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A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

A Dissertation Presented

by

JOHN M. PERELLA

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies
University of Massachusetts Boston,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

June 2012

Leadership in Urban Education Program

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

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Approved as to style and content by:

_____
Jack Leonard, Assistant Professor
Chair of Committee

_____
Joseph Check, Professor
Member

_____
Ray Shurtleff, Lecturer
Member

_____
Joseph Check, Graduate Program Director
Leadership in Urban Schools

_____
Wenfan Yan, Chair
Department of Leadership in Education

ABSTRACT

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

June 2012

John M. Perella, B.A., University of Massachusetts Amherst
M.A.T., Salem State University
C.A.G.S., Salem State University
Ed.D., University of Massachusetts Boston

Directed by Assistant Professor Jack Leonard

Since 2005, the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) has contributed to school leadership training in Massachusetts and has trained over 945 superintendents, principals and school administrators with a very unique mission and leadership style (MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010) and yet very little is known about the program origins or philosophy.   The current study seeks to understand NISL's origins, objectives and financial and philosophical foundations while determining the extent it is understood by educators who have been through the training.

This research utilized critical theory to conduct a qualitative study through content analysis of the curriculum and interviews of NISL leadership, facilitators, participants and DESE leaders involved in its implementation. Neoliberal and

privatization indicators were also developed and used to determine trends and relationship within the program.

NISL is a program that was created by a small group of public school reformers from The National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE), a Washington think tank. Unlike the academies of the past, NISL is a non-collegiate, for-profit, private institution. It was developed as a means to influence public education through the benchmarked training of school leaders and was initially resourced by a combination of private and non-profit organizations. NISL's philosophical foundation derives primarily from Marc Tucker, a noted leader of the standards driven education reform movement, and NCEE. They, in turn, benchmarked the structures and strategies of military, private business and international leadership training and education systems. Participant awareness of the NISL program (history, context and agenda) is minimal. The findings reveal that there are strong elements of both privatization efforts and neoliberalism within the NISL program.

DEDICATION

To Elizabeth, Jack and Benjamin

To my parents – Thank you for always believing in me

To Thea

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am unable to put into words the role Dr. Jack Leonard has played in my completion of this dissertation. I cannot imagine how many times he had to read, re-read and edit my research. You may know this material better than I do! I will truly miss our discussions, thank you. I must also thank David DeRuosi. You have always pushed me to take my thoughts to the next level. Thank you to the entire LIUS staff. Tricia Kress, Joe Check, Jay Dee, Ray Shurtleff and Molly Pedriali – you all played an enormous role in helping me complete this feat. And thank you to my classmates in the 2006 cohort, especially Dianne Kelly. Working with you made my experience in the program unforgettable.

Thank you to my family and friends for understanding and believing in me. Thank you to my three beautiful children, Elizabeth, Jack and Benjamin. From your love, I found the strength to complete this study.

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Finally, thank you to all the participants in this study. I will never forget your words and kindness.

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LEADERSHIP

Introduction

Leadership is learnable. This simple concept is the basis of leadership training

academies for all fields of employment. In public education, school leadership is

essential. In an environment of accountability and budgetary restrictions, school

improvement is dependent to an unprecedented degree on the quality and effectiveness of

school leaders (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Tucker & Codding,

2002).

One of the most important elements of successful leadership is understanding

your own beliefs (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Tucker & Codding, 2002). "To become a

credible leader you have to comprehend fully the deeply held beliefs – values, principles,

standards, ethics and ideals – that drive you" (Kouzes & Posner, p. 48). It is the

combination of identifying and properly expressing those beliefs that determine a leader's

effectiveness and sustainability

Public education has formally trained school leaders and administrators since the

early 1900's (Ravitch, 2000). These training programs and institutions, although

widespread, rarely shared a common view how to best prepare educators. From the

onset, sharp differences in goals, procedures and philosophies emerged (Levine, 2005).

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Almost universally, these programs were run by the college and university systems that were also in charge of preparing the teaching staff. Today, Massachusetts's public school administrators are receiving leadership training, not only in graduate schools, but also through the directive of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). For example, in an effort to enact "wide-scale engagement of urban educators", in 2005, Massachusetts ambitiously resolved "to provide instructional leadership training and support to all school principals in the state over the next several years" (http://www.doe.mass.edu/edleadership/nisl/?section=overview).

Beginning in 2005, The National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) has contributed to school leadership training in Massachusetts, and as of November 2010, this program has trained over 945 superintendents, principals and school administrators in a very specific, uniform manner (MA DESE, 2010). Numerous distinctions differentiate NISL from past leadership training programs. Unlike the academies of the past century, NISL is a non-collegiate, for-profit, private institution. This company is now responsible for preparing and teaching school leaders what to concentrate on and how to best administrate that focus. I am a product of this new model of preparation.

Education and history have always interested me. I began my career in education as a secondary history teacher and for seven years I taught students to reflect on past events. More importantly, I challenged students to look upon present day events and ideas with an appreciation and an understanding of pertinent history. I have always felt comfortable looking at the present through the lens of the past. In 2004, I left the classroom and began my career as a school administrator in the position as a vice-

principal. In 2006, I enrolled in a doctoral program in urban education at the University of Massachusetts Boston and a year later I was asked by my school principal if I would be interested in joining a small group of Revere administrators to take part in a training course for school leaders. He described the program as an "excellent feather for your cap". It was also his opinion that this program was going to be a prominent part of the state certification process in the upcoming years. The course was run by a private organization called the National Institute for School Leadership. During the next few months, I was introduced to the modern "crisis" of American education. I read studies that painted a bleak picture for the United States and the American worker. The message was clear: without dramatic changes in how the American educational system operated, the United States would suffer a reduction in its living standards and relative economic position in the world (NISL Research and Development, 2008).

The NISL seminars, readings and discussions introduced fresh and innovative approaches to the seemingly agreed upon problems in public education. I was impressed with their application of military and business strategies to educational issues. This program was unlike anything I had experienced before, in regards to professional training. I had always believed that our public education system was flawed. I saw its imperfections every day as a teacher and an administrator in an urban school system. Now there was a plethora of data supporting those beliefs. I happily took part in the program. It was a perfect way to balance the more academic training I was receiving in the doctoral program.

Initial Problem Statement

A few months after completing the NISL program, a colleague asked me what NISL was "all about". It was at that point that I came to the realization that I wasn't quite sure even though I had just completed a multi-year training in it. I knew what they taught, and elements of their vision, but I was not entirely sure who they were. What was NISL? That question has led me to this research.

The history of education in the United States is teeming with groups incorrectly predicting what will be required in the years to come and what changes are necessary in the present. "If there is a lesson to be learned from the river of ink that was spilled in the education disputes of the twentieth century, it is that anything in education that is labeled a 'movement' should be avoided like the plague" (Ravitch, 2000. p.453). Educational historians like Diane Ravitch have demonstrated that such incorrect assumptions have been the cause of massive amounts of waste and misdirection since the inception of public education:

Public school systems are feeling the pressure from an array of directions to improve. Some contemporary groups addressing educational improvement include the Alliance for Excellent Education, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC), The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the RAND Corporation. NISL is the result of $11 million in research and development grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Broad Foundation, the New Schools Venture Fund, the Stupski Foundation and NCEE (NISL Research and Development, 2008). NISL has gained a

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significant amount of support from the education departments of 15 states including

Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, California, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, New Hampshire,

Connecticut, Texas, Colorado, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Illinois and Mississippi

(R. Moglia-Cannon, personal communication, November 20, 2010). The NISL program

is a contemporary reform movement that appears to be not adequately understood. Who

is NISL? This is the initial question driving this study.

The National Institute of School Leadership

Here is what we know about NISL from publicly available literature and my

experience in a NISL cohort in Massachusetts. The National Institute for School

Leadership, Inc. is a professional development business for educators. NISL identifies

itself as "an initiative of the National Center On Education and the Economy (NCEE)"

(NISL Research and Development, 2008). NISL, like *America's Choice* – another

subsidiary of NCEE designed to engage educators in school reform – is a for-profit

company. Both NCEE and NISL list 2000 Pennsylvania Ave NW suite 5300 as their

mailing address. In an initial phone call to NCEE to better understand their relationship,

I was informed that although NISL is for-profit, its holding company (NCEE) is non-

profit. I also inquired to the Washington D.C. Attorney General's Office and Better

Business Bureau about NISL's for-profit and incorporated status. A representative from

the D.C. Attorney General's Office told me that there was no record of NISL and that I

would need to find out what their "true corporate name" was in order to get business

information on them.

The NISL leadership-training program is both extensive and well organized. The program requires a time commitment of one hundred and eighty-two hours during 27 days and takes place over 15-18 months. Participants are selected by their school district and are placed in a cohort made up of teachers and administrators from local school systems. The selection process varies from district to district. In some school systems participants are told to attend while in others educators volunteer. Typically, superintendents look to balance school administrator participation in order to retain coverage in their schools. For instance, when I was a member, the other school administrator in my building was told that she would be included in the next cohort. In Massachusetts, there is no cost to the individual or the school district. To date, NISL has been paid for through federal and private grants. Participants meet typically twice a month during the school day. The sessions generally run between eight and three during the day and include breaks and lunch. Some cohorts have had classes on Saturday and in the evening.

The impetus for the creation of NISL was to improve student achievement. NISL is specifically targeted for underperforming districts (typically urban). This is a program that was designed to work with districts that are in corrective action (not making adequate yearly progress) or are at risk of becoming so (MA DESE & NISL, 2010). Although NISL participation has yet to be required by the DESE, it has been strongly encouraged in specific low-achieving districts. The education boards of thirteen states, including Massachusetts, are currently endorsing this program that emphasizes structure, common

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standards and language, and career preparation. To be clear, NISL, a private for-profit

company, is being utilized by the DESE to improve leadership in urban school districts.

NISL employs a "scripted curriculum" so that all of their cohorts will take part in

the same training and employ a common language. The short readings and case studies

can all be found in the NISL Course Instructor Guides. For my cohort, the guides were

updated and presented when the cohort reached the corresponding phase of the program.

The course guides are large three ring binders that are given out to all cohort members

periodically during the program. Although there are considerable pre-work readings,

there are no 'tests' that participants need to pass in order to complete the program. There

is also a culminating computer simulation exercise at the end of the training. In it,

participants role-play how they would address problems in an imaginary school.

Completion of the program does require attendance and participation in every session.

A presupposition of this study is that the assigned readings, case studies and the

articulated general purposes of the NISL curriculum represent a syllabus of the structure

and design of the program. Consequently, they enumerate what participants need to read,

engage in, and ultimately what the program considers important (Hess & Kelly, 2005).

An important component of the NISL curriculum is the inclusion of "best practices" of

other organizations. These are referred to as 'benchmarking'. NISL describes itself as an

organization that:

> …brings the best practices used to train corporate CEOs and battlefield
>
> commanders to the education field. Researchers benchmarked the training of
>
> school principals worldwide and the training of leaders and managers in business,

the military, medicine, and other fields to create a state-of-the-art executive education program for principals and other school and district leaders. (NISL Research and Development, 2008).

I have included a list of their required readings and purposes for the first course in the program to best demonstrate the substance of the curriculum. The suggested reading list is not presented in this study, since they are a reflection of the required reading. There are a total of four courses in the NISL curriculum. The readings for each session took the form of chapters or pages of large books (100+ pages), short studies, and short readings supplied by NISL. The following is a list of the Unit 1 required readings in the order they were assigned. In most cases, only sections of these readings were assigned.

- Friedman, Thomas. 2006. *The World is Flat.*

- The New Commission on Skills of the American Workforce. 2006

- Carnevale, Anthony & Desroches, Donna. 2003. *Standards for What*?

- Tucker & Codding (eds.) 2002. *The Principal Challenge.*

- Gardner, John. 1990. *On Leadership*

- Codding Judy, 1999. "Does this School REALLY Have a Vision?"

- Deibel, Terry. 1995. "Thinking about Strategy and Security"

- Hamel. Gary & Prahalad, C.K. 1994. *Strategic Intent*.

- Kotter, John. 1996. *Leading Change*

- Tucker, Marc & Codding, Judy. 1998. *Standards for Our Schools*.

- Allison, Graham & Zelikow, Philip. 1999. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*.

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- Harari, Oren. 2002. Open Doors: Colin Powell's Seven Laws of Power.

- Russo, Edward & Shoemaker, Paul. 1990. *Decision Traps: Top Ten Barriers to Decision-Making and How to Overcome.*

- Marsh, David & Codding, Judy. 1999. *The New American High School.*

- Tucker, Marc. 2002. "The Roots of Backlash."

- Kohn, Alfie. "The Case Against 'Tougher Standards.'"

- Wiggins, Grant & McTigher, Jay. 1998. "What is Backward Design" and "Implications for Organizing Curriculum."

- Hill, Peter. 2003. "Safety Nets."

- Hill, Peter. 2001. *Principles of Learning and Their Implications*.

- Hill, Peter. 2002. *Focused Teaching*.

- Stigler, J. and Hiebert, J. 1999. *The Teaching Gap*.

Each unit begins with a discussion of the purpose and learning objectives of that section. There are two types of purposes that are listed in the Instructor's Guide, those of the general unit – broad-spectrum goals, and those for a particular activity, such as a computer simulation. The following is a <u>list of general purposes</u> stated by NISL for each of the first course units. There are a total of four units in Course One. The purposes for each unit are taken directly from the NISL Instructor's Guide (2008).

Unit 1(pg. 3)

- <u>Build a sense of urgency</u> and understanding among principals as to why <u>deep education reform is a necessity</u>.

Unit 2 (p.I-3)

To illuminate why and how a principal should:

- Lead and motivate a school team to create a vision of where the school wants to be over a period of years

- Develop a strategy to implement that vision

- Build action plans to execute that strategy

- Apply a process for measuring the accomplishment of that strategy

Unit 3 (I-3)

- Prepare principals to analyze the standards-based system within their own schools and identify their role in constructing a more comprehensive, better-aligned standards-based system within their school's proficient design.

Unit 4 (pg. 3)

- Provide school leaders with the knowledge and skills they need to improve instruction and learning in a standards-based school environment.

NISL also utilizes the case study method as part of their training program. Like the required readings, the case studies that NISL participants engage in demonstrate a blueprint of design and focus. The NISL program lists the case study as an innovative approach to understanding and solving the problems of public education. As evidence, they cite:

Military trainers pioneered the use of case studies and simulations to provide their future leaders with the knowledge and experiences that would be difficult to

obtain outside of combat conditions. MBA programs now also frequently utilize case studies, simulations, and group exercises. Meanwhile, the medical internship consists almost entirely of "case studies" involving real patients, under the careful eye of an expert. (http://www.nisl.net/research/fields.php)

The following are the case studies that NISL participants in my cohort took part in during the first course:

- Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers

- The Singapore Experience – a comparative analysis of the Singapore education system with that of the United States.

- Transformation at Ford – A look at how the Ford Company adjusted its business design and facilitation.

The entire curriculum of NISL will be presented and reviewed in chapter four.

NISL Engagement in Massachusetts

From 2005 to 2011, NISL has enjoyed a strong amount of support from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). In the February 2008 Massachusetts Department of Education's Report to the Legislature on School Leadership Academies Training Initiative, NISL was identified as "central to the commonwealth's current district and school leadership development effort" (p. 8). In the April 2009 report of the same name, NISL was further applauded because it "offers busy school and district leaders a valuable opportunity for 'on the job' training in 21st century leadership for learning" (p.5). NISL has been touted as the "centerpiece" of the DESE's

drive to train all school principals in an effort to address the "leadership crisis" in Massachusetts. Currently, NISL is one of four elements in the DESE Leadership Unit. The three others are:

- Massachusetts Cohesive Leadership System Team (MCLS)

- New Policy Standards for Principals, Superintendents, and Other Leadership Roles

- Executive Leadership Program for Educators (ExEL)

Two of the other components (The Massachusetts Cohesive Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Program for Educators) also have funding from the Wallace Foundation (DESE, April 2009). The MCLS and the New Policy Standards were designed to lend structure and support to leadership organizations. ExEL is a collaboration program that is run out of Harvard (working in conjunction with the DESE and local districts). The NISL program is unique, due to its non-affiliation with a university and the fact that it is a pure leadership-training model. The expansion of NISL in Massachusetts seems inevitable, especially since it has been linked to further federal funding. In the Meristem evaluation (2009), the group concludes that "NISL expansion could be included as part of a comprehensive leadership component in its proposal to the U.S. Department of Education under the Race to the Top Fund" (p.65).

Purpose

This paper reports on a critical, exploratory research study of the NISL program. For all its perceived value, attention and importance, there is very little that is known

about NISL's agenda for public education. This examination has been accomplished through in-depth analysis of the founders, funders, leaders and supporters of the program and the curriculum. It is important to clarify that this research was not a program evaluation or assessment of NISL's effectiveness. The purpose of the study was to better comprehend the vision, expansion, trajectory, and, ultimately, the future of NISL in Massachusetts.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions that have driven this study:

1. What does critical analysis reveal about NISL's origins, objectives and financial and philosophical foundations?

2. How well is the NISL agenda (as determined by critical analysis) understood or known by the educators who have been through the training?

Context

In this section, I will introduce some terminology that is essential to this research (with a deeper description and discussion in chapter two). Two concepts that are pertinent in this study are privatization and neoliberalism. Privatization is "the practice of delegating public duties to private organizations" (Donahue, 1989. p.3). In the United States, it is a relatively new economic policy that is founded on the objectives of limiting government and expanding private enterprise. Historically, there are legitimate reasons to be wary of the privatization of public services (Bracey, 2002; Burch, 2009; Levin, 2001;

Lubienski, 2006). Donahue (1989) sums up the inconsistent and sometimes conflicting nature of privatization:

> When it works well, privatization can boost efficiency through accelerated innovation, more appropriate technologies or management styles, or a more sensible scale of operations. It can clarify public purpose by passing mandates through the focusing filter of explicit contracts. It can allow for more flexibility and variety in public services, spare public managers from occupying themselves directly with peripheral functions, and improve spending decisions by highlighting costs. When it works badly, of course, privatization can muddy public finance, and make public management more complex and awkward, strip away vital dimensions of the public purpose that are hard to pin down contractually, transfer money from public workers to contractors without any savings to the collective fisc, allow quality to decay, and *increase* costs. (p. 217).

Privatization in and of itself is not an evil. There have been many examples of its positive use. The concern addressed here is in its application to public education. Are market approaches and solutions (privatization) a good fit for the preparation of public servants? Can relying on the market by using private business (for-profit) make for "good" education? The quest to privatize public education is considered to be the most prominent global education reform today (Aronwitz & Giroux, 1993; Burch, 2009; Cuban, 2004; Hursh, 2007; Lubienski, 2006; Spring, 2007; Spring, 2008).

Privatization is considered a strategy for a larger ideological movement called neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is a word that is not often heard and is rarely used in

American society. It is defined as "a political movement beginning in the 1960's that

blends traditional liberal concerns for social justice with an emphasis on economic

growth" (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/neoliberalism).   Using the term social

justice may cause confusion. Neoliberalism stresses the need for individual equality and

freedom. The means to achieve this is through economic and market freedom. Neoliberal

rhetoric places a strong prominence on individual freedom (from government control)

and the liberty of consumer choice (Harvey, 2005). Whereas traditional liberal

movements of the 1960's fought against big government *and* powerful corporations, the

neoliberal focus is on the regulatory application of the government only.   Consider The

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, as an example. The stated goal of NCLB is to not

leave any child uneducated. This is social justice. The NCLB means (accountability and

assessment) is what differentiates it as neoliberal instead of liberal. Neoliberalism is pro-

business and does not view powerful corporate influence as problematic.

