South Africa could provide a wealth of baseline research opportunities, leading to a major contribution to the literature on administrator preparation. In addition, this project will support South Africa in its attempt to improve education for all children at a time when “education for all” is a clarion call throughout the continent of Africa.

Project members feel that funding must be secured as soon as possible to enable the project to maintain momentum. Another grant will be submitted to USAID, as well as other

funding sources. The University of the Western Cape should remain the keeper of the vision, and stakeholders should be heard and their input acknowledged. In addition, research data should be kept from the inception of the program and a discussion begun regarding how this research should be gathered so that it is reliable and valid. Last, but not least, the association among the University of the Western Cape, the University of Missouri System, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Western Cape Education Department should continue and be nurtured for the mutual benefits in learning about the development of school leaders for our global society.

In the summer of 2005, the Shuttleworth Foundation offered their help in funding the South African Leadership Academy for the next 3 years. This will give the Academy the opportunity to secure additional funds and gather the primary data that has the possibility of making a connection between professional development for leaders and student achievement. Through the hard work of Herman and Williams, the Academy has now received the support of all stakeholders and is being housed at the University of the Western Cape.

Lessons Learned

Working internationally is always an interesting experience because of the differences in cultures and the ways things are handled. Below are some of the lessons learned over the past 5 years:

1. There is no formal preparation of school principals in South Africa.
2. There are no set standards for school principals in South Africa.
3. Working with developing nations and their political issues takes time. Stakeholders are suspicious of each other's motives and outsiders because of the former apartheid government.
4. One must deal with deep-seated feelings and emotions that have been created by apartheid.
5. Missouri has a quality model for training principals that can be used by South African principals.
6. Networking is a concern globally.
7. When surveyed, topics of concern for principals are similar in both the United States and South Africa.
8. Developing the Leadership Academy not only addresses education and quality leadership in schools, but also can address the economic and social development of South Africa.

Hopefully this will only be the beginning of a long and productive relationship for both parties concerned. Now with the initiation of the South African Leadership Academy in 2006 we can begin the collection of data to support the need for professional development for leaders. This data will give credence to the money being spent on professional development for leaders.

About the Authors

Dr. Carole Murphy is currently a facilitator for the Missouri Satellite Leadership Academy and the chair of the Educational Leadership Division, University of Missouri, St. Louis. She holds the rank of associate professor and her areas of expertise are leadership, brain research, and curriculum and instruction. She is striving to connect professional development for administrators and school improvement.

Email: carole@umsl.edu

Dr. Harold Herman is the former dean of the College of Education at the University of Western Cape. He is well known in the area of comparative education and has given a number of presentations in the United States. He is the driving force behind the creation of the Leadership Academy in South Africa. His dream is to provide professional development that will facilitate school improvement.

Email: hherman@uwc.ac.za

Dr. Kathleen Sullivan Brown is an associate professor in the Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Her area of expertise is in policy research. She is active in the Holmes Partnership and is interested in Professional Development Schools.

Email: kathleen_brown@umsl.edu

Dr. Osman Ozturgut is ESL program coordinator at the China Incarnate Word University, Guangzhou, China. Dr. Ozturgut has just completed his doctorate degree in Higher Education from the University of Missouri, St. Louis. His research area is comparative and international education. Dr. Ozturgut is an expert in the area of Sino and U.S. education and program development.

Email: osmanozturgut@umsl.edu

References

- Barth, R. S. (1988). Schools: A community of leaders. In A. Lieberman (Ed.), *Building a professional culture in schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Barth, R. S. (1990). *Improving school within: Teachers, parents and principals can make the difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO]. (2003, February). *Interstate school leaders licensure consortium (ISLLC)*. Retrieved May 15, 2006, from www.umsl.edu/~mpea/Pages/AboutISLLC/AboutISLLC.html
- Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO]. (2000). *Standards based professional*

- development for school leaders*. Washington, DC: CCSSO and Pew Charitable Trust.
Retrieved from the CCSSO Web site: <http://www.ccsso.org>
- DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work. Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Ellinor, L., & Gerard, G. (1998). *Dialogue: Rediscover the transforming power of conversation*. John Wiley and sons Publishers.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hensley, T., & Miller, D. (2001, June 25). *Report to participants: TELP Visit to Cape Town, South Africa*. Tertiary Education Linkage Project Report: University of Missouri.
- Herman, H. (2002a, April 10). Tertiary Education Linkage Project (funded by USAID) Report: University of the Western Cape and University of Missouri.
- Herman, H. (2002b, October 24). *A Vision of a leadership and professional development, Academy for the Western Cape*. Tertiary Education Linkage Project Report: University of the Western Cape and University of Missouri.
- Husen, T., & Postlewaite, T. N. (1994). *International encyclopedia of education* (2nd ed.). Oxford, England: Pergamon Press.
- Lambert, L. (1998). *Building leadership capacity in schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MDESE]. Retrieved from <http://dese.mo.gov/divteachqual/leadership/index.html>
- Senge, P. (2000). *Schools that learn*. New York: Doubleday.
- September, J. (2002a, June 10). *Leadership and management training. A special case: The disadvantaged school*. Tertiary Education Linkage Project Report: University of the Western Cape and University of Missouri.
- September, J. (2002b, November 5). *School leadership development in the Western Cape: An investigation into the establishment of a leadership academy in the Western Cape. A progress report on development of issues related to the process towards establishment of a leadership academy*. Tertiary Education Linkage Project Report: University of the Western Cape.
- September, J. (2002c, December 9). *Leadership academy/professional development agency. Management and leadership training*. Tertiary Education Linkage Project Report: University of the Western Cape and University of Missouri.
- Williams, C. (2002). *The establishment of a leadership academy in the Western Cape – An historical overview of the process so far*. Special Report to the University of the Western Cape.