     The word itself often leads to confusion, for neoliberalism is acutely conservative

in its economic approach. In fact, neoliberals share many of the same educational goals

of neo-conservatives including the inclusion of a more substantial private (non-

government) role in education reform and a concern that our current education system is

failing the national economy. The overlap between neoliberal and neoconservative goals

has proven politically beneficial for both. Neo-conservatives differ from neoliberals in

that their main agenda is cultural restoration through the return of more "traditional"

forms of education where the focus is on classical Western knowledge, whereas the main

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agenda of neoliberalism is the creation and support for a new, market based society (Apple, 2004; Ravitch 2010).

One of the most significant elements of neoliberal ideology is its faith in the private sector. Neoliberalism operates under the assumption that all government services including schools, water and sewer systems, electric power and so on, can be more effectively and economically provided by private companies and nonprofit organizations (Spring 2007). The neoliberal position is that corporations are more efficient and the market is more responsive to public interests than the government. Basically, when it comes to services, the market can do everything better than government. Neoliberalism is about restructuring society to allow for, and facilitate the growth of, free-markets (Igoe and Brockington, 2007). Neoliberals have even argued that government itself should be remade in the likeness of the market for these very same reasons (Burch, 2009).

It is important to note that neoliberalism has been seen as both an ideology and a model of social and economic reform. Kipnis (2007) points out that "it can refer to a type of economic policy, to an overarching economic or even cultural structure, or, closer to the ground, to particular attitudes or inclinations toward entrepreneurship, competition, responsibility, and self-improvement" (p. 282). For example, neoliberalism has been associated with global capitalism (Farahmandpur, 2008). Globalization and neoliberalism are best understood when examined in relation to each other. Lipman (2007) described globalization as:

> …a worldwide economic process, globalization is characterized by the primacy of
> financial and speculative capital, highly integrated and flexible systems of

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production of goods and services, the reorganization of the labor process, and increased mobility of transnational circuits of labor (p.39).

It is easy to see how the use of the terms neoliberalism, privatization and globalization could cause confusion. Simply put, neoliberalism is a belief system and an economic approach. Privatization is just one strategy of this larger movement and globalization is the background for this entire story.

Neoliberalism has influenced some important trends in public education. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is most telling. As it mandates certain forms of privatization if (or when) a school is unable to make adequately year progress as exemplified through school vouchers, supplemental (privatized) services and the school takeover process – private businesses allowed to run failing public schools (http://ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml). Some have argued that privatization (and consequently the end of public education), driven by neoliberal education policies is the objective of this landmark legislation (Apple, 2004; Bracey, 2004; Lipman, 2007). McLaren (2007) expands on this belief:

> Legislative provisions of the NCLB Act clearly make the process of privatizing education a lot easier through a testing and accountability scheme that will increase the likelihood of failure of students in economically disadvantaged schools. NCLB is all about transferring funds and students to profit-making private school corporations through vouchers. This is essentially a neo-liberal model of education (p. 39)

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Although this idea is common for many critical theorists (the theoretical lens that will be used in this study), it is also being expressed by those not formally affiliated with critical theory. Diane Ravitch (2010) describes her fears regarding the NCLB 2014 timetable that every single child will be "proficient:"

> The most dangerous potential effect of the 2014 goal is that it is a timetable for the demolition of public education in the United States. The goal of 100% proficiency placed thousands of public schools at risk to be privatized, turned into charters or closed (p. 104).

Ravitch, well known for her conservative educational perspective and intimate involvement in the enactment of NCLB, had a fundamental shift in her opinion of NCLB, as well as the present trend of education reform. There is evidence that this fear is coming to fruition. For example, as part of their Detroit Public School Renaissance 2012 Plan, the financially embattled DPS school system is 'handing over' 41 low-performing schools to private and charter school operators by 2012 (Zehr, 2012). This trend is becoming more common in the larger urban school systems. Clearly, privatization has become an acceptable solution to dealing with failing schools while addressing the scarcity of resources.

Theoretical & Conceptual Framework

This study utilized the critical theory lens to guide the methodology and examine the findings. I use this theory to investigate NISL as an example of neoliberalism. Critical theory perspective plays an important role in the analysis of neoliberalism and

privatization. What first attracted me to critical theory is the emphasis on the story, on the history. Specifically, who is telling the story? Critical theorists have played a significant role in the "re-writing" of history. This has a direct connection to my historical emphasis and interest. An introductory definition of critical theory is "a theoretical approach developed by the Frankfurt School of social thinkers, which stresses that all knowledge is historical and biased and thus claims to 'objective' knowledge are illusory" (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/critical+theory). Critical theory allows an individual to "critically evaluate a range of salient perspectives and ideologies…while showing a commitment to egalitarianism" (Hill 2008, p.130). In this sense, critical theory perspective is a means to make sense of the results of this study with a goal of social equality. Similar to historical inquiry, critical theory forces one to re-examine commonsense social principles and values. For this to occur, we need to consider that "certain types of cultural capital – types of performance, knowledge, dispositions, achievements and propensities – are not necessarily good in and of itself" (Apple, 2004 p.123). Many of the conceptions we use are developed constructs, typically social and economic. Consequently, the words we employ automatically affect the way we view the world. This is specifically applicable in education regarding the language of neoliberal reform. Hill and Kumar (2009) articulate this concern:

> The language of education has been very widely replaced by the language of the market, where lectures "deliver the product," "operationalize delivery," and "facilitate clients' learning," within the regime of "quality management and enhancements," where students have become "customers" seeking "modules" on

a pick 'n' mix basis, where "skills development" at universities has surged in importance to the derogation of the development of critical thought. (p. 21)

A key component of the NISL curriculum is the creation of a common language for educators (http://www.nisl.net/results/). Should there be apprehension with the establishment of a common language in public education by a program that is based on business and military models? The concept of a common language used by NISL is of considerable interest in this study, especially in light of the concerns raised by critical theorists.

Historical analysis is an essential component of the critical perspective. As such, it is important to acknowledge its role and significance. When I entered the doctoral program, I considered myself first and foremost an historian. I have always been suspicious of educational fads. My leanings as a teacher and student are in social history. Accordingly, I have a propensity to view history as a conflict of social classes (also a focus of critical theory). I am partial to the historical perspectives of Howard Zinn. Zinn first introduced me to the power of historical analysis. His ability to put American axioms and common beliefs on trial is the essence of historical inquiry. Zinn's belief that "we need a constant reexamination of our thinking, using evidence of our eyes and ears and the realities of our experiences to think freshly" (Zinn 1990, p.7) encapsulates the approach I believe is most effective when examining contemporary issues in education. The historical perspective is an important element in the overall framework since what I am investigating is a product of history. It is imperative as a researcher to acknowledge the natural biases of historical research since, "any historical explanation entails choice

about selection and explanation, whether or not it is considered by its proponents to be theoretical" (Fulbrook 2002, p.37).

Methodology

The methods used to assess the NISL agenda for public education were primarily qualitative and historical research. Historical research was conducted with classical methods, including content analysis of primary and secondary sources. Using the lens of critical theory, I examined the NISL program. Criteria that will be described in the upcoming chapter were instrumental in discovering to what extent NISL was a manifestation of neoliberal/privatization efforts. The NISL curriculum was extensively analyzed during this research. In order to effectively review the documents, I utilized elements of a specialized approach called *content analysis*. Considered a method, an approach and a strategy for understanding documents, content analysis is described as "the systematic examination of forms of communication to document patterns objectively" (Marshall & Rossman, p. 85). This procedure will be explained in more detail in Chapter 3.

The qualitative analysis was conducted through the interview process. I interviewed NISL participants from the original Massachusetts cohort and a present, local cohort from NISL, NISL facilitators and the NISL leadership and founders. There was a concern that having been a member of a cohort would affect my ability to be objective. Although objectivity is unrealistic according to historians and critical theorist, I believe that in this case, it will add to the research. Membership has allowed me to have a more

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intimate understanding of the program. It was an essential part of the experiential component in this study.

Rationale and Benefits:

With the amount of time and public resources that are being invested, it seemed only appropriate to scrutinize NISL. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has listed 26 urban districts and over 900 school administrators as participants or graduates of the NISL program (http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcls/nisl/?section=district). The belief from educators and academics alike is that this movement is growing. There is also some apprehension in regards to NISL's agenda (hidden and/or open). NISL will inevitably apply increased sway on public education as more school leaders are trained. An independent study on the program by the Meristem Group (2009) confirmed the degree of influence NISL had on its participants. "A substantial majority…reported a moderate impact on school culture, staff morale and school operation due to the implementation of NISL concepts in school" (p. 57). This report cited these impacts as being examples of both the powerful influence of the NISL program and its positive application in schools.

There are many benefits from this study. Chiefly, it leads to a clearer understanding of what NISL is, what it stands for and what its goals of public education are. A second benefit is more macro in design. This investigation illuminates the role and context NISL plays within current education reform efforts.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS WITH LITERATURE

REVIEW

Rationale

In this chapter, I present a detailed description of the conceptual and theoretical

framework of my research. This is further clarified by placing the concerns presented

into the context of American and educational history. The history of school reform and

public education's role in society significantly situate this study. I briefly review the

history of the economic influences on educational objectives in this country and describe

the contemporary situation. I illuminate who and what has been affected by the trends of

neoliberalism and reviewed the arguments for and against the use of privatization. There

is an extensive analysis of both the philosophical and practical disagreements that may

exist. This chapter begins with a discussion of the theoretical and conceptual lenses that

are used for this study and why they are both appropriate and relevant. The role of NISL

in contemporary education reform is the primary focus of this research. The framework

for this research uses critical theory to (1) examine the motives, vision and agenda of the

NISL program and (2) guide the methodology in the examination of the findings.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Theoretical Framework

It is the goal and purpose of critical theory to both inform and provoke positive adaptation. Fundamentally, critical theory is a method for social change toward a more democratic and just society. To those who espouse its values in the economic realm, critical theory is a call to resistance against the alleged tyranny of capitalism and the oppression it brings. Much of this perspective ultimately derives from Marxist thought and has only recently come head to head with neoliberalism. My research will apply the approach and emphasis of the critical theorists Peter McLaren, Henry Giroux and Michael Apple. They, in turn, have taken much of their inspiration from Paulo Freire and Pierre Bourdieu.

Critical pedagogy is the application of critical theory to education. Critical pedagogy views the educational system as an arrangement that (potentially) oppresses society and examines the education system from the perspective of who is benefiting (from it) and at whose expense. The concepts of power and knowledge are essential in this discussion. Who has it (power), who created it and who benefits from it? Essentially, critical theorists approach a topic with an eye on where the power employed derived from, how it benefits those who hold it and how is it restricted from those who do not possess it. It has been mentioned in this paper that this takes the form of a "re-writing" of history. Often confused with revisionist history, critical theory frequently re-assesses past events bearing these crucial questions on power and knowledge in mind. For instance, the implementation of universal compulsory education in the early 20th century

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has often been interpreted as an example of the social equality/democratic effort by our society to give every child a chance to attain the American dream. Yet, universal education may be interpreted as a means of control more than an opportunity for equality. Who had the power to implement this system? Whose knowledge was favored? Who benefited from it? Much of the support for compulsory attendance laws of the late 19th and early 20th century derived from Protestant upper and middle class fears of urban children roaming the streets. Social control was a chief goal of this reform (Ravitch, 2000; Reese, 2005; Tyack, 1974; Urban & Wagoner, 2004). During this time, the United States was experiencing a dizzying influx of non-Protestant immigrants mostly from southern and Eastern Europe who were quite unlike early waves of immigrants. What knowledge was favored? Behaviors that were valued and rewarded included punctuality, silence, obedience and the ability to be successful in the uniform grade level examination system (Tyack, 1974). These "routinization" expectations ultimately socialized students to the world, and more specifically jobs they were expected to fill – the new factories that were being developed in the nations cities (Urban & Wagoner, 2004). This is a classic example of applying critical analysis to a common event, which in turn yields a different historical conclusion. A critical review of any subject requires this type of re-examining beliefs and conclusions that are taken for granted. This is commonly facilitated by constant questioning of not only what is being said and done, but also what is NOT being said, done, or emphasized. Absence of action or support is equally important in a critical analysis. Regarding universal education, what knowledge (curriculum) was not included

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and supported? Whose voice was not heard? This application of critical theory is foundational in my methodology.

Critical theorists view the contemporary use of public education as both a means to address, and an example of, the neoliberal/privatization agenda.   Paula Allman (as cited by Hill, 2008) put it this way:

Education has the potential to fuel the flames of resistance to global capitalism as well as the passion for socialist transformation – indeed, the potential to provide a spark that can ignite the desire for revolutionary democratic social transformation throughout the world (p.131)

This view, interestingly, is not too dissimilar to neoliberalism in that both wish to use public education in order to propagate their respective values. In other words, both understand the power of education to change minds and shape public opinion. It is the motivation for and the exercise of power that is most troubling to the critical theorist.

Critical pedagogical theorists stress the vital role schools play in creating and re-enforcing inequalities. This is accomplished by means of the 'transmission' of culture (Apple, 2004). The transmission of culture is the most powerful way society is able to maintain the status quo or "reproduce" it. Schools promote and reward specific forms of culture of the dominant group. Consider the example of compulsory education presented above. One of the goals of those reformers was to homogenize the school population within the Protestant culture of that time. In the case of contemporary public education reform, pro-business and neoliberal influences are driving school reform efforts. For example, much of the education reform today is directed and supported from business

partnerships and corporate interests such as the Wallace Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, NCEE, the Broad Institute and the Walton Family Foundation. All of these groups have advocated for the increased role of privatized services, the use of vouchers, high stakes testing and the need for education to meet global economic demands. These groups have not only influenced public education with financial investments, they have also played a huge role in the direction and implementation of federal and state education policy (Barkan, 2011).

Social reproduction is an important component of critical theory. Social reproduction refers to the process of passing on and continuing social class from generation to generation within a family or closed group (McLaren, 2007). Critical theorists argue that the social reproduction of economic class is the goal of conservative and neoliberal policies. The reproduction of society is best observed as a transmission of cultural capital or *habitus*. This social gift, (good taste, prior knowledge, language and social advantages) acts in the same way as economic capital (Apple, 2004). People who are born with it have a potent advantage over those who were not. For example, children of Ivy League colleges have a much greater probability of going to an Ivy League school than do children of parents who did not complete high school. This is true not only because of social connections, but also due to their upbringing. Exposure to literature, ways of thinking and travel experience play a significant role in shaping an individual. If an individual's primary discourse (way of thinking and speaking) is in line with that of a school, there is a greater likelihood of academic success. If they are not aligned, then that student needs to learn a secondary discourse in order to succeed. They are inherently

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disadvantaged. This plight is common in urban schools where the language and customs of many of the students are dissimilar from that of the predominantly white middle class educators.

The public education system is one of the most influential environments for the reproduction of society that can be observed. Bourdieu (as cited by Apple, 2004) succinctly summarizes this point. He stipulates:

Cultural capital stored in schools acts as an effective filtering device in the reproduction of hierarchical society. For example, schools partly recreate the social and economic hierarchies of the larger society through what is seemingly a neutral process of selection and instruction. They take cultural capital, the habitus of the middle class, as natural and employ it as if all children have had equal access to it. (p. 31)

Institutionally, schools support and reward specific types of behavior and thinking. In the process, public education maintains specific cultural heritages and penalizes others (Swartz, 1997). Schools then, are explicit instruments in the development of children for specific roles and belief systems. Schools are not neutral conveyors of knowledge but are instruments of ideology.

The real issue is that the education system gives those who begin with certain advantages (the right economic status and thus the right values, the right speech patterns, the right mannerisms, the right behavior) a better chance to retain those advantages all through school, and ensures that minority and economically disadvantaged students will remain at the bottom rung of the meritocratic ladder.

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(McLaren, 2007, p.238)

Critical pedagogical theory is grounded in the assumption that all curriculums and institutions come with an ideology, whether explicit, implicit, intentional, or hidden. As such, every curriculum either supports and perpetuates class differences or ameliorates them. NISL is no exception. NISL has defined beliefs, approaches and supports certain types of cultural capital. This is important because of the role NISL is now playing in the training of school leaders. Since public education is an instrument of ideology, then leaders trained by NISL will predictably influence their respective schools or districts. It is important that these philosophical and practical approaches, specifically the goals and vision of the school leaders, be transparent.

For this analysis of NISL, I have used the following questions and criteria of the critical perspective. As I investigated NISL, I looked for:

- Whose voice is being heard? Whose voice is not?

- Who has knowledge? Who has power?

- What is being said and what is left "unsaid" in the NISL curriculum?

- What is being conveniently left out or might be read in a different way?

- Who is benefitting from the application of the NISL program and who is not?

Critical theory is especially relevant in the analysis of neoliberalism and privatization. The frameworks presented here work cohesively. For instance, historical analysis is an essential component of critical pedagogy. Specifically, critical theory seeks to enter a dialogue with history in order to create a future that is not a replica of the past

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(Giroux, 2010). Critical theorists often utilize historical research in order to demonstrate power usage and motive. It is an indispensable tool for critical theory. Michael Apple (2004) describes the relationship between history and critical theory:

> Any serious attempt at understanding whose knowledge gets into schools must be, by its very nature, historical. It must begin by seeing current arguments about curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional control as outgrowths of specific historical conditions, as arguments that were and are generated by the role schools have played in our society. (p. 63)

These complimentary theoretical and conceptual approaches have allowed me to better understand the role NISL has in contemporary education reform. Historical analysis has elucidated the context in relation to previous reform programs, while critical pedagogy has allowed me to meticulously examine both the role of NISL, as well as the general neoliberal and privatization elements in present-day education reform.

Historical Contextualization

For many in contemporary education reform circles, the application of privatization to public education is not seen as a problem at all. These strategies are viewed as the solution to the real problem: lack of excellence in public schools. In order to best understand this frame of thinking, it is important to first comprehend the role education has played in American society. Two important "truths" must be acknowledged. Foremost, public schooling, from its early inception, has been the

treatment for society's troubles. Secondly, public education has always had a role as an "engine of commercial development" (Rury, p. 179).

The belief that schools should and can fix national issues is an important aspect of the American public education system. "This pattern of expecting education to solve national problems is deeply embedded in the nation's social and economic structures" (Cuban, 2004, p.10). It has been applied to apprehension regarding citizenship, immigration, class, race, gender, economics, even alcohol and tobacco use (Labaree 2007, Ravitch 2000; Urban & Wagoner, 2004). Part of the reason for this manner of thinking is due to the universal role public education plays in American society. Reese (2004) explains:

> Because more and more Americans have attended schools, and for more years of their lives, everyone has an opinion, not always flattering, about what schools were once like and what they should become. Citizens who should know better routinely expect them to accomplish what is humanly impossible, complain bitterly when the schools falter, and yet turn to them again and again to cure social ills not of their making (p.2).

As the role of the federal government in education has increased during the latter part of the 20th century, so have the expectations. From the end of World War II to the present, "no institution bore a heavier burden for improving society than America's public schools" (Reese, 2004, p.215).

Perhaps more important to this study is the relationship between industry and public education. Public education has cycled through periods when economic interests

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dominated the focus of schooling. Evidence of the formal role of industry in education is

seen as far back as the late 19th century. During this time period, industrialists began to

view the public school system as a vehicle to expand industry. The education system was

a perfect place to train the future factory workers of the nation. As this country became

more industrial, new interest groups began to seek out influential roles in education. In

1896, the National Association of Manufacture's (NAM) was calling for "radical changes

in American education" (Kliebard, p. 23). Basing their arguments on the success of the

German school system, NAM advocates became a major force for vocational training.

In 1906, The National Society of Industrial Education (NSPIE) was founded with the

explicit goal of linking schooling to employment. The call for creating separate industrial

schools followed not long after. Urban & Wagoner (2004) describe the trepidation by

many of this burgeoning trend.

> Many both inside and outside education were particularly disturbed by the idea of
>
> separate industrial or trade schools whose major function was training students for
>
> employment. Their fears of an education dominated by employers were
>
> heightened as some in the business community began advocating separate
>
> industrial high schools under a private board that would be responsive to
>
> employers' needs, not necessarily those of the students. (p.209)

This time period is often labeled the progressive period, an era in which reform

campaigns and activists sought sweeping social changes in the United States. Public

education was also heavily influenced by the forces of industrialization and urbanization

(Rury, 2009).

Business-inspired school reform has been present in public education throughout the 20th century, specifically during times of financial instability. Social and political environments substantially affect the establishment and success of a reform movement. For example, the global economic position of the United States during the 1890's and the 1970's spurred an array of educational reforms ranging from vocational programs during the turn of the century to the centralization and standardization of public education today (Urban & Wagoner 2004, Cuban 2004). During these moments of economic turmoil, the public education system was always the first to be blamed. In the rare instance when other causes were considered, the responses were consistently downplayed. For example, the economic problems of the 1970's (inflation, stagnation, energy spending and unemployment) were seen as a consequence of a poor education system. The blame for the lack of American competition was crystallized in *A Nation at Risk.* This Reagan-inspired report was released in 1983 and was followed by an immediate cry for public education reform. There was little critical review of the correlation. Cuban (2004, p. 26) describes how,

> Occasionally, lone voices would object to blaming schools and propose
> alternative ways of framing the problem. For example, some observers pointed to
> poor corporate investments, mismanagements by CEO's, and top managers'
> failure to stay abreast of technological changes. Others noted the importance of
> oil boycotts and the U.S. fiscal and monetary policies of the Vietnam War (1964-
> 1975), suggesting that both played major roles in causing recessions in which
> swelling unemployment and inflation occurring simultaneously. Those who

offered alternative ways of framing policy problems were ignored, even muffled, and seldom moved opinion leaders to consider other causes for economic downturns and cultural changes than the shortcomings of public school

Although education has always been seen as a road to financial success, the emphasis changed from creating capable workers to being a vital component of the national economic health in the mid-20th century. After the Second World War, the growing importance attached to formal education became closely connected with the national economic growth. What initially originated out of a late-nineteenth century theoretical claim of the societal benefits for public education has been accepted as an undeniable "truth" since the mid-twentieth century (Cuban, 2004). This shift primarily came out of the creation of the World Bank and the implementation of the Marshall Plan (Spring, 2004). Both were designed to avoid future conflicts by creating social cohesion amongst nations that were economically dependent upon each other. "(Reflecting this), economists coined the term 'human capital' to denote the growing role of education in the economy" (Rury, p.179).   Human capital theory is based on the assumption that formal education is essential for a society to be productive (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). It is primarily an economic theory that presents human resources, as opposed to production, as the most important factor for a nation's economic health. From this lens, the goal of education is to contribute to economic growth. Consequently, a good education system is linked to economic outcomes (Spring, 2004; Wrigley, 2009).

Urban & Wagoner (2004) demonstrate that more changes occurred to public education because of World War II (external) and its challenges than during the

Depression years (internal). These authors point out that, "these changes, as so often is the case in the history of American education were influenced by external events and forces more than by premeditated designs of educators or educational policymakers" (p. 279). This is a very important observation for this research. Presently, it is the global business influence that has driven contemporary education reform. As the economic crises of the last thirty years have grown in severity, so has the demand that public education meet its challenges. Today, globalization and the United States' lack of superiority in the global market has become the newest emergency. Thomas Friedman, author of the *World is Flat* (2007) has a chapter in his book called, "The Quiet Crisis". In it, he talks about the 'perfect storm' or a confluence of conditions that have created a societal crisis. "Today we should be concerned about the gaps in our education, infrastructure and ambitions that threaten to weaken us from within" (Friedman, 2007, p. 329). Friedman's writings are an important part of the NISL curriculum.

As with any topical investigation, studying the past is an essential component to understanding the present. This is particularly relevant in regards to the field of public education. The American education system shares a unique relationship with our history. Rury (2009) provides an insightful explanation:

> Consequently, we can say that education has been on either side of social change:
> both as a casual agent and as an aspect of life that has been transformed because
> of other social forces. The link between education and social change however is
> complex and constantly evolving. This makes it especially interesting as a topic
> of study, and as a means for reflecting on the present (p.4).

This relationship is well accepted in academia. History has demonstrated that public school reform is not unique to today. Yet, contemporary debates on education reform tend to take place without any real comprehension of the issues, methods and results of the historical record (Check, 2002).

In regards to NISL itself, the historical lens in especially relevant. During a seminar, I questioned both the Massachusetts DESE representative and the head facilitator of NISL in Massachusetts about the history of the program and where some of its components came from. To my utter surprise, neither was able to give me an explanation that went beyond what the NISL literature supplied. In my preliminary analysis of the NISL curriculum, the history of education and school reform were not covered. Much of what is written generalizes and simplifies this topic. For example, in the first unit of the NISL Instructor's Guide, *The Educational Challenge* (2008), vague references such as, "The New Economy is fundamentally different than (what) our ancestors experienced" (p.14) supply the only historical record. The farthest back this instructor's guide referred to is "back in the early 1980's" (p. 14). The first unit's purpose is to "build a sense of urgency and understanding among principals as to why deep education reform is a necessity" (p.3). In this unit, the contextual information is provided and the factors driving education reform are highlighted. NISL lists globalization as an external cause and NCLB as an internal cause for the reform of leadership programs. In their review of these factors, there is no mention of any previous educational reform movement or causes for reform. There is also no reference to any previous reform efforts in the curriculum materials supplied by the NISL program. The required readings for the

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first unit are Thomas Friedman's *The World is Flat (2006),* Tucker and Codding's *The Principal Challenge* (2002) and *The New Commission on Skills of the American Workforce* (2006). These readings primarily focus on the varying business-modeled approaches that will be necessary to create change that is required in the new global economy. NISL does utilize specific case studies (Cuban Missile Crisis and "Transformation at Ford") that are grounded in historical events. However, the emphasis for the case study analysis is how these two military and business examples demonstrate strategic thinking, not historical appreciation.

Can educational reform take place in an effective manner without an understanding of the historical record? Educational problems are deeply rooted in the past. Countless "solutions' have been tried and many studies have been conducted that have resulted in a whole storehouse of data and analysis (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). There are inherent dangers in implementing a national leadership program that is apparently ignorant of education history. It has been made clear, especially by critical theorists, that the only way to truly understand an issue is by placing it into an historical context. The absence of historical scrutiny clearly restricts our ability to fully comprehend an issue. Check (2002) submits that this is a persistent hindrance in public education. "This systematic forgetting is a serious flaw in current reform efforts" (p. 37). A consequence of this a-historical approach to education problems is the endless cycles of reform that have marked the past one hundred years.

Neoliberalism and its Role in Public Education

In order to fully comprehend the role neoliberalism plays in current education reform, we need to first understand its origin. The following is a simplified account. Neoliberalism developed as a reaction and a strategy to address the government-heavy Keynesian economic systems of the United States and Great Britain during the 1970's. Keynesian economics (based on the theory by John Keynes) is the economic structure that came out of the Great Depression. It is a government regulated economic system that essentially acts to "dampen business cycles and ensure reasonably full employment…a class compromise between labor and capital" (Harvey, p. 10). Concepts like social security, Medicare and government regulation of business and the environment came directly from this system. When it was fully implemented after WWII, Keynesian fiscal and monetary policies were seen as an appropriate alternative to the perceived shortcomings of capitalism that resulted in the Great Depression and alternative communist forms of governing. This system operated effectively for a few decades. However, in the late 1960's a "crisis of capital accumulation" began to take the form of rising unemployment, stagnation and inflation in many western nations including the United States. The United States and many of the Western industrial nations experienced this predicament primarily due to the overproduction of their goods that flooded the world market (Farahmandpur, 2008). Critical theorists, in fact, submit that this crisis is inherent in a capitalist system. As tax revenues plunged, so did faith in Keynesian policies. It was during this time that the banner of neoliberalism began to unfurl. Liberating business and corporate power by removing regulations and re-establishing

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market freedom became the solution that ultimately was applied.   Business reforms that were embraced included investment in speculative capital, reigning in the power of unions and moving manufacturing abroad to third world nations and China in order to save on labor costs.

The neoliberal emphasis and approach to public education began during the 1980's. Since then, the egalitarian goals of education of the 1960's and 1970's (access and equality for all) have been replaced with a more conservative (and neoliberal) focus on "excellence and accountability" (Ravitch, 2000; Spring, 2001; Urban & Wagoner, 2004). Although critical theorists would take issue with many of the educational polices of previous generations, the acute concentration of privatization trends in education during the past thirty years has caused considerable apprehension (Apple, 2004; Arnowitz & Giroux, 1993; McLaren 2007).

When viewed through the critical lens, neoliberalism is a clear attempt to re-distribute wealth back to power elites through reduced corporate tax policies and the dismantling of regulatory systems in regards to business activity, while strengthening regulatory oversight of public education (with the assumption that public education will fall short and private solutions can take over). The restoration of economic elite class power, as evidenced by expanded wealth distribution rates (the growing divide between the haves and have not's), corporate de-regulation (the end of "big" government) and the reduction of 'real' wage levels (taxed earnings with inflation taken into account) last seen in the 1930's, are all apparent consequence of the application of neoliberal policies (Buchele & Christiansen, 2009; Harvey, 2005; McLaren, 2007; Ross & Gibson, 2007).

These well known facts have been documented both internationally and domestically (Heathcote, Perri, & Violante 2009; UNDP 2005).   During the past forty years, the most affluent percentage of the population has increased their wealth, while the middle and lower classes have lost or had no gain in relative wealth (Hill & Kumar, 2009). The Working Group on Extreme Inequality (2008) (see also Cavanaugh and Collins, 2008) presented the following: "The top 400 U.S. income-earners in 2005, the *Nation* coverage notes, collected 18 times more income than the top 400 in 1955, and that's *after* adjusting for inflation". When viewed critically, the situation becomes clearer.   Who benefits from these policies (economic elites, corporate America); whose voice is not being heard (lower class, labor)? Considered one of the last bastions of Keynesian social service, public education is under attack in this country as a result of the extension of these neoliberal policies (Spring, 2004). The expansion of neoliberal practices into the education field makes perfect financial sense. <u>Central to the neoliberal doctrine is a simple, yet powerful objective: profit. It is an economic approach that emphasizes the expansion of free markets.</u> Herein is the essential concern with its relationship to public education. <u>Neoliberal theory calls for a market-driven economy for all facets of society.</u> Thus, the goal of privatizing public education is almost to be expected. Patrinos and Ariasingham (as referenced by Hirtt, 2009) equate the $2,000 billion world education market as the New Eldorado for investors. The same can be said about the potential for an education market in this country, where "education is rapidly becoming a $1 trillion industry, representing 10% of America's GNP and second in size only to the health care industry" (Birch, 2009, p.21). Like the health care industry, there is a tremendous

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opportunity for capitalists within public education. For an economic system that constantly requires new profitable markets, public education is a godsend.

Neoliberalism as an economic philosophy is understandably invested in the concept of privatized education. Arguments in favor of pro-business methods and principles of education have a prominent voice in contemporary education reform. For these groups, education is positively correlated to both an individual's worth and the national economy as a whole. Since neoliberalism is essentially a modern manifestation of a specific application of capitalism, the topic is perhaps the most important political/economic discussion of the past fifty years.

Neoliberalism itself has many varying influences on society. As an economic/political system, there is no doubt that in the short run it saves money, consolidates power and effectively regulates elements of an economy. The easing of tax and regulatory burdens on corporations allows industries to "flourish". Earnings skyrocketed and by many accounts the United States seemed to benefit as a whole as exemplified during the years from 1980-2000 (Hill & Kumar, 2009). Due to the political/election cycle, quick-fix decision making is unfortunately the norm. Cutting the expenditures of the government through de-regulation, privatization and reduction of social spending has a strong appeal to tax weary citizens. This is especially true when these changes are blanketed in the 'freedom' promised by neoliberalism. The pursuit for profits and earnings inherently lead to darker results. During this same period, and more importantly from 2000 on, the short-term measures of the previous decades began to show their results: burgeoning poverty rates, the decimation of the working class (as

evidenced by union minimization, unemployment and reduction of real-wage levels) and, of course, the unchecked avarice of big-money best exemplified by the banking and housing crisis of the first decade of the 21st century (Farahmandpur, 2008; Hill, Giroux, 2011; Greaves & Maisuria, 2009; McLaren, 2007). Harvey (2005) described the process of neoliberalization as a "destructive force" that not only substantially changes powers systems and institutions, but also fundamentally impacts "divisions of labor, social relations, welfare provisions, technological mixes, ways of life and thought, reproductive activities, attachments to the land and habits of heart" (p. 3). This degree and manner of influence is equally true in regards to privatization, as a means for the neoliberal system. This study focuses on the influences of neoliberalism and privatization within the context of public education. In public education, neoliberalism has exhibited itself as both a goal of education (business training) and a method of practice (privatization). Criticisms of both elements are common in public education (Mishel & Rothstein, 2007).

There has been considerable resistance to the use of education as a work preparation. Joel Spring (2007) has been a powerful detractor of the aligning of predicted economic needs and school standards. He argues that, "Education for work can be dysfunctional because the labor market changes and students are educated for nonexistent jobs or for jobs that have an oversupply of skilled employees" (p. 6). The concept of "filling the pipeline" has been extensively documented as a strategy of corporate interests for preparing the next generation of workers (Trammell, 2005). This terminology is also used by many of the leadership training programs referenced later in this study. NISL is a program that has made clear their interest in engaging in "pipe-line" placement. There is

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also substantial concern about the basis of current business orientated reform in regards to the correlation between the economy and the education system. Cuban (2004) reminded us that there is strong disagreement among "experts" on the relationship between human capital assumption and its linkage to productivity and global competition.

In my analysis of NISL, I apply the following criteria in order to identify neoliberalism. These measures were developed from descriptors previously cited in this section. Indicators of a neoliberal agenda in education included:

- Belief that the market is a better driver of public education than the government
  - Using market structures that stress competition, cost reduction and choice to improve and ultimately run schools.
- Belief that education is positively correlated with the national economy
  - Embracing Human Capital Theory – A strong education system is essential for the national economy
- Belief in cutting public expenditures for social services (public education)
  - Reduction and de-regulation of government resources in public education
- Privatization of education through the support of the state and federal government
  - Allowing private, for-profit industries to oversee and run schools
- Business supported school reform that stresses accountability, data-driven decision making, performance pay and standards that promote completion
  - Using the business philosophy that stresses business operations and belief systems

Growth of Neoliberalism

Due to its nature, public education has always had a strong political element to it. Political influence has both positive and negative influences on public education (Hacsi, 2002). The zeal to improve education for the disadvantaged during the 1960's, in this way, is comparable to the current passion to create a superior education system that insures our global economic position. It seems that current political leanings (both Democratic and Republican) are in agreement with the contemporary economic-based goals of neoliberal and pro-business education programs.

On the federal level, every president since George H. Bush has made education reform a personal priority. "The federal role in education is sizable and increasing; voters report that education is one of their top concerns, and education has become a central issue in national politics and elections" (McGuinn, 2006, p. 2). NCLB is a landmark law due to the manner in which it has significantly changed the role of the federal government in public education. Although the federal government had been playing an instrumental role in public education since the 1960's, the function and emphasis has undergone a substantial transformation. McGuinn (2006) recounted this transformation:

> The old federal education policy regime, created in 1965, was based on a policy paradigm that saw the central purpose of school reform as promoting equity and access for disadvantaged students…The policy paradigm at the heart of NCLB is centered on the much broader goal of improving education for all students (p. 193-194)

This context of changing federal support and direction has allowed neoliberal policies to gain ground. In fact, <u>one of the necessary components of neoliberalism is the need for a strong state to promote its interests </u>(Kumar and Hill, 2009). The important role of the state in a neoliberal system may seem counter-intuitive since neoliberalism stresses deregulation and the removal of government involvement in public services. David Harvey (2005) presents a succinct description:

> The role of the state (within a neoliberal system) is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such a practice (strong property rights, free markets and free trade). The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, <u>if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary.</u> Beyond these tasks the state should not venture. (p. 2)

Privatization

Privatization in education is hotly disputed. Participants in the debate argue with passion and conviction. On one side is the belief that education is a core public responsibility, while opposing views see privatization of public schooling as the only means to raise education from the quagmire of an inefficient bureaucracy (Forman, 2007). <u>It is important to note that there is no single privatization school plan.</u> Defining

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and understanding the term requires a sifting of relatable concepts such as market-driven reform efforts, school-business partnerships and commercialism (Block, 2005). Overall, contemporary research in education has called into question the degree of success that privatization efforts in the area of school operation have had in the United States (Cuban 2004, Levin 2001, Vandershee 2005). This section brings to light the different elements and social contradictions of the application of privatization to public education.

Public education appears to be in the crosshairs of some powerful ideological movements to align education with business models and privatize public schooling (Apple, 2004; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993; Cuban, 2004; Emery & Ohanian, 2004; Labaree, 2007; Ravitch, 2010). To what degree is this accurate? Privatization is not a novel trend. Private companies contracted garbage collection services in San Francisco as early as 1932 (Forman, 2007). Interestingly in the 1960's, it was the political liberals who were concerned about government bureaucracy and fought to have services provided by outside agencies (Donahue, 1989, Levin, 2001). At that time, community-based nonprofit agencies worked extensively to supply many of the services initiated during the War on Poverty especially in areas of urban housing development and job creation. Today, nonprofits run 80% of American social services, 70% of rehabilitation facilities, 50% of the hospitals and universities and colleges and 25% of daycare and nursing programs and homes (Salamon, 2002). Privatization during the past 30 years has taken on a much different tone. Since then, the emphasis has not been in the cooperation and support of the government, but in the displacement of the government.

The underpinning of any argument for privatized services is efficiency. Are private agencies more efficient (time and cost-wise) and more effective in providing a service? Studies on the efficiency of privatization have had varying results. Donahue (1989) cited studies of water, electrical power and public bus services from 1976 to 1987 that show conflicting conclusions. He demonstrated that some studies show positive correlations in regards to cost-savings and service while other show negative or no correlation. Donahue concluded with two principles. "First, the profit-seeking private firm is *potentially* a far superior institution for efficient production. Second, that productive potential can be tapped only under certain circumstances" (p. 78). One criterion that Donahue specifically made was that competition vs. noncompetition is more important than private vs. public. Simply put, privatization without competition is not a viable solution. A "healthy insecurity" is an essential element of effective privatized services. Are public schools an environment in which insecurity should be fostered? This is a great question to consider. There is some truth behind the old adage that schools and teachers are buffered from societal scrutiny. In fact, this is one of the areas that NISL seems to be interested in abolishing. In their assigned reading, *Building a New Structure for School Leadership* (Elmore. 2000), the concern over "loose-coupling" or the control of the technical core of educational decisions by educators and not the organizations around it (community and businesses) was addressed. In this piece, Elmore credited this system of organization with the "nervous, febrile and unstable condition of politics and leadership around most school systems of any size. The governance structure is designed to support the logic of confidence in the institutional structure of public

schools, not to provide stability, guidance, or direction for the long-term improvement of school performance" (p.7). The belief that schools are unwilling and unable to self-regulate and improve led to two telling developments, standard-based reform and the changing influence of teacher unions.

The rationale for the application of privatization in public education follows the same logic as it would for any public service. If you replace a local monopoly and infuse market competition, efficiency can be brought to consumers (parents) in a couple of ways. First, there is the competition incentive. "Good" schools, like good businesses will endure and thrive while "bad" schools will close. This belief is directly linked to the impetus for charter and school-choice initiatives. Competition in a market typically leads to better products and improved services and general cost-effectiveness. This is the essence of capitalism. Concerns arise though when this is applied to public services. Consider public education; "bad" schools are typically found in poor and urban neighborhoods. Is this because they are all inept, poorly staffed and led by ineffective leaders? There are surely elements of these problems in those schools, as there are in all schools. On the other hand, why is it that affluent community schools do not have these same problems? Did they only hire the good teachers and leaders? It is much more reasonable to relate a degree of a student's success with his/her socio-economic position and community. Current reforms place the sole responsibility of students' success on the school and ignore the structures of urban life that sustain inequalities in employment, housing, and social services (Cuban, 2004). It is also worth considering the application of cost-effectiveness in education. In a business model, being cost-efficient is a worthy

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goal. Cost-efficiency means better profits. How does this apply to education? How does this relate to a student, to a child? At what cost is efficiency gained within a public school? Money for schools comes from taxes, not from satisfied customers. Tax supported education systems are designed for a myriad of reasons including many social goals (citizenship, social equality, shared educational experiences) that are impossible to assess and are not directly tied to effectiveness or financial value. In urban schools, efficiency is measure by standardized tests. It is impossible and unethical to apply the standards for creating an automobile with creating a successful student.

A second goal of neoliberal/privatization education reforms is to provide choice to parents. The belief is that families will be able to choose a ('good') school that best fits their needs because of the greater variety. Choice, like freedom is a term that resonates with the American public. It taps into the core of our democratic convictions. Choice is manifested in many ways. It can be as simple as deciding to attend a private over a public school. It can also be viewed as a decision (for those who are in a position to do so economically) regarding where one lives. For this discussion, I am examining the concept of choice within the charter/voucher construct. In this paradigm, choice is typically represented by the concept of the school voucher. The modern form of this school voucher originated in the writings of Milton Friedman (1962), who wrote an essay championing its application. Friedman advocated that, "governments could require a minimum level of schooling financed by giving parents vouchers redeemable for a specific maximum sum per child per year if spent on 'approved' educational services" (Friedman p.89). The argument for the use of vouchers is that competition for students, in

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conjunction with the threat of losing resources as students leave ineffective schools, will force schools to improve or close. Friedman's views found support in the Reagan administration in the 1980's. During this time of big government overhaul and deregulation, vouchers morphed into a more politically acceptable means to deal with under performing schools (Ravitch, 2010; Urban & Wagoner, 2004). This was also the first time the voucher concept began to get a substantial amount of public support, primarily from frustrated parents. They were sold to the public as an example of the freedom (a clear example of neoliberal strategy) gained from market-driven policies and as the application of choice for families. Vouchers, the predominant application of privatization in education today, were a nonnegotiable inclusion during the NCLB legislation and are considered one of the most important elements of the policy (Lipman, 2007; McGuinn, 2006; Ravitch 2010; Reese, 2004, Trammell, 2005). Some states have gone further and implemented expanded voucher options that allow for transfers to private schools (not part of the federal plan) as evidenced by Florida's A+ Accountability Plan (Greene, 2001). The use of vouchers is fast becoming an acceptable response to failing school systems. For example, empowered by NCLB, the Bush administration (over the objections of Congress and the residents) imposed a $50 million voucher program on Washington D.C. (Bracey, 2004; Hursh, 2007). It is important to note that vouchers truly impact only poor, urban school systems, since these are the typical places where the standards of NCLB are consistently not met.

Belfield and Levin (2002) found in their research of privatization in education varying levels of success that were dependent on the context. Markets modestly improve

education quality in some instances and for some groups. Specifically, success is more likely in more affluent communities and not as apparent in urban areas. A critical analysis of this would lead to questions on who benefits and who does not. Research has shown that choice tends to be ineffective without the community and family support system that is taken for granted in middle and upper-middle class families (Cuban, 2004; Ravitch 2010). Equity in resources, opportunities and results differ depending on race, class and geography. Consequently, choice is not a viable option in poor neighborhoods when the major educational obstacles (poverty, racism, underfunding and lack of family support) are not addressed (McLaren, 2007). Advocates for vouchers and privatization argue the opposite, specifically that the competition of a marketplace will force schools to meet these demands or those schools will fail. The identification of differing levels of success dependent on class is an important caveat.

The one area that seems to provoke the most concern in regards to privatization efforts is in social inequities and stratification (Levin, 2001). Proponents and critics alike of privatization have identified social cohesion as a possible victim of market driven education. A significant public purpose of an education system is to provide a common experience for all students regardless of their background. One cannot expect a competitive approach to promote social cohesion. A related fear is that the use of markets into public education will negatively impact common societal goals such as equality and common societal values and objectives that do not translate into financial earnings. The concept of cost effectiveness is often incompatible with social equality. For example, many of the education reforms of the 1960's (special education, Title 9) when viewed

through the lens of cost effectiveness would not be condoned. These programs, although worthwhile in a 'common good' sense, do not qualify as cost efficient. There are no (quantifiable) cost savings related to their implementation. In fact, there is typically a cost increase. This is <u>an inherent contradiction in the use of markets for social programs.</u> Consensus from these researchers is that although privatization has benefits, it also comes with costs.

The most common example of privatization of public education has been food services. During the 19th and early 20th century, lunch programs were incorporated into the school budget, mostly through community efforts. With the inception of The National Lunch Act of 1946 and the National School Lunch Programs (NSLP), the federal government became formally involved in funding schools, and later, private companies, to feed school children (Urban & Wagoner, 2004; VanderShee, 2005). <u>Privatization efforts in the field of education in the United States had historically been in non-essential services, most commonly in the form of transportation, janitorial and cafeteria services (Burch, 2009). This changed in the 1990's with the rise of educational management organizations (EMOs). EMO's are defined as "For-profit organizations that contract to provide management and administration services for public school agencies such as charter schools"</u> (http://www.education.com/definition/educational-management-organization-emo/).

Apart from food, transportation and physical plant expenditures including school supplies, <u>EMO's and the educational voucher are the predominant privatization/market reforms of the 20th century</u>. This is an important distinction. Privatization services have

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long been ingrained in public education, and for good reasons. There are many operations within a school structure that can and should be delivered by private agencies. Yet, the core of public education, teaching and management, has, to this point, with a few exceptions, been preserved as a public function. Vouchers are a major step away from this arrangement.

For-profit education in public schools is a unique illustration of privatization efforts in education. The most prominent example of the attempt to completely privatize public education is the Edison Schools program. The brain child of Christopher Whittle, the Edison Schools project was created in 1991 with the goal of revolutionizing education by becoming high tech, expanding the school day and year, utilizing rich and relevant curriculum and all for no more cost than public schools (Molnar, 1996). Whittle devised his idea during the corporate boom of the 1990's. It was during this time period that a combination of an acceptance of neoliberal ideas and a perceived excess of capital existed. It is conceivable that had these conditions not existed the program would not have been initiated. This is a clear example of both the political and economic context in alignment with educational reform. Whittle believed that he could effectively create a for-profit school model that would demonstrate how the market would improve the outcomes and efficiencies of public schools (Cookson & Steffens, 2002).

Although initial responses to the Edison Schools were promising, subsequent research has shown that the effectiveness and results are nominal at best. It seems Whittle did quite well financially, but did not bring about any substantial success through his experiment. In fact, concerns with the misleading internal reports, forced adherence to

scripted curriculum, and insensitivity toward minority students have surfaced (Bracey, 2002; Cookson & Steffans, 2002; Cuban, 2004; Nelson & Van Meter, 2005). Specifically, there has been substantial 'disagreement' regarding the success of the Edison Schools. Evaluations from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and those conducted by groups including the U.S General Accounting Office (GAO), the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and evaluations from school districts in Dade County Florida, Minneapolis Minnesota, Dallas Texas and the official state evaluation of charter schools in Michigan all contrasted sharply with the self evaluations produced by the Edison Program (Bracey, 2002; Edison Learning 2010; Nelson & Van Meter, 2005). In fact, Edison's internal *Annual Reports* have been equated to infomercials (Bracey, 2002). In the AFT evaluation, Nelson and Van Meter (2003) found, "the company has struggled to raise achievements in many schools it runs" (p. ii) and that "Edison greatly exaggerates its claim that predominantly African-American schools it manages show improvement rates 'several' times higher than other public schools" (p.30). Specifically, the report found that "African-American" schools managed by Edison "were well below average among other public schools in their respective comparison groups" (p.30). Edison Learning commissioned an outside evaluation that was conducted by the RAND Corporation. The conclusion from the RAND evaluation (Gill, Hamilton, Lockwood, Marsh, Zimmer, Hill & Pribesh 2005) contrasted sharply with those listed above. RAND, a nonprofit research organization, found Edison to have a "coherent, comprehensive and ambitious strategy … to providing high quality education (p. xxi). It specifically complimented Edison's alignment with the current state of education reform.

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"Edison's well developed information system's focus on achievement-based accountability should make it especially well suited to the high-stakes testing environment of NCLB" (p. xxii).

How does one account for the discrepancies of the evaluations? Evaluators base their studies on criteria that are important to them. The RAND Corporation has supported similar education polices and initiatives. At the very least, it shows that support and dissent for these highly charged policies and programs are varied and likely politicized. From a critical standpoint, it would be helpful to consider these perspectives in regards to ideology, benefit and voice. The AFT has no voice in regards to Edison, which is inherently detrimental to their cause. Likewise, RAND has frequently been labeled a moderate think thank supporting both liberal and conservative research but is more often associated with conservative projects (Groseclose & Milo, 2005). This is one of the more significant concerns in regards to any evaluation. Interestingly enough, Edison's inability to make a profit is not disputed in any of the evaluations. (Bracey, 2002; Nelson & Van Meter, 2005). For their part, the Edison Schools decry the term "privatization" to describe their industry (Lubienski, 2006). Deborah McGriff, a former vice-president of Edison Schools argued: "It's not privatization…No one is selling a school". It seems the use of the word itself is looked upon suspiciously. There is no mention of the word in any NISL or DESE-related literature. Part of the problem with the identification of privatization resides in its definition. McGriff's statement may be true, depending on how the term is defined. She was correct in that "no one is selling a school". Therefore, it is essential for 'privatization' to be expounded upon.

This research has utilizes specific criteria in order to better clarify and identify aspects of privatization within the NISL program. Lubienski (2006) created a succinct typology of privatization that defines explicit characteristics of the phenomenon. These central characteristics can help demonstrate the complexity regarding the usage of the word. Lubienski demonstrated the range of privatization forms, from obvious to more subtle with the following typology (p. 13, 14):

1. "Privatization" involving the transfer of ownership from public or state to private interests.

2. Private provisioning without private ownership. Contracting private companies to run public entities.

3. Privatization is often evident in terms of governance or control, as when individuals gain more power over investing their public pensions

4. Less clear are issues of funding or access where individuals pay user-fees for services which were previously provided through tax revenue

5. Even more ambiguous are examples where goods and services remain outside private control in terms of ownership, governance, provision, funding and access, but the production or provision of such services is modeled on a private business-style paradigm. Here, market values are both elevated and internalized.

6. As reforms in many areas seek to introduce profit-style incentives, orientations of the production or provision of a good can change from a general to an individual focus as well.

Comparative Leadership Curricula

NISL is a relatively new training program. In my investigation, I have discovered other similar leadership curricula. Two that stand out are the Broad Superintendants Academy and Residency Academy and New York City's Leadership Academy. The Broad Academy is a subsidiary of the same Broad Foundation that has supported NISL. It shares many of the qualities of the NISL philosophy, including international benchmarking (using examples of other nations' structures and systems), use of case studies and an emphasis on effectiveness and business management. It is a privately funded program that is fundamentally concerned with future jobs and national economic security (http://broadacademy.org/about/overview.html). The Broad Foundation also identifies itself as an organization that is profoundly invested in placing non-education leaders into urban school leadership positions. Broad seeks out leaders in the military, business, government and education for their training. Regarding business leaders, they conclude:

> By bringing private-sector best practices and a corporate sense of urgency and accountability to a school district, Fellows from the private sector do not just increase effectiveness of district operations, but ultimately impact student achievement. For example, by identifying areas of inefficiency, money is saved that can then be used to benefit students, like buying new textbooks or increasing teacher salaries. (http://www.broadacademy.org/join/leaders/private.html)
> Broad has two distinct flagship initiatives, a residency program for placing "participants into full-time high-level managerial positions in school districts, CMOs

(Charter Management Organizations), and federal/state departments of education"
(http://broadresidency.org/about/overview.html) and their Superintendent Academy. The
primary goal of the Academy is to train and place non-educator executives into
superintendant positions. Both the Broad Academy and Residency have been identified
as "pipelines" to place and advance their membership in leadership positions (Barkan,
2011). Broad, emphasizing that more than half of their graduates have a background
outside of education, cite the following statistics in regards to their placement success:

> Academy graduates have filled 71 superintendent positions and 87 senior school
> district executive positions. Graduates of the program currently work as
> superintendents or school district executives in 53 cities across 28 states. In 2009,
> 43 percent of all large urban superintendent openings were filled by Broad
> Academy graduates (http://www.broadacademy.org/fellows/results.html)

Participant's tuition and travel expenses are paid for by The Broad Center for the
Management of School Systems. The program cites presenters from a wide range of
backgrounds including military leaders, business CEO's, government officials and former
education leaders (mostly retired superintendants). The curriculum for the program is also
quite telling. Listed below is the program overview:

Instructional alignment:

- Raising overall student achievement and eliminating achievement gaps using
  research-based strategies
- Developing systems to assess and improve the quality of instruction
- Appropriate use of student assessment data

- Reviewing curriculum and instructional material

- Assessing professional development impact

Operational excellence:

- Human resources: recruitment, hiring and evaluation

- Multi-year budgeting and equitable allocation of resources

- Fair and transparent maintenance and capital improvement processes

- Performance management systems

- Improving the effectiveness of business operations services

Stakeholder engagement:

- Partnering with key stakeholders to support the district's work

- Strategic partnering with the school board to advance district priorities

  Maintaining labor-management partnerships aligned to student achievement goals

  Fundraising aligned with overall strategy

- Forging relationships with parents and the community

- Working effectively with the media to communicate good news and build

  community understanding of work

(http://www.broadacademy.org/about/services/training.html)

This business influence and language is openly embraced as is evidenced in their

curriculum and the descriptive language of the training, "sessions cover CEO-level skills

and the best practices in education reform leadership"

(http://broadacademy.org/about/overview.htm). What is equally telling is what is not

listed and would be expected of a more progressive training program.   For example, this

list begins with the assumption that the district and the city are basically doing the right thing and that what is needed most is good management to do even more of the same. The superintendent here is empowered, but not empowering; there is no emphasis on developing the voice of parents or promoting local (teacher, principal) leadership. Posted on their website is their ultimate objective: "Wanted: the nation's most talented executives to run the business of urban education" (http://broadacademy.org/).

The Broad foundation has also been a staunch supporter of charter school initiatives, a previously identified example of the privatization of public education. When viewed through Lubienski's (2006) privatization lens, Broad's programs display elements of production or provision of services modeled on a private business-style paradigm, a private provision (of leadership training) without private ownership of the leadership training function and the introduction of profit-style incentives, orientations of the production or provision of a service that changes from a general to an individual focus. There are also displays of a neoliberal influence in areas such as accountability, data-driven decision making, performance pay and standards that promote completion. For these reasons, this program has patent indicators of privatization goals and themes.

The Leadership Academy in New York was an initiative of the Bloomberg administration in 2003 that was created to mentor new principals through their Aspiring Principals Program (APP). The New York City district created the program in order to have a greater role in the training and development of its school leaders (Olsen, 2007). The APP is also a privately funded program that had a distinctively business executive training agenda (Ravitch, 2010). The APP is 14-month leadership program that focuses

on "problem-based and action-learning methodologies to prepare participants to lead instructional improvement efforts in the city's high-need public schools—those marked by high poverty and low student achievement"

(http://www.nycleadershipacademy.org/aspiringprincipals/app_overview). This program, similar to NISL, is paid for by the New York Department of Education. Unlike NISL (to date), there is also a certification pathway that allows participants to receive the New York State administrative certification (SAS/SBL). One element that distinguishes the APP from NISL and Broad is their residency component. Participants in the APP are required to take part in a 10-month residency/internship under the mentorship of an experienced principal. Similar to NISL, the APP also focuses on preparing educators in cohorts to become principals. This differs from Broad programs. In the New York City Aspiring Principals Program School-Level Evaluation (2009), Corcoran, Schwartz and Weinstein found that the program was very successful in bringing a common leadership approach to the N.Y.C. school system. This evaluation, funded by the Broad and Dell Foundations, presented the improved test scores (Regents) as evidence of the program's success. Although there has been literature in regards to the effectiveness of these programs, I have not been able to identify research associating them with privatization. There is also a gap in the literature specifically in analysis of these programs from the critical perspective. From the initial research, the APP program has limited elements of a neoliberal/privatization agenda apart from their managerial and business style emphasis.

 Since NISL is an educator-training program, it is worth considering how it relates and compares to both professional development and certification/degree programs

typically taken by educators in Massachusetts. School leadership training by private organizations is not unheard of. There are many private colleges that train public teachers and administrators. Comparisons to academic (university/college) degree and certification programs reveal some interesting differences. First, NISL is a scripted program. Everything from the daily agenda, to exercises and reading materials are exactly the same as every other cohort, in every other state. Secondly, the instructors of NISL are typically retired educators who are hired to replicate and present the NISL curriculum. They are trained on what and how to disseminate the NISL material only. I was privy to elements of this type of training in my cohort. Comparatively, academic programs introduce and rely on theory and are taught (primarily) and directed by tenured professors. Although tenured teaching staff is by no means the norm in academia, the influence of academic freedom is. The importance of tenured vs. trained instructors is based on academic freedom. Theoretically, tenure allows academics the liberty to pursue critical, theoretical instruction free from undue backlash or influence (Giroux, 2007).

Another interesting aspect of the NISL program is how it has coordinated with some universities and colleges to provide graduate course credit for participation in the program. Presently, Lesley University in Massachusetts offers a 24-program credit transfer to their education doctorate program upon completion of the NISL training. In Massachusetts, NISL joined Boston University, Harvard, Northeastern and the University of Massachusetts Boston to collaborate on a Wallace Foundation proposal to build a pipeline of leaders for the Boston Public Schools. Although the proposal was unsuccessful, the NISL inclusion with this group demonstrates the degree to which NISL

has been accepted as an equal partner in the development of school leaders for the district. NISL, however, is not yet in the business of preparing educators for certification of state licensure. As of 2011, the completion of NISL does not lead to a DESE administrator license, although, there has been discussion (during one of my cohort's classes) that completion of NISL may become a route to superintendant licensure in the future. Training and continual education is a norm for educators. Teachers and administrators are routinely required to attend professional development such as Research for Better Teaching (RBT) - a development program that teaches instruction and classroom management skills - and are obliged to complete master degree programs in order to obtain professional status. Although professional development is not typically optional, it is tied directly into a district's educator development plan and thus is both transparent and directly linked to re-certification.

Perhaps the most important differences between NISL and academic programs are their goals and approaches. As a participant of NISL, our focus was on raising student assessment scores and developing a type of culture within our schools that would help facilitate improvement through management approaches. Comparatively, my education at the University of Massachusetts Boston was based on examining, comparing and developing various theoretical lenses while exploring a wide range of approaches on education as a whole. In many ways, this is the ultimate (neoliberal) appeal of NISL. The theory top-heavy academic programs often lack what practitioners desire most – situational training. In fact, this was what I found initially refreshing about NISL. The training was rich with practical alternatives and strategies for dealing with issues such as

improving a school culture, organizing an effective vision statement and how to coach in content areas that are not my specialty. The question about what is the most appropriate balance between theory and practice is not addressed in this research. It is worthwhile to acknowledge the benefits of both. The concept of public accountability does lie at the center of this research. College and universities, be they public or private, make transparent their approach and emphasis as they compete for enrollment. Yet, what happens to them if they turn out inept educators? The absence of accountability is a key concern and indicator for/of neoliberal reform. The lack of clear accountability systems regarding how academia trains educators are one of the key reasons programs like NISL were developed. Transparency of ideology and accountability for training are two areas this research has examined.

Previous Research on NISL

One of the most alarming concerns raised by this study is the presence of absence of criticism and critical research of the NISL program. Although mentioned in the Rationale Section, it is important to emphasize its significance. When I began the initial research, I was amazed that other than some performance evaluations, there was no academic research on the NISL program. A Google search revealed a handful of pages that all originated from NISL, DESE or NCEE. When refined by Google Scholar, the list became shortened but the results are the same, NISL information by either NISL itself or the funders and users of the program. In a search of *Education Week* of the past five years, four articles are identified as having "NISL" in it.

1. One is about how NISL uses computer simulations (http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/10/31/10nisl.h27.html?qs=NISL).

2. One is on how states are beginning to take a bigger role in principal training (http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/07/16/43zahorchak.h27.html?qs=NISL

3. Another is on principal training (http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/09/12/03wallace_prep.h27.html?qs=NISL)

4. And one is on early learning transitions (http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/04/15/29zahorchak.h29.html?qs=NISL

A search of the *American Education Research Association* (AERA) on NISL resulted in no finds. This is also the case in a search of the *Education Leadership* and *Association for Supervision and Curriculum* (ASCD) web site. I contacted Lesley University in Massachusetts one of two doctoral programs that accept transfer credit from NISL participation (24 credits). Their program representative informed me that although NISL works closely with Lesley, there is not any dissertation works by their students currently being done on it (S. Gould, personal communication, June 9, 2011). Similarly, I have not found any studies being conducted by students at NOVA Southeastern University on NISL. NOVA also allows for transfer credit for completion of the NISL program. The absence of critical research is an important element of this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction to Methods

In this chapter, I detail the methods of examination, the rationale behind their use

and the strengths and limitations they present. The criteria for these tools, listed in

chapter two, are further defined.   This chapter provides a description of the theory and

school of thought behind the methods of this research. The research design or plan is

defined as the "intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry and specific methods"

(Creswell 2009, p. 5). Chapter three presents and describes the research design for this

study.

The methods that I use to examine the NISL program are historical content

analysis and qualitative methods, specifically interviewing. Qualitative research is a

means of examination that seeks to understand how participants in an environment

construct the world around them (Glesne, 2006). Marshall and Rossman (2006) define it

as, "a broad approach to the study of social phenomena" (p. 2). This method is best

suited when collecting data on complex social phenomena like the NISL organization in

which there is the possibility of differences of perspective. Marshall and Rossman (2006)

compiled a list of qualitative research strengths. The following are applicable and pertinent to this study:

- Research that elicits multiple constructed realities, studied holistically;

- Research that elicits tacit knowledge and subjective understanding and interpretations;

- Research on little-known phenomena or innovative systems;

- Research on informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organizations;

- Research on real, as opposed to stated, organizational goals.

Qualitative research ultimately relies upon the experiences of those involved in the phenomenon. In the investigation of NISL, individual NISL members and leaders' beliefs and feelings about the program have been included. The qualitative approach also works effectively when used in conjunction with a theoretical lens (Creswell 2009).

It is important for the researcher to acknowledge that investigation does not occur within a theoretical vacuum. Glesne (2006) explains, "Your theoretical perspective…and values affect what you look for and, consequently, how you describe what you find" (p. 28). This idea is relevant to both the use of critical theory and the historical conceptual framework for this study. Clearly, the critical lens influences what we see and how that is interpreted. It can be argued that qualitative research and critical theory can undermine each other. To illustrate, Marshall and Rossman (2006, p.5) describe the foundation of "traditional" qualitative research:

Traditional qualitative research assumes that:

- The researcher learns from participants to understand the meaning of their lives but should maintain a certain stance of neutrality; and

- Society is reasonably structured and is orderly.

These bullets are in conflict with the tenets of critical theory. These are important considerations in light of the goal for thoughtful and ethical research. Creswell (2009) explains how theory can be ethically used in a study. "This lens (the theoretical lens in use) becomes an advocacy perspective that shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change" (p. 62). This is the heart of critical theory, a call for change. Consequently, it is impossible to remain neutral while using the critical theory. Critical analysis strengthens the research by uncovering what is obscured and hidden, by drawing attention to what is not obvious and to voices not heard, and by illuminating what is being said and left "unsaid" as well as identifying the beneficiaries of the program. In this manner, critical theory informs the methodology in regards to all the forms of data collected. In this study, I analyze the following data sources:

- The NISL curriculum/Instructor's Guide (3 Large binders encompassing units 1-12)

- DESE website and reports that address the NISL program

- NISL's website

- NCEE literature and website

- Interviews from cohort participants, NISL instructors and leaders, and DESE representatives.

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The triangulation of these data points has enhanced the richness and clarity of the research. Triangulation is the "act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point" (Marshall & Rossman, p. 144). For all of these data sources, I apply a critical lens to help locate what I am looking for and then better understand it. All information, even discrepant analysis that does not fit the framework, has been presented.

Participants

The participants for the interviews in this study were adults who have, or had have an involvement with/in the NISL program. The goal was to interview the "right" people, a cross-section of individuals who would present a diverse perspective on the program. Primarily, they were educators who have either completed the NISL training or are presently in a cohort. NISL facilitators and leaders are also interviewed for the research. I decided to work with these individuals due to the nature of this inquiry. A significant part of this study was structured to determine how educators perceive the NISL program. The question of what NISL was, specifically what effect it had on public education in this study was best posed to those involved in its application. This was especially appropriate in the light of the "presentism" defined in chapter one as being an issue in school reform.

The following is a list of individuals that were interviewed, their relevant role in regards to NISL and the manner in which I spoke with them:

- Rich Moglia-Cannon (RMC). Chief Financial Officer NCEE - conversed via email

- Dr. Andrew Chen (AC). Lead Math Facilitator of NISL – interviewed in person

- Janet Strauss (JT). Lead Facilitator / coordinator of NISL in Massachusetts, original cohort member – interviewed in person

- Jennifer Beck-Wilson (JBW). NISL Director of Instruction and Operation – interviewed in person

- Dr. Robert Hughes (RH). President and CEO of NISL – interviewed in person

- Bobbie D'Alessandro (BD). Former DESE employee, national consultant to NISL – interviewed in person

- Dr. David DeRuosi (DDR). Former facilitator of NISL in Massachusetts, original cohort member – interviewed in person.

- Anthony Neves (AN). NISL facilitator in Massachusetts, original cohort member – interviewed in person.

- Dr. David Driscoll (DD). Former Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, NISL consultant – interviewed in person.

- Danielle Mokaba (DM). Current NISL participant – interviewed in person

- Kelly Moss (KM). Current NISL participant – interviewed in person

- John Obremski (JO). Current NISL participant - interviewed in person

The interviewee's initials (in parentheses) are coded and are used to identify the source of the information in chapters 4 and 5. Their initials follow material provided by them. The participants were chosen for a combination of reasons. They all have differing roles in education and many are at different stages of their career. Members of the first NISL cohort (2005) were targeted to see how their experience might have differed from newer

cohorts. Also of interest was how their initial impressions may have changed over time. The current cohort is referred to as cohort 2010 since that is the year they began the program.

Research Parameter and Time Line:

The interviews were conducted face to face and included open-ended questions in order to tease out views and beliefs of the participants regarding NISL and its leadership development program. Considerations for appropriate, convenient and available locations for the interviews were paramount (Glesne, 2006). The interviews lasted no more than one hour, and included prepared questions. They will be open in nature in order to facilitate unexpected leads during the conversation. The question's applicability depended on the role and position of the interviewee. A more substantial matrix that demonstrates the alignment of interview questions, research questions and specific participants is attached (Appendix B). Questions included:

- In your opinion, what are the goals of the organization; what do they hope to accomplish (say within 5 years)?
- What is the vision of the organization; where do they hope their organization will be in 5-10 years?
- What are the motives for the NISL movement; what is the rationale for the program?
- In your view, who does NISL speak to/for? Who benefits most from the implementation of NISL strategies?

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Who shapes and holds the goals of the organization?

Who determines the vision?

Who is the intended audience? Who should be paying attention?

Who will benefit from NISL?

- What would you change about the program?

  What is missing or left out or what should be expanded of the readings,

  lectures, presenters?

- How would you characterize the presenters/speakers/teachers in NISL?

  How were they selected?

  What group do they represent? What group is not represented?

- How would you characterize the readings for NISL?

  How were these selected?

  Who decides if and when it should be updated?

  What is the thinking behind the changes?

  Are they philosophical shifts or updates?

  Whose voice is being heard here? Whose voice is missing?

- Try to remember what you believed about education prior to your experience with

  NISL? How has NISL changed your thinking about:

  Leadership

  Student Achievement

  Developing a school vision

  The role of public education

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- What do you know about the history of NISL and the reasons for its

  development?

- Could you describe the essential components of your experience with the NISL

  program?

- Have you discussed any aspect of the NISL curriculum with your colleagues? If

  so, please

- As a result of the NISL training, are you doing anything differently in your

  current professional work?

These topical interviews focused on the program and the participant view of it, not their

personal lives.

Interviews can be designed to yield large quantities of data and can help a researcher

understand meaning from the point of view of the participant. There are, however,

weaknesses of this method of gathering information. They include the utter dependence

the researcher has on the participants' cooperation, truthfulness as well as the possible

misunderstanding and miscommunication inherent in the activity itself (Marshall &

Rossman, 2006). Interviewing in qualitative research, especially in light of the theoretical

lens used in this study, has a strong moral element to it. Creswell (2009 p.90-91) lists

some important areas interviewers need to be cognizant of. Interviews of this nature

must consider:

- How the interview will improve the human situation (as well as enhance scientific

  knowledge).

- How a sensitive interview interaction may be stressful for the participants.

- Whether participants have a say in how their statements are interpreted.

- How critically the interviewees might be questioned.

- What the consequences of the interview for the interviewees and the groups to which they belong to might be.

These concerns are particularly relevant in this study, due to the nature of the inquiry. In light of my presuppositions, interviewing NISL facilitators and the DESE representative required sensitivity and tact.

Participants were given a packet with a consent form, a description of the study and the goals for it (Appendix A). The interviews were conducted in the early fall of 2011 with the use of electronic recording devices (with the participant's consent). Transcribed material was further checked for human error by the researcher. The data acquired was transcribed and analyzed in the late fall or early winter of 2011. The risk to participants in this study was minimal. All efforts were made to conduct an ethical inquiry by respecting the right to privacy and upholding the guidelines of the established institutional review boards.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for this research came in the following forms: primary sources, secondary sources, internet (websites), and interviews. For all these sources, descriptive and non-evaluating note taking was used. Most of the historical information has been presented in chapter two. There was additional historical research in the form of primary documents surrounding the NISL, NCEE and the MA-DESE relationships. These included the

newly released Old Dominion Report (July 2011) on the impact of the NISL program in Massachusetts, and some very revealing material authored by Marc Tucker. Specifically, his newly released *Surpassing Shanghai, An Agenda for American Education Built on the World's Leading Systems* (Fall 2011), *Standing on the Shoulders of Giant, An American Agenda for Education Reform* (May, 2011) and two articles in Education Week he authored in October and December of 2011. This information was applied and used in conjunction with data gathered through the interviews. In order to help determine the levels and extent of a privatization and neoliberal influence, criteria established (chapter 2) was utilized in order to flush out these qualities. For instance, regarding neoliberal influence in NISL, the following was coded for:

- Belief that the market is a better driver of public education than the government
- Belief that education is positively correlated with the national economy
- Privatization of education through the support of the state and federal government
- Business supported school reform that stresses accountability, data-driven decision making, performance pay and standards that promote completion

Regarding privatization, I coded for the following derived from Lubienski's (2006) typology:

- "Privatization" involving the transfer of ownership from public or state to private interests.
- Private provisioning without private ownership.
- Privatization in terms of governance or control

- Privatization through issues of funding or access

- Privatization where goods and services remain outside private control in terms of ownership, governance, provision, funding and access, but the production or provision of such services is modeled on a private business-style paradigm.

One area that was further analyzed was the required reading list of the NISL curriculum. These reading were re-evaluated in light of the material learned from the interviews. As a critical researcher, I was also looking at the ability of respondents to offer ideas, opinions, thoughts or a voice that was different or even contrary to the NISL agenda.

In order to effectively evaluate these readings, I utilized elements of content analysis. Content analysis is a technique that allows researchers to examine large amounts of data (books, readings, etc) in a systematic fashion (GAO, 1996). This is specifically useful researching NISL since content analysis is a powerful tool in which to discover and describe the focus of groups, institutions and individuals (Carley 1993, Stemler, 2001). Content analysis is not simply counting word usage in a text. I determined categories of concepts that are repeated in the texts reviewed using the same codes for neoliberalism and privatization. There is a range of different levels of content analysis. The full application of content analysis would include an exhaustive breakdown of all NISL text, word for word. Since this is a complimentary strategy, I used content analysis to distinguish trends in the material. The association of text, author and objective of the curriculum indentified these trends. I utilized content analysis in the following manner. I reviewed the entire curriculum presented by NISL. I re-read the literature and examined the unit guidelines in the curriculum binders. The guidelines explained to instructors how

they were to present the material, what to focus on and in what manner to facilitate instruction. I charted the author's objectives, literature's emphasis, and its usage in the program in order to identify relationships and trends in the curriculum. A full curriculum map is presented in Appendix C. In the curriculum and interview analysis, I looked for specific ideas and examples that were not aligned to the NISL's articulated vision and mission.

The neoliberal and privatization indicators cited are used as instruments to tease out a better understanding on the essence of NISL. Ultimately, this is a critical analysis of NISL and as such I do not rely on empirical measurements for conclusions. The goal of the research is to answer the simple question, what is NISL. As a critical theorist, I ask many questions of/about NISL. In this study, I analyze the required readings, authors, cases studies and course/unit purposes. As the material is reviewed, the critical lens and methodology are applied to the findings. With each piece of information (whether from websites, documents or interviews), questions are asked. Who has power? Who has a voice? Who was excluded? Who profits from NISL? Who wrote the curriculum? Whose knowledge counts? Whose knowledge is not included, does not count? Who gets to tell the story? Whose story is being heard and whose doesn't?

An additional information-grid was utilized to organize the data collected on NISL from both Massachusetts (state) and the rest of the country (national). This is largely an organizational tool. The documents and statistics included the presented literature for the NISL program as well as data collected from the state and federal education boards involved. Key informants were individuals who were connected to the

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facilitation and implementation of NISL while the participants were the actual cohort

members, past and present.   The data collection grid presented below was instrumental in

the organization of this data for this study.

Data Collection Grid:				
	Documents	Statistics	Key Informants	Participants
National				
State				

Limitations and Conclusions:

In a study of this nature, there were inherent concerns over validity. There were

validity concerns in regards to creating tools that would give me the data my questions

sought as well as in my internal biases as a researcher. For instance, are the interview

questions being asked aligned to the research questions, theoretical lenses and the

literature review of this study? Also, one of the most important elements of critical

theory is the understanding of voice. Yet, whose voice is applying the neoliberal

identification? Igoe and Brockington (2007) have argued that, "the term neoliberalism is

at risk of becoming nothing more than a vehicle for academics who like to criticize things

that they do not like about the world" (p. 5). There is also valid concern in regards to the

assessment tools created in this study and the general historical interpretations. I have

included a matrix to help justify the interview questions in light of the need to align them

properly (Appendix B). The long-standing debate/discussion over whether history is fact or opinion represents differing views over what history essentially is. This black and white dichotomy is an oversimplification of the commonly held contemporary belief of which there are elements of both fact and opinion (Fulbrook, 2002).

Similar to the limitations regarding historical knowledge and theoretical-driven research, the researcher is undeniably influenced by those values and biases that affect all research. The application of content analysis provides a good example. There are differing degrees to which content analysis can be applied. In a quantitative study, the entire curriculum could be analyzed using software designed to track words and concepts. In this study, I handle the curriculum in a highly qualitative fashion. Although this approach provides richness, it is susceptible to bias of text and topic choice (Carley, 1993). Additionally, there were legitimate limitations in regards to the indicators used to determine neoliberalism. There is no agreed upon list detailing its properties. A fellow researcher also developed the indicator list used for privatization. Some of the criteria are very simple, such as if an organization is private and for profit. Others, though, are more open to interpretation, especially when they are based on an interviewee's opinion. Lastly, there are limitations regarding the number of people interviewed. This is a relative small sample size since there have been hundreds of educators trained by NISL. The focus for this study was to interview individuals who could best chronicle and explain how NISL became what it is.

The tools used for this research are designed for the researcher to make sense of the data collected. They derive from theoretical (critical), historical (conceptual) and

personal (researcher) lenses and thus by definition must be biased. This is in fact an essential "truth" in critical theory. Swartz (1997) aptly noted; "If one accepts Bourdieu's claim that intellectual work is inescapably bound by viewpoint and functions as strategy within fields of struggle for recognition and legitimating, what form of objective practice is possible" (p.270)? The answer to this dilemma is to engage in reflective practice or reflective orientation. The idea is that every academic inquiry requires reflection and acknowledgment of bias (Swartz, 1997). This research is not designed to be systematically replicated, nor is that a qualitative goal (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). At best, these tools and the study itself will be a model for additional research on reform movements, specifically through the use of history.

This study illuminated a specific reform group (NISL) while drawing much needed attention to contemporary education reform. The completion of this study has yielded an extensive collection of data and analysis of the NISL organization. A further consequence is the creation of a model for looking for neoliberal and/or privatization elements and influences in educational reform efforts.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH CONDUCTED

Introduction

The analysis of The National Institute of School Leadership for this research was based on answering the following questions. 1. What does critical analysis reveal about NISL's origins, objectives and financial and philosophical foundations? 2. How well is the NISL agenda (as determined by critical analysis) understood or known by the educators who have been through the training? Like all research, some basic assumptions were present prior to the data collections stage. They included a concern that elements of privatization and neoliberalism are infiltrating public education as part of contemporary education reform.

The qualitative research was conducted through content analysis and the interview process. During the months of September, October and November of 2011, key stakeholders of NISL, relevant Massachusetts DESE members and cohort participants were interviewed. In some instances, interviewees made suggestions of individuals who could provide additional information. Also during this time, the researcher continued to examine and analyze documents connected to the topic, specifically the NISL curriculum.

In this chapter, I begin with a recent evaluation conducted on the effectiveness of NISL.
I introduce NISL as a component of NCEE and then present the interview and curriculum
data I collected separately. In chapter five, all of the materials are brought together for
final analysis.

2011 Old Dominion Report

NISL leadership understands that there is a need to accentuate its achievements
(RH, JBW & JS). In July of 2011, a new independent evaluation of NISL's effectiveness
in raising student performance in Massachusetts was conducted by Old Dominion
University. This report came out of the Center for Educational Partnerships whose
mission is to:

> establish collaborative educational enterprises with schools and school divisions
> that support dissemination of proven practices, rigorous field trials of promising
> models, and development and testing of innovative research-based models in
> collaboration with Old Dominion University's primary educational partners.
> (http://education.odu.edu/tcep/mission.shtml)

Old Dominion has previously conducted three other evaluations of NISL in
Pennsylvania (http://www.nisl.net/results/statewide.php) in which positive findings were
reported as well. Although commissioned by NISL, further analysis of the study (and its
lead researcher) sheds minimal concern over its objectivity. The director of the CEP and
lead researcher, Dr. John Nunnery, has an extensive background in accountability and

assessment systems. He also has spent a good deal of his career working to better the needs of low-income students. His biography on The Old Dominion website cites:

> His research and leadership interests are focused on providing effective solutions for educators of students at risk of failure due to economic hardship or historical deprivation. He has published more than 150 research reports, journal articles, and book chapters in this area, and currently serves as Associate Editor for the Journal of Education of Students Placed At Risk. His work has been cited as meeting the highest standards of rigor by the National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform, the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, and the Education Commission of the States.
>
> (http://education.odu.edu/tcep/directory.shtml)

Nunnery's background and that of the Center for Educational Partnerships depict an emphasis on practical strategies to address disadvantaged schools and students. From my research conducted, this study was both scientific and rigorous. For all its effectiveness (Meristem Report 2009, Old Dominion Report 2011), NISL has received little national fanfare.

The study sought to compare the performance level in Mathematics and English/Language Arts between schools served by Cohort 2 NISL –trained principals (the second cohort trained in Massachusetts) and comparison schools that were not. "The analysis sample included only those schools whose principal began the NISL program in 2007, completed the NISL program, and remained at the same school from 2007 through the end of the 2010 school year" (Old Dominion, 2011, p.4). In their final analysis, 38

NISL schools and 997 comparison schools (schools with similar free/reduced lunch, previous assessments scores, and percentages IEP and LEP status of students) were included. The study was a pure quantitative analysis that focused on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Program test scores. It found overwhelming statistical evidence that schools with leaders trained by NISL had "consistent and fairly immediate" gains in student achievement. The report identified a .8 Cohen's effect size (d) of schools with NISL trained leaders in mathematics and reading. Although results may be *statistically* significant, as in this case, the effect size tells us if the results matter; are they large enough to make a difference? .8 is accepted as a significant or large effect from the application of NISL training on leaders (Thalheimer & Cook, 2002).

Ultimately, the study found that schools led by principals trained in NISL (and retained in their original school) outgained schools whose leaders were not. The study concluded, "When it is considered such effects apply to an entire school and that the NISL program costs only about $4,000 per participant principal, the educational value to individual schools and to multiple schools state-wide is obvious."(p. 12).

This report should be read with caution and a critical eye. It is important to note, correlations do not prove causation. We do not know if the MCAS scores rose because the principals received NISL training or, alternatively, if leaders from good schools with high MCAS scores were more likely to enroll in the NISL program. Perhaps they were an already good leader, which was reflected in their MCAS scores and in their pro-active interest in NISL.

NISL and NCEE

Conceptualizing who and what NISL is as an organization was made most clear from a visit to its headquarters. The primary focus of the trip to Washington was to better understand where NISL came from and how it operated. NISL's headquarters is located in the heart of Washington DC between the George Washington University hospital and the White House. The office itself is found in the middle of a modern building that also contained numerous retail and restaurants on the first floor. I had scheduled two one-hour interviews that were held on consecutive days. As I entered the office on day one, a prominent sign over the receptionist's head was the first thing that greeted me. There were two signs actually. Side by side, (of equal size) were signs for NISL and NCEE. In the subsequent conversations, it was conveyed to me that both organizations shared the office space equally (RH & JBW). NCEE – NISL connection has always been of interest in this research.

NCEE is a non-profit, policy analysis and development organization. NISL is instrument of NCEE. Essentially, both are under the direction of Marc Tucker. The National Institute of School Leadership is the brainchild of Marc Tucker and in many ways reflects his vision for public education. At the end of his latest book, *Surpassing Shanghai, An Agenda for America's Education Built on the World's Leading Systems* (2011) Tucker is described as "the President of the National Center on Education and the Economy, America's Choice, Inc., and the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce…the director of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, which created the National Board for Professional Teaching Standard" (p 221).

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NCEE is a larger (in application) organization than NISL with a wider range of operations and objectives. NCEE mission, as stated on their website is as follows. (http://www.ncee.org/about-ncee/mission/)

> The National Center on Education and the Economy was <u>created in 1988</u> to <u>analyze the implications of changes in the international economy for American education</u>, <u>formulate an agenda for American education</u> based on that analysis and seek wherever possible to <u>accomplish that agenda through policy change and development of the resources educators would need to carry it out.</u>

> Since 1988, NCEE has been investigating and <u>analyzing</u> the ways in which other nations <u>govern, finance and organize their education systems</u> (<u>benchmarking</u>). Along with the analysis, NCEE has issued numerous publications regarding where schools need to go, and how they can get there. The following programs and initiatives have been developed by NCEE to carry out their goals: (http://www.ncee.org/)

- *Excellence For All* – previously called the Board Examination System, its goal is to help students succeed post public school in post-secondary education by aligning instruction and examination through international benchmarking.

- *International Education Benchmarking* – This program has been assembling over 20 years of benchmarking data to be used for recommendations and initiatives.

- *Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce* – This assembly of business executives, government, civil rights and education leaders made recommendations for the skills necessary to be successful in the 21st century. <u>In 1990,</u> the report of the first Commission of the Skills of the American Workforce, *High Skills or Low*

Wages! was released to the public. In it, the call for the standards movement was given voice. NCEE claims that from it, the Common Core State Standard Initiative was launched. The commission also detailed how the imminent globalization of the world economy necessitated a massive scale change of the American public school (http://www.skillscommission.org/?page_id=296). NCEE declared the "world was flat" fifteen years before it was coined.

- *Tough Choices or Tough Times State Consortium* – A grouping of states that agreed to implement prescribed changes advocated by NCEE in their publication of *Tough Choices or Tough Times* (2007). This divisive report set forth detailed recommendations for "re-tooling" the public education system in the United States. It was met with sharp reactions in the field of education. In response to the New Commissions Report, Lawrence Mishel and Richard Rothstein (2007) countered, "We distract ourselves from grappling with serious economic challenges by a myopic focus on school improvement alone" and presented a more grave accusation with, "flawed economic analysis leads the panel to go beyond reasonable recommendations to several that are reckless" (p.739). Another critic, Denis Doyle (2007), also had his concerns with the Commission's findings. In one example, he examined a financial recommendation by the panel. He looked at the "imaginary fund" discussed in the report to help pay for college tuitions. "What is missing from this picture? A sense of the public reality of public finance…the New Commission's name for the fund is more apt than its members may have intended: 'imaginary fund' indeed" (p. 734).

- *Workforce Development Program* – Provided support and advice to policymakers, states and localities to create workforce development systems to help hire and train the newly emerging workforce. This program is currently working with *Jobs for the Future* to create a path for student to transition into the workforce from school.

- *America's Choice* – Works with low performing schools to raise their performance through professional development and technical assistance. America's Choice has also had an enormous impact on public education. Since 1989, America's Choice has been partnering with states, districts as well as the private provider Pearson to provide professional development, instructional programs such as the Ramp-Up for student remediation and curriculum coaching and materials (http://www.americaschoice.org/whatweoffer).

These initiatives have all had significant influences on public education, the degree of which I was caught off guard by. As I investigated NCEE more, it became clear that all of these programs work in conjunction and collaboration with each other. Formally, NCEE, NISL and America's Choice are members of the State Alliance for High Performance. Along with the Council of Chief State School Operators, the Consortium of Policy Research in Education and the Asia Society, this collaboration works together to benchmark and implement international strategies and models of public education (http://www.americaschoice.org/statealliance). NCEE has more than one horse in the race.

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Interview Findings

NISL is a very specific leadership development program of NCEE. The headquarters was of modest size. It included 7-8 visible offices and a conference room where I was able to conduct my two interviews. I spoke with Jennifer Beck-Wilson (Director of Instruction and Operation) on day one and Dr. Robert Hughes (president and CEO) on day two. Both were warm and gracious, as were the other members of the NISL staff that I was introduced to. There was a casual, pleasant manner to the individuals that I met.

In the fall of 2000, Tucker contacted Dr. Bob Hughes and asked if he could interview him. Tucker had gained initial funding from the Carnegie group in New York and was seeking to understand how the philanthropic organizations had spent scores of millions of dollars to reform education and "the needle didn't seem to move" (RH). Reading scores were flat, kids were bored and there was a governance concern with how the federal government had little influence and funding in public education. Tucker identified leadership as an essential component of school improvement. He wanted to cross study how other fields such as law, medicine, business, and the military conduct leadership training. Over a few days, Hughes and two other former Deans of the National War College talked with Tucker. Robert Hughes has a doctorate in linguistics and possesses a prestigious background as the former Dean of the National War College and a leader in executive leadership programs, organizational diplomacy and strategic thinking. The National War College, founded in the early stages of the Cold War in 1946 (also known as National), represents the "pinnacle of the professional military education

system" (Hughes & Haney, p.135). Much of the military education system benchmarking comes from this component of the National Defense University.

It is important to note that these conversations occurred in 2000. Many of the practices addressed were not routinely taking place in public education at the time. Hughes recalled several essential points that were brought up in their conversations that pertained to the comparison between military and education leadership training.

1. Military leadership focused on its own practice, especially in the area of best practices. In contrast with public education, the military spent considerable resources on examining local effective strategies. Although peer-observation is more universal in 2012, it was not commonly practiced in 2000. Hughes presented the military leadership training as more "self-aware" and as a consequence, more accountable.

2. Military leadership professional development was focused on self-assessment and the establishment of a career ladder in leadership roles (comparable to the manner National recruits applicants). The consensus was that there was no comparable system in public education that identified and developed leaders. Schools leaders typically self selected in a haphazard manner, and were then approved by academia (which had little practical public education experience). Hughes presented school leaders primarily as teachers who decided to go into administration for a myriad of reasons, but rarely because they were identified and groomed by the school itself. In comparison, the military routinely assessed and recruited leadership from their ranks. The concept of recruiting and

developing leadership is referred to as pipelining and it is a key element of the NISL (and the Tucker) philosophy for leadership training.

3. The concept and use of a cohort. The military learned from each other in a cohort system. This was their equivalent of a contemporary community of learners or professional learning communities. Prior to 2000, public educators also did not routinely take part in common planning and professional learning groups.

From these conversations, Hughes and Tucker came to a consensus that public education and the military differed greatly in their approach to leadership training and professional development. Hughes summed it up (using the language of the military system) as a difference between the tactical and the operational. "Public education (in regards to decision making and leadership training) had to roll up to an operational level in comparison to a tactical level in order to operate strategically". It was further clarified that strategy is about broad, long-term goals; tactical covers the big ideas or activities that move toward achieving those goals; and operational levels are the day-to-day courses of action that achieve the tactical objectives. The belief conveyed by Hughes was that public education lacked the alignment of an effective strategic-tactical-operational system and that compared to military leadership education, public school leadership training was misaligned and thoroughly ineffective. Throughout my interview of Dr. Hughes, the use of similar strategic descriptions, expressions and perspective were present. It is not difficult to see that many of the particulars Hughes and Tucker identified as lacking in public education in 2000 are commonly practiced in 2012. The degree of influence Tucker, Hughes, NISL or NCEE had in regards to their implementation is unclear.

In <u>December of 2000,</u> Hughes was invited and took part in three-day 'summit' in Del Ray, Florida. Along with Hughes, numerous individuals with diverse backgrounds in business, management, education, law and the military were also invited to attend. The following specialists (and their position at the time) were included in this group (RH):

- Peter Hill – Director, Research and Development NCEE

- Robert Joss, Dean, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University

- Alison Bernstein, Vice President, Ford Foundation

- Kathleen Burke, Executive Director, Stupski Family Foundation

- Deanna Burney, Senior Fellow, University of Pennsylvania

- Marie Eiter, Director of Executive Development, Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

- Jerry Murphy, Professor and former Dean, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University

- David Marsh, Robert A. Naslund Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, Director, Center for School Leadership, Graduate School of Education, University of Southern California

- Robert Kegan, Professor, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University

This group was brought together by Tucker to debate, argue and ultimately complete the book, *The Principal Challenge*. For eight to ten hours a day, led by Dr. Tom Sobol from Teachers College, the group discussed the problems with leadership training in public education and ways to correct it. <u>Out of these meeting came the conceptualization of NISL</u> (RH). An extensive list of the people who were consulted during the design

stage of NISL is listed in Appendix B of *The Principal Challenge*. What is most

interesting about the group is not who was present. This is an impressive list of

participants with prestigious affiliations. <u>Who is not present? Why is it that no parents</u>

<u>were asked to take part in the discussion? How about teachers and students? This</u>

<u>committee of elites lacks community representation.</u> It <u>also lacks the voice</u>

<u>representation of social fields such as sociologist, psychologist and historians.</u> NISL was

born from a specific collection of voices.

Hughes was surprised to be interviewed yet again by Tucker and Peter Hill in the

summer of 2001. Hill, the newly appointed head of research and development for NCEE,

had been brought in during the spring of 2001. In July of 2001, Hughes formally

accepted a position in NISL.

NISL Operations

The NISL curriculum was built using Instructional System Design Methodology

(ISD). ISD was a system that was originally designed by the air force in the early 1990's.

It was a "very rigorous system that was heavily involved with the identification and

analysis of objectives and understanding audience" (R.H.). A 27-day program was

created and piloted in Santa Monica and Jacksonville. There was continual evolution of

the program during the first few years. NISL learned that they were still not interactive

enough; "adults similar to kids like to take control of their learning" (R.H.). To this end,

case studies, simulations and games were developed. Growth of the program continues

still. As of the fall 2011, NISL was developing a "monopoly-like game" to be played by cohort members in the quest to improve usability (J.B.W. & J.S.).

By 2005, NISL had been in the making for five years. It utilized the expertise of 100 specialists around the country with over 11 million spent on its creation. NISL was based on "best practices" benchmarked from numerous and diverse fields and the assessments of student achievement. In his reflections on NISL, Hughes made clear that the program was always 'grounded in reality'. NISL brought in acting principals around the country to help test simulations and create the curriculum. Hughes also noted that he was only "1 of 3 out of 58 core NISL faculty members who had not been a principal or superintendent." The goal of NISL was to make the program genuine; NISL needed to "walk the walk and talk the talk". NISL utilized seasoned educators in order to make the training authentic (JBW). In this example, the voices of school principals were heard. It was conveyed that the suggestions of principals were sought primarily to ensure application feasibility.

Pragmatically, NISL seems to always have one eye on state and federal policies. When it was created, there was a clear alignment in NISL with the spirit of NCLB. (JBW & DD) From my discussions with the NISL leadership (national and state), the program continually looks to align and meet the needs of the changing public education environment. For example, as of the fall of 2011, NISL has been focusing on incorporating the Common Core into their curriculum and the development of an early education leadership program. Their new Early Childhood Leadership Institute specifically targets the $500 million Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (J.B.W).

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Massachusetts was one of nine states awarded this early learning grant in 2011. Districts in the Commonwealth can apply to utilize this grant money with NISL as the provider (J.S. & B.D.). From my research, NISL demonstrates a pragmatic approach to education reform efforts – they work within the system, specifically in regards to grant funding. In order for NISL to be practical, there must be a means to finance it. By aligning with federal and state guidelines, NISL accommodates school districts. NISL does not offer any apologies for its emphasis on student achievement. Hughes referred to NISL as a "results cult". If student achievement was not improved, then NISL was unsuccessful. This is also very revealing. NISL's focus is on results, results assessed only through standardized exams. What about criteria that cannot be assessed by an exam? For instance, is NISL able to identify and address school culture? What about student social/emotional well being? NISL's focus on results brings to lights areas that are not targeted and consequently not assessed by the curriculum.

NISL functions on two levels. On the state level, NISL works with school districts and state education department to implement the NISL training (JS & JBW). NISL helps the states and cities navigate the philanthropic and federal grants, including the Race to the Top Funds that have recently been used by the states for turnaround and training programs (JS). NISL also works with districts to personalize the program to their liking. Recently, some districts have begun to "own the program" by customizing and facilitating it (JBW, JS). Every state involved with NISL has a unique relationship with it (JBW, JS). Each state also varies on the specifics of its management.

NISL in many ways has run like a "mom and pop operation" (BD, DD & DDR). It was fairly small and each of the members took on a variety of roles. Until recently, the Director of Instruction and Operation was putting together the binders for cohort members in the conference room (JBW). The organization has recently begun to evolve and expand into more of a business endeavor. Many of the people involved in NISL (state and national) lamented that there was not enough PR regarding the success of NISL (JBW, RH, JS, AN & DD).

NISL in Massachusetts

Massachusetts was an early participant in NISL and a nice fit for the program. Through the Wallace Foundation grants, Massachusetts was investigating leadership programs prior to NISL (DD & BD). NISL was brought to Massachusetts primarily through the efforts of Dr. David Driscoll, then Commissioner of Education and Ms. Bobbi D'Alessandro. D'Alessandro, a former superintendent in Cambridge Massachusetts and Fort Myers Florida, had been working with the Wallace Foundation on ways to make better school leaders. She took a leave from Wallace in 2004 and took a role with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) then known as the DOE of Massachusetts. Working under the oversight of Driscoll, she examined and then reported her findings of different leadership training programs. From the accounts gathered, Driscoll asked her to investigate NISL as a program that he could implement. After surveying and speaking with urban superintendants, D'Alessandro recommended NISL as a leadership program that was heavily researched and in line with the philosophical approaches of the DESE. Massachusetts was looking for ways in which

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they could affect positive change in the public school systems. Working with teachers was an impractical approach, due to the vast numbers of teachers in the Commonwealth (DD). Driscoll and his team decided that school leadership was an area they could influence and "penetrate the classroom". For Driscoll, the decision to go with NISL was a calculated gamble. "I could have gone up to the roulette table and put a dollar here or there, we decided to put all the money on NISL". Massachusetts rolled out its first cohort in Holyoke, a low achieving urban community in western Massachusetts in 2005.

Initially, NISL was paid for by DESE with Wallace Foundation and Title I money (JS). As of fall 2011, DESE in Massachusetts works with school districts in their application for NISL training and are not "money handlers" in the sense that they distribute resources. Districts now apply for Race to The Top funds through an application process (BD & JS). NISL is one of many state-approved options for utilizing Race to The Top funds. In the application process, districts must declare how they wish to use the funds. Massachusetts offers a wide range of projects that support the goals of the state's RTTT program (JS). In their application form, the DESE offer 38 state approved projects in which a district can use RTTT funds toward. Other targeted projects include teacher-mentoring programs, teacher supports in English as a Second Language licensure, innovative school programs and the development and implementation of a STEM Early College High School (http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/grants12/rfp/doc/201_b.pdf). The state's role is not a "gate-keeper" in this process (JS & DD). The DESE keeps track of who is in the program but has no role in scheduling it. This was not the case in 2005 when the

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Commissioner first introduced it in the state. The state has made an effort to measure the outcomes (Meristem Report 2009, Old Dominion 2011) of NISL. This is in line with the accountability element emphasized by the program.

NISL employs a handful of full-time staff in Massachusetts whose job is to help districts go through the application process, create cohorts, find training sites, get materials and ultimately facilitate the cohort training through the scheduling of the classes and instructors (BD & JS). Without these local employees, NISL would be unable to effectively run the program. The NISL component in Massachusetts is also involved in leadership training of co-facilitators to "build capacity" (AN & JS). This apprenticeship program (train the trainer program) has trained cohort facilitators. Presently, Massachusetts is organized regionally by NISL and has at least three facilitators 'stationed' in each area (JS). This system has allowed for the expansion of NISL in Massachusetts.

The NISL Experience

Every individual I spoke with reported a positive experience with NISL. Early cohort members were especially explicit in their praise (AN, DD, JS). Comments like, "it changed my life" and "I am a different person since the training" were common from individuals interviewed (DDR, AN, AC, DD). Many felt "honored and appreciated". Another theme that kept surfacing was that the participants felt like "professionals" during the training (DD). This was an identified objective of NISL. All of the participants interviewed reported positive experiences from the NISL training. The newer

cohort members did not share the degree of enthusiasm of the original members (DM, JO & KM). The varying quality of instruction may explain this variance. The earliest cohorts were facilitated by the "best there was" (DD, DDR & BD). This included speakers like Bob Hughes, Phil Daro and military leadership personnel (RH, DD & JS). As NISL expanded, new instructors had to be trained and placed into the field. The new staff did not possess the qualities or experience of the original instructors. Ironically, this is the very area that NISL has identified as being a major concern for public education – weak instructional leaders. In all of my interviews, the concern over expansion, especially in terms of the need for stronger facilitators, was reiterated.

In the interviews, participants were asked about their feelings regarding the use of business models in the program. Half the cohort participants interviewed expressed some degree of concern with the NISL business affiliation. One former cohort member explained the unease educators had with the idea as being a reaction to genuine privatization efforts across the country (charter and take-over programs). He continued that the relationship was not so much a marriage of models but a "bridge of business ideas and systems to public education" (DDR). It was also explained to me that the benchmarking of business systems (as well as military and medicine) "opened up the conversation that we can learn from other industries" (AN).

The NISL Plan for the Future

The NISL leadership in Washington envisioned the future of the program to include many new initiatives that would "drive NISL deep" (RH). These included cohort coaching and mentoring, new leadership curriculum in early child learning, special

education, ELL and disability, as well as pipelining. Pipelining is an area NISL has been

investing in with a significant amount of support from the Wallace Foundation (JBW).

Pipelining implies that school systems identify and select promising individuals for

leadership roles and move them through a series of exploratory, preparatory, promotional,

and mentoring experiences. Another facet of the military influence is the mentoring

process. The military relies on the "graybeard" mentoring of its aspiring leaders (RH), the

mentoring of young leaders by experienced veterans. Both coaching/mentoring and

pipelining are articulated in the current works of Marc Tucker. In his Agenda for

American Education taken from *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants* (2011), Tucker lists:

- Systematic leadership advancement/pathways. This is the pipeline system

  referred to in this research that would facilitate leadership identification and

  training.

- Creation of a clinical model to coach and mentor new teachers. Teachers would

  take part in a clinical model, similar to first year residents in the medical field.

  They would be assigned to a master teacher during that time.

Alumni of NISL have been "screaming" for a web site and increased interaction with

NISL (RH). The creation of a best practice library and webinars are also a focus of

NISL. In order to more applicable, NISL is seeking to customize its program to local

goals (JBW & JS). Although it has always tailored its program (to local standards and

state regulations), customization entails adjusting the curriculum to the desires of specific

school districts (JS). In these 'hybrid" programs, the rights are kept by NISL, yet the

program is run by school districts. A clear example of this application of the NISL

system is in <u>Prince George's County Maryland.</u> This district (through a Wallace pipeline grant) is using elements of the NISL program as one part of their grant (JBW).

Making NISL more business-like is an ongoing task. As of the fall of 2011, NISL has implemented a new marketing plan and "unlike most of the economy are hiring" (RH). New staff includes a Director of Strategic Partnership, a Director of Scale-Up and Reform Initiatives and a Director of National Sales (JBW). <u>With a staff of 58 NISL certified master faculty and over 400 NISL certified facilitators throughout the country NISL is expanding.</u> Their intention is for the participation of NISL (cohort members) to grow by 30% in 2012, 30% in 2013 and 50% in 2014 (RH).

NISL expressed some concern with quality control in regards to its expansion (JBW, JS, DDR & DD). The comparative decline of the NISL facilitator ability is an example of one of the quality control concerns (DDR). There is also some minor concern about the direction of the program. Hughes recounted how he must continuously remind the sales department "do not mistake the enterprise where we have expertise". It seems that NISL is often asked to do things they "just don't do" by districts throughout the country. It was expressed that occasionally the sales department pushes for expansion in other areas of education (JBW). Hughes often plays the role of keeping the NISL focus true. "We could do all of those things but here is what we are really good at, don't mistake the enterprise".

Participant Awareness of the History/Foundation of NISL

One of the foci for this research was to establish how much participants understood the history and philosophical foundation of NISL. Interestingly, the leadership of NISL was surprised that this was an area of concern (RH). In my discussion with Hughes, he was surprised that participant historical and contextual understanding of the program was a guiding question of this research. He explained that surprised him because he specifically taught that material as a facilitator.   At the time of the interview, I was also caught off guard by his response. From my research, I have identified a clear lack of participant knowledge of NISL's history and of NISL's presentation of history. Since Hughes helped organize the historical section of NISL, it is clear that he (and NISL) did not consider the historical component to be necessary or important. This is consistent with their strategy of creating a sense of urgency discussed in the previous chapter. The first unit of NISL does emphasize a contextual understanding in the spirit of creating a sense of urgency. Yet, it lacks a deep contextualization of NISL in connection to NCEE. It also does not present any information on education reform prior to 1983.

Newer cohort members possessed a minimal knowledge of NISL. Most understood the program as a state initiative to train principals but had very little knowledge of the program's background (DM & JO). None of the 2010 cohort members understood how the training was being paid for. "I know it is free for us" (KM). When asked about Marc Tucker, one connected him to the video activities presented during training while the other two remembered his name but had a difficult time articulating his

role. "That guy with the Darwin–like beard? He was the guy behind benchmarks right. That makes sense" (DM).

Older cohort members had a better understanding of the program yet still lacked definitive awareness of its history. One former member and part-time facilitator put it like this. "I know NISL was born through NCEE, I believe it was a Washington based, think-tank…it was a well thought out plan to bring this common language for leadership forward" (DDR). He also added that he believed global economics and the need to prepare workers for the future were driving NISL. One original cohort member even pointed out "there are lots of connections between all these Washington programs" (JS). These members had more awareness of how Tucker fit in. Initially, I too did not have a full awareness of the importance of Tucker in NISL. I was only led in his direction while interviewing Bob Hughes and David Driscoll.

Even though NISL does present some of its background within the pages of *The Principal Challenge* and in the initial sessions of training, the NISL program does not make clear how the program evolved. Consequently, participants do not genuinely understand how NISL (and NCEE) fits within current education reform efforts. My research itself is a prime example of the lack of participant understanding of NISL. As a result, this investigation has identified clear presentism in the NISL development program.

The NISL Curriculum

The NISL curriculum is a reflection of the agenda, goals and beliefs of the program. Critical educational theorists consider the curriculum of a program or training

to be much more than a collection of readings and objectives. From the literature sampling, course content, discussions and social relations expressed in the program, dominant groups are made to benefit and subordinate groups are excluded (McLaren, 2007). The curriculum analyzed for this research is the one used by my cohort. There were 50 required readings (including case study reports) for my cohort. It was explained to me that NISL performs its own self-analysis every 2-3 years and conducts a "big design effort" (JBW). During this time there is an examination of the curriculum in light of changing state and federal regulations and contemporary literature of relevant topics. As of November 2011, NISL is engaging in an examination of their curriculum. In this section, I present the core of the curriculum. Appendix D is an organized display of the curriculum sections, required readings and objectives.

The NISL course curriculum is presented to participants in the form of three large binders labeled NISL Executive Development Program Instructors Guide. The curriculum is organized in the following manner:

Phase 1

 Course 1: World Class-Schooling: Vision and Goals

Unit 1: The Educational Challenge

Unit 2: The Principal as a Strategic Thinker

Unit 3: Standards Based – Instructional Systems and School Design

Unit 4: Foundations of Effective Learning

 Course 2: Focusing on Teaching and Learning

Unit 5: Leadership for Excellence in Literacy

Unit 6: Leadership for Excellence in Math

Unit 7: Leadership for Excellence in Science

Unit 8: Promoting Professional Learning

Phase I Simulation

Phase Bridging Institute

Coaching Institute

Phase 2

Course 3: Developing Capacity and Commitment

Unit 9: The Principal as Instructional Leader and Team Builder

Unit 10: The Principal as Ethical Leader

Course 4: Driving for Results

Unit 11: The Principal as Driver of Change

Unit 12: Leading for Results

Culminating Activity

The first phase is structured to introduce NISL and to convey (according to their literature):

- A sense of urgency

- Strategic thinking

- A review of standards-based education and the foundation of effective learning.

- How to lead in the areas of content literacy, math and science

Phase 2 is broken up into 2 courses as well. It is designed to address:

- How to build and lead teams

- Ethical responsibilities of leadership

- How to lead with results

In the first phase, NISL introduces benchmarking, specifically in the fields of industry and the military. NISL presents alternative approaches to decision-making (strategic thinking) and then proceeds to examine the best practices in the content fields. The idea is to prepare principals so that they feel confident that they can identify effective teaching strategies in any classroom (AC, AN, DDR & JS). Phase 2 focuses on the capacity of a school leader to build, direct and produce results in an ethical and measurable manner.

NISL relies on the strategy of establishing a sense of urgency to drive the material. The very first reading in Unit 1 is *The World is Flat* (2006). The fact this book is chosen as the introduction of the program signals that globalization is the backdrop to the sense of urgency in the NISL curriculum. *Tough Choices (2006),* which follows, takes the same dogmatic stance as *A Nation at Risk* and emphasizes externals threats to the economy. In *Tough Choices*, Tucker shook the reader with his assessment for the future. "If we continue on our current course, and the number of nations outpacing us in the education race continues to grow at its current rate, the American standard of living will steadily fall…If the gap gets to a certain – but unknowable – point, the world's investors will conclude that they can get a greater return on their funds elsewhere, and it will be almost impossible to reverse course" (p.8). The strategy to establish a sense of

urgency in this manner is concerning, especially to the extent Tucker speculates. The history of education reform demonstrates the danger in ringing the alarm bell of crisis.

In the post-analysis of the curriculum, I was able to find consistent alignment of the purported use of the curriculum and the opinions of those interviewed. As has been noted, the literature and case studies have a common business and military theme. NILS has consistently expressed the aspiration of benchmarking their strategies. I have mapped the curriculum to demonstrate the extent of this focus and to tease out trends in readings. Appendix C displays the unit objectives and required reading titles and authors. During the training, the material was given to the cohort one binder at a time. In review of the entire curriculum, clear trends and relationship are evident.

Key Informants

From 2001-2004, The Broad Foundation "kicked in 3.5 million" and NISL began to put together teams of "the best and brightest" for the purposes of creating a curriculum for NISL. NISL grew primarily through the efforts of Marc Tucker, Robert Hughes, Peter Hill, Judy Codding, Richard Elmore as well as 70-100 consultants throughout the country. The influence these key individuals have on the curriculum is significant. Tucker, Codding, Elmore and Hill wrote 11 out of the 50 or 22 % of the assigned readings. The choice of these individuals speaks volumes to the voice, knowledge and power base that NISL derives from. A deeper analysis of the philosophical influence of these key informants follows.

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Prior to working in NCEE, Dr. Peter Hill held numerous positions around the world in educational administration. These included a Senior Advisor to the Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority, roles as an educational consultant in Australia, Canada, the Middle East, and the United Kingdom, General Manager of the Department of School Education in Victoria, Professor of Education, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Hill was very influential in prioritizing the concept of "safety nets" (arrangements to help students who were slipping through the cracks) within NISL. He also authored the followings readings in the curriculum:

- *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* (course 1, unit 3)

- "Safety Nets"(course 1, unit 3)

- *General Design for Improving Learning Outcomes* (course 1, unit 3)

- *Principles of Learning and Their Implications* (course 1, unit 4)

- *Focused Teaching* (course 1, unit 4)

From my investigation, Hill's contribution in the NISL curriculum and foundation was primarily on the importance of standards, and their alignment with safety nets, assessments and the beliefs and understanding of a system. His General Design for Improving Learning Outcomes (course 1 unit 3, and in chapter 2 of *The Principal Challenge*) articulated the need for structural organization in public education. Hill's previous international involvement in examination and assessment systems exemplify neoliberal strategies.

Considered one of the "architects" of NISL, <u>Judy Codding</u> has played a critical role in the design and the curriculum of the program (R.H.). Dr. Codding is the President and Chief Executive Officer of <u>America's Choice</u> and Vice President of NCEE. Previously, Codding was an award winning principal of Pasadena High School in Los Angles and a teacher and principal in New York. She served as an Associate in Education at Harvard and as an education consultant to the Ministry of Education in the People's Republic of China and the U.S. Department of Defense schools. Dr. Codding was also a charter principal of the <u>Coalition of Essential Schools</u>. Codding's written contributions to NISL focus on the evolving role of the principal. She co-authored the first chapter in *The Principal Challenge, Preparing Principals in the Age of Accountability*. This chapter presents how the role of the school principal has changed. Codding and Tucker compare the plight of contemporary principals to American corporate leaders in the late 1970's and early 1980's. They surmised that (p.8):

> The experience of American business in the 1980's shows that it is in fact possible to greatly raise quality without significantly raising costs. But that same experience shows that this can be done only by rethinking the way the organization works, coming up with new strategies and processes, and then driving those strategies and processes through the whole organization using new conceptions of executive development

Codding is also the author of *Does This School Really Have a Vision* in course 1 unit 2. This piece is on the importance that a school vision has "substance and promise" (p.5). Codding's focus on accountability and the comparative arguments of school and

corporate leaders echoes the neoliberal and privatizing beliefs articulated in this research. Yet, Codding has an interesting background. It is difficult to assess the road she took to NISL since I was unable to interview her. In some ways, her background in the capacity as a principal of an Essential School contradicts her present position with NISL and NCEE. This is further discussed in chapter 5.

Dr. Richard Elmore is the Gregory R. Anrig Professor of Educational Leadership at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. In my NISL training, his article *Building a New Structure For School Leadership (*2000) was a reading that was given a good deal of attention and discussion. The paper submits that the only way out of the problems plaguing public education is "through the large scale improvement of instruction…which is possible with dramatic changes in the way public schools define and practice leadership" (p.2). Elmore explains how the system of "loose–coupling" created the current education predicament. Loose-coupling is a sociological term, which posits the core of learning, and student evaluation resides in the classroom with the teacher, not the educational organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). The organization's (administration, policy makers) role exists to "buffer" the teachers from outside scrutiny, inspection or interference (Elmore, 2000). Elmore argues that because of this accepted relationship; school leaders and policy makers have had little success in changing what happens in the classroom. Consequently, he argues the need for a fundamental change in the way in which school systems operate. This is a monumental declaration.

According to Elmore, because authority resides in the classroom true reform is impossible. Writing in 2000, this piece strongly articulates the need to hold teachers

accountable since, in Elmore's opinion, they are a big reason for the failure of public education. In this article, Elmore reflected on contemporary reform efforts (in 2000), and stated "within the current educational reform debate, the governance structure that best fits the view that all matters of quality and performance of education are matters of personal taste, preference, and judgment is, in fact a market-model" (p.10). He then continued that with such a system, "the stakes are extremely high" since the public responsibility for education would then be removed. Elmore submitted that the problem with current reform efforts is that the logic of standards-based reform is fundamentally at odds with loose-coupling. This statement implies the desire for top-down controlled accountability that takes control of classroom innovation in instruction away from classroom teachers. McLaren (2007) wrote how the adoption of management strategies to meet the logic of market demands result in "policy proposals that actively promote the de-skilling of teachers" (p.188). There are unmistakable indictors of neoliberal reform beliefs in Elmore's writing. Elmore is speaking for a dominant group in power. His views do not represent teachers or students.

The Business Model

Content analysis of the NISL syllabus reveals that there are 9 (out of 50) business articles or readings in the curriculum. 18% of the required reading is from the business community. They are:

- *The World is Flat*

- *On Leadership*

- *Leading Change*

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- *Decision Traps: Top Ten Barriers to Decision Making and How to Overcome Them*

- Transformation at Ford; Harvard Business School Case Study

- *Good to Great*

- "The Discipline of Teams"

- *Organizing Genius: Secrets of Collective Collaboration*

- New United Motors Inc. Corporate Case Study

These readings were not designed for an education audience. There are strong business models presented by NISL in the curriculum as exemplified by Collins' *Good to Great* and the Ford and New United Motors Case Studies. Two additional examples of this in the literature are James Kouzes and Barry Posner's *The Leadership Challenge* (1997) and John Kotter's *Leading to Change* (1996). These texts demonstrate clear business-modeled approaches to leadership training. In their chapter "Envision the Future", Kouzes and Posner (1997) submitted, "when a leader's role is strategic (as it is for a CEO, president, or a research director, for example), the time orientation is longer term and more future-orientated than it is for a leader whose role is more tactical (for example, a production supervisor or operations manger)" (p.111). In his introductory chapter on "why firms fail" Kotter (1996) presented his concern for the future. "More and more organizations will be pushed to reduce costs, improve quality of product and services, locate new opportunities for growth, and increase productivity" (p. 3). Both of these examples demonstrate business methods and language.

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NISL benchmarked the definition and description of leadership from the business community to help position their view of effective leadership. In the first unit, our cohort was asked to discuss and write on the Kouzes and Posner (1997) definition of leadership. NISL utilized Kotter's (1996) distinctions between leadership and management during the second unit. In both of these examples, the "business" views and approaches of leadership were taught as a model for NISL.

These books were written for a business school audience. Kouzes and Posner both teach and work at the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University. John Kotter is the Konosuke Matushita Professor of Leadership, Emeritus at Harvard Business School. Kotter is also is a frequent speaker at management seminars and has wrote numerous business books. These are some of the premiere business theorist in the country.

Marie Eiter (2002), considered a chief architect of the NISL curriculum, contributed an entire chapter in the *Principal Challenge* articulating the reasons and benefits to benchmarking industry for leader development. In a summary of her research she noted:

> Considerable over-lap was found to exist in the content of the leadership development programs used by corporations and business schools. The leader as a strategic thinking, driver of change, person with a teachable point of view, creator of culture, and driver for results are the focus of both university-based programs and those developed by corporations…perhaps the best approach to developing future leaders is to continually reexamine leadership development

efforts in light of the best practices in corporations and groundbreaking research at the top-ranking business schools (pg's 120-121)

Linked to business practices are readings and activities that <u>emphasize accountability, standards, data-based decision-making and the "no excuse" agenda to school reform.</u> In the NISL curriculum there are 16 readings (32%) that present the value and necessity of these accepted neoliberal indicators of public education. They include:

- *Tough Choices or Tough Times Executive Summary*

- *The Principal Challenge*

- The Singapore Experience Case Study

- *Standards for What? What's at Stake?*

- *Standards for Our Schools*

- Building a New Leadership Structure for School Leadership

- *The New American High School*

- "What is Backward Design"

- *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications For Reading and Its Implications For Reading Instruction Summary Reports*

- "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment"

- *What the United States Can Learn from Singapore's World-Class Mathematics System (and What Singapore can Learn From the United States.): An Exploratory Study.*

- *Still at Risk, Thinking K-16*

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- Japan's Approach to the Improvement of Classroom Teaching. In *The Teaching Gap*

- "A Principal Looks Back: Standards Matter"

- National Forum on Educational Statistics

- *Results Now*

In these readings, the NISL approach to public education is articulated. For example, Carnevale & Deroches (2003) use the book *Standards for What? What's at Stake?* to clarify the risks to the American economy. This reading <u>exemplifies the belief in human capital theory</u>. "The direct and indirect benefits of increases in education accounted for two-thirds of the increase in the U.S. economic growth (p.11). The authors site Black and Lynch (1996) in their assessment that "increasing the education level of workers by one year has been shown to increase productivity by 8.5 percent in manufacturing and 12.7 percent in nonmanufacturing industries (p.12). *Tough Choices* (2007) also makes the human capital association clear to the reader. "The best employers the word over will be looking for the most competent, most creative, and most innovative <u>people on the face of the earth and will be willing to pay them top dollar for their services. This will be true not just for the top professionals and managers, but up and down the length and breadth of the workforce</u> (p.8).

Hill and Crevola's present their model for professional development in the reading, *Organizational Learning: Learning by Design*. Their model is based on the following premises: (p.16)

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- Design-based learning for improving student outcomes

- Data-driven improvement. The use of data to drive teaching and learning

- Teachers as learners

These authors call for systems thinking and data driven operations in public education. All of the readings in this section stress the need to align assessments instruction and standards. This is a patent neoliberal approach to organizing public education.

The Military Model

NISL sought to benchmark the military because they identified it as a leader in professional development. Carnegie and NCEE had envisioned the creation of a "war college" for public school leaders as early as 1999. The foundation of this goal was presented in the *Principal Challenge* (2002). Hughes and Hanley (2002) expressed the NISL position on military training systems: "no professional in the United States values education and professional development more highly than the military or puts more of its resources there" (p.123). An influential model for benchmarking the military education system is the National War College. National's mission is to hand pick and train civilian and military leaders of the country. The student selection process, dissimilar from the "self selection" of education graduate school programs, is a foundation for some of NISL's current objectives. The pipelining initiative of NISL, and the training of future school leaders articulated by Tucker, are both benchmarked from National. The college was established so that it could be "concerned with the grand strategy and the utilization

of the national resources necessary to implement that strategy" (Hughes and Hanley, p.135). NISL has identified the following military specifics that are applicable to school leadership training:

- The systematic evaluation of a person's potential to be a leader, and the systematic process of advancing leaders -pipelining.

- Levels of training need to build upon previous steps acquired.

- Training and education need to be geared to particular goals and tasks. Active learning.

- The entire education system (training) is subject to constant review

- Accountability is the systems watchdog

- The individual is the key to success. They are responsible for seeking new opportunities and growth tracks.

Military systems are benchmarked in Hararari's *Open Doors: Colin Powell's Seven Laws of Power*, Allison and Zelikow's Cuban Missile Crisis analysis and the *Thinking in Time, The Use of History for Decision Making Case Study*. I added the *Thinking in Time* case study because it is an analysis of military strategic thinking. It does not, unlike its title suggests, examine or use history in any meaningful way, which is another indication of the disregard for history in the NISL program. The Course One Unit 2 Instructor's Guide lists the following case study questions cohort participants are to reflect upon. (p. I-42)

1. Why did the Soviet Union put missiles in Cuba in the first place? What were they thinking strategically? What did they hope to accomplish?

2. Why did the US respond with a naval quarantine?

3. Why did the Soviet Union withdraw the missiles?

4. What did the U.S. have to do to resolve the crisis? Did the situation really return to the status quo?

These questions focus on strategy, actions, winners and losers. They do consider cultural or social elements of the crisis.

As was conveyed and demonstrated by Dr. Hughes, strategic thinking is important facet of the NISL program. The military model's emphasis of strategic thinking and planning are exemplified in the NISL curriculum. The Cuban Missile case study (Unit 1) is a great example of the use of military modes of thinking. The case study was an exemplar of strategic thinking and systematic problem solving – the need and use of systems to solve problems. In Course One Unit Two, our cohort took part in discussions and activities that taught how to engage in strategic planning and thinking. In one activity adapted from the Naval War College, we utilized a model of thinking called Questions for the Strategists. In it, we were asked to consider 18 questions regarding our district's strategy (NISL, p. I-20). Some included:

- What are the goals to be achieved?

- Do we have the necessary capabilities to do the job?

- What restrictions will be placed on our capabilities?

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- What are our opponents' / competitors' strengths and weaknesses?

- What are the consequences of failure?

There was also a framework presented to our cohort that demonstrated strategic thinking. We utilized a Strategic Planning Worksheet in one of our classes (Appendix D). The worksheet showed how, and in what ways educators could think and act strategically. In it, language such as assets, objectives, identified ends and relative advantage, demonstrate clear business and military terminology. Deibel 's (1995), "Thinking about Strategy" and Hamel and Prahalad's (1994) *Strategic Intent* are two required readings in the curriculum that emphasize strategic thinking. Strategic thinking is also embedded in many of the business and military offerings from NISL. Having been introduced to NISL from an original cohort member, the concept of strategic thinking was not foreign to me. From 2007-2010, strategic thinking was practiced in the leadership meetings I took part in at Revere High School. Our team would use the structure of the strategic worksheet to devise plans to deal with identified concerns. Personally, learning about it was a revelation. I consider it to be a highly effective process and it is unmistakably a part of my leadership paradigm.

Modeling public education on the military once again raises some concern. The military is based on top down discipline and power. Dissent can be viewed as insubordination resulting in discipline and release. Public education has always thrived in the spirit of debate. There are many voices in the discussion of goals and approaches to public education. A consequence of the full application of the military model is the loss of competing voices, dissent, and civic engagement.

Critical theory stresses what is missing from a curriculum is just as important as what is presented. What is absent from the NISL curriculum? There is no literature that challenges NCLB, accountability business models or human capital theory. Nor is there any literary perspective of teacher, student or community. From the curriculum, there is only one (2%) distinguishable voice questioning the standards movement. The Unit 3 required reading included Kohn's, "The Case Against Tougher Standards". It initially struck me that I did not recall reading it. Further investigation of the Unit 3 binder showed a good reason. On page I-24 of the Course One binder, The Kohn piece is referenced as an optional "brown-bag" lunch activity that "you may also want to refer to". Furthermore, the only way to read the article was to access it online. NISL did not provide a hard copy of the reading. I have since read the article. It presents an excellent analysis of the five fatal flaws of the standards movement. At the same optional lunchtime activity, the curriculum proposed that Tucker's article "Roots of Backlash" be used in defense of standards. There are only two readings (4%) that focus on the importance of culture. NISL assigned Lickona's *Creating a Positive Moral Culture in School* (1998) and a five-page excerpt from Bryk and Schneider called *Trust in Schools* (2003) was included in Unit 10. *Trust* is unique in that it also emphasizes the importance of school culture, not the school leader.

Course 2 of the curriculum focuses in leading teaching and learning in literacy, math and science. There is evidence that NISL is effective in raising these specific scores in the measurement systems that now drive public education. Why is there no focus on

humanities, arts or environmental studies?   A common critical assessment of this narrow

focus is that science and math curricula are favored over liberal arts because of the needs

of the business community (McLaren 2007, Spring 2007, Ravitch 2010). The absence of

humanities fields speaks volumes to the value system NISL operates in. Focusing on

science, math and literacy over the arts and humanities can also be explained as more

than economic utility. These fields have more concrete, identifiable content that is more

easily taught and more effectively testable (Apple, 2004).

From the critical analysis conducted, there are significant concerns regarding

voice and perspective. It is clear that the curriculum lacks opposing or contrasting

viewpoints. All of the voices in the curriculum are singing the same tune. This is not a

democratic curriculum. The total lack of history implies that NISL does not value or care

about teaching democratic purposes, civic engagement or community activism. The

voice of the people is not represented. NISL is using this strategy of creating a sense of

urgency to get its voice heard; that much is clear. NISL presents little historical

perspective. This in turn can lead directly to presentism. Is the NISL strategy meant to

create a sense of urgency without contextualizing it? As stated in chapter 2, there are

inherent dangers in implementing a national leadership program that is deliberately

ignorant of education history.

Marc Tucker

Genuine comprehension of NISL requires an understanding of its creator. Marc

Tucker was born in Newton, Massachusetts and earned a Bachelor's degree in philosophy

and American literature from Brown University in 1961. Presently, Tucker is the

president of NCEE. On NCEE website, he is listed as having been a champion for

internationally benchmarked standards and their alignment with assessments since the

1980's (http://www.ncee.org/about-ncee/our-people/leadership/marc-s-tucker/). Tucker

has also made a name for himself as an advocate of aligning the success of public

education with the national economy (human capital theory). There are clear neoliberal

qualities in human capital theory. One of the initial concerns brought to light regarding

NISL was that it was a creation of NCEE. Specifically, apprehension arose from the

publications of Tucker and NCEE. In the landmark study, *Tough Choices or Tough*

Times (2007), NCEE (with Tucker as its main author) articulated the need for dramatic

changes in the public education system. In this highly controversial *New* Commission

report, the need to revamp the educational system to meet the needs of a global economy

was identified as priority number one. The report emphasized the role schools should

play in preparing students for the workforce. Some of the suggestions of the commission

included the redesign of the governance of schools and the teacher pension system. In

their plan, "schools would no longer be owned by local school districts. Instead schools

would be operated by independent contractors, many of them limited liability

corporations owned and run by teachers" (p.16). The commission agreed that a wide-

range of ownership arrangements could fit into this system. "[The organizations] could

range from schools of educators to teachers' collaboratives to for-profit to non-profit

organizations" (p.16). Privatization of public education is a clear option within this

model.

The commission was also critical of the present compensation system of public educators. It made the argument that the back-loading of teacher compensations (low initial salaries and relatively high health and retirement packages) did not allow for the recruitment of highly skilled individuals. The suggestion of the commission was to emulate a business model in which employees would be given more up front money in the form of their salary and then be given market options of what to do in regards to health care and retirement. This recommendation was very similar to the proposed privatization of social security championed by President Bush in 2005. Allowing the markets to control and ultimately profit from the pension and health benefits of public school teachers while shifting the present retirement security into the uncertainty of the market demonstrates a neo-liberal approach to the problem of teacher compensation. The report came to the conclusion that (p.8):

> The core problem is that our education and training systems were built for another era, an era in which most workers needed only a rudimentary education. It is not possible to get where we have to go by patching that system. There is not enough money available at any level of our intergovernmental system to fix this problem by spending more money on the system we have. We must get where we must go only by changing the system itself.

During the last phase of the research for this dissertation, new literature has emerged that casts a different light on Tucker and, by consequence, has influenced my analysis of NISL. From this material, there seems to be an evolution of Tucker's ideas and ultimate vision for public education. Although many elements of his plan remain - a

revolutionary change of the public education system that includes recruitment of highly

qualified teachers, quality universal early education, and the restructuring of the

university system in regards to education training, much has also changed. Tucker's view

regarding the use of the market in public education is very different. During the summer

of 2011, NCEE (authored by Tucker) released *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants, An*

American Agenda for Education Reform. In it, the goal of developing a world-class

teaching force was restated with increased compensation as one of the means of attracting

qualified candidates. However, there was no mention of the privatization of health and

pension benefits as a means of funding the increased compensation. In his comparison of

successful countries (benchmarking) and their education blueprints, Tucker reported that

those countries do not employ market mechanisms like charter schools and vouchers.

Nor do they rely on entrepreneurs to "disrupt the system" or use of student performance

data on standardized tests to reward or punish teachers and principals.

In the October 17, 2011 online version of Education Week, Tucker authored a

commentary called *Creating Education Success at Home*. In it, he continued to stress the

need to benchmark successful education systems around the world in an effort to improve

American public schools. At the end of the article, Tucker reviewed some of the

ineffective ways in which we are currently engaging in school reform. In a very revealing

section Tucker stated:

> The solution is to change the system. Instead, many governors, legislatures and
>
> state boards are buying the agenda of the reformers who want to use market
>
> mechanisms to destroy what they think professional educators created. Those

reformers seek to replace the system with innumerable entrepreneurs offering

innovations in the deconstructed education marketplace. But lack of innovation

has never been the problem; lack of an effective system is the problem. The

experience of the top performers teaches us that creating an effective public

education system is a job for the government.

Tucker also emphasizes that "draconian accountability schemes" join a multitude of

reasons why people opt not to go into teaching. This article further situates Tucker as

someone who is at the very least at odds with some privatization and neoliberal elements

of current education reform. Yet, Tucker clearly demonstrates a number of neoliberal

beliefs. For instance, consider his view that the systematic change required of public

education is a job for the government. This belief demonstrates the neoliberal view that

big government is necessary to push social and economic agendas.

From this research, it seems the most significant underpinning to Marc Tucker's

approach to reform public education is continuous benchmarking of successful industries

and education systems around the world. Marc Tucker is a driven, influential school

reformer who is not easily labeled. The creation of NISL is just one of the areas he has

made an impact on public education in the United States. NISL was supposed to be his

'legacy' for public education. (JBW).

There are many examples of Marc Tucker's (and NCEE's) repudiation of the core

neoliberal and privatization tenets. There are also numerous examples of his strong

beliefs that education is positively correlated with the economy, his emphasis on

accountability, data driven decisions and business-style paradigms. All are foundations

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of neoliberal and privatization efforts. Tucker, NCEE and NISL all have a blend of neoliberal and privatization elements. They all also demonstrate unmistakable characteristics that refute neoliberalism and privatization. The conflicting analysis of Tucker and NISL will be articulated in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Introduction

The goal of understanding the National Institute of School Leadership has been

both an academic analysis and a personal reflection. As I have examined the program, I

cannot help but reflect on my experience in it. Perhaps more important is how it has

influenced the manner in which I think and work as a school leader. This journey began

with a simple question, what is NISL? During the many months that have passed since,

the answers I have found are equally simple and maddeningly complicated.

In this research, neoliberalism and privatization were articulated concerns. Evidence for

and against neoliberal and privatization tendencies of NISL were identified using the

tools designed in the methodology. The following findings demonstrate the degree to

which these are present in National Institute of School Leadership.

Review of Research Questions

The research questions were used to drive this research. They were designed to be

broad and open-ended to allow for continual review and reformulation. I will now revisit

my research questions.

1. **What does critical analysis reveal about NISL's origins, objectives and financial and philosophical foundations**

   This research analyzed NISL through a critical lens. In my analysis, it has become clear that, either consciously or unconsciously, curriculum and education are based on a dominant group perspective. Although directed at the classroom level, the following observation by Michael Apple (2004) rings true for this research. "Education in general, and the everyday meanings of the curriculum in schools in particular, were seen as essential elements in the preservation of existing social privileges, interest and knowledge, which were prerogatives of one element of the population, maintained at the expense of less powerful groups" (p.45). The data collected clarified where NISL came from, what its goals are, how it operated and, most significantly, how it derived from one element of the population.

   As demonstrated in my analysis of Marc Tucker in the last chapter, it is clear that there is some conflicting evidence of neoliberalism and privatization indicators. Other examples include Judy Codding and Richard Elmore. Codding and Elmore are identified as key informants, major authors of the curriculum and creators of the NISL program. Codding's work with inner-city students, specifically with the Essential Schools makes her a difficult person to position. The Coalition of Essential Schools is a progressive educational structure designed by Ted Sizer in 1984 as a means of transforming public education into an engaging, whole-person education. Codding's involvement in this reform effort speak volumes. This is the opposite of a neoliberal perspective on public

education. Did she have a change of philosophy? It is difficult to account for her move from Essential School to NCEE. Codding displayed a strong inclination for the necessity of government support and accountability standards (both common among all NISL leaders). A private business paradigm was also expressed in her thinking relative to the organization of public education.

It seems equally clear that Elmore has an abundance of neoliberal qualities and views. Yet, he also demonstrates a contradiction in that he is not a believer in the full application of market models to fix public education. For him, losing the "public" element of education risks the:

> Collective responsibility of whether students are exposed to high quality teaching and learning as a consequence of public expenditures, for whether the differentials in exposure to high quality teaching and learning are a matter of public concern, for what students know as a consequence of the teaching they have received, and for whether certain students routinely have access to more powerful knowledge than others – all of these concern become matters of individual taste, preferences and judgment, rather than matters of public policy discourse and debate (p.11).

There is also evidence that NISL behaves in a non-neoliberal and privatization manner. Although there is a clear agreement with elements of accountability and student achievement measured through standardized assessments, NISL does not share the Bush, NCLB-neoliberal fervor. NISL targets public school districts that need assistance so that they do not fail. Thus, their goal is to help districts avoid being taken over by the state and private companies. In the conclusion of the Old Dominion study, a significant

observation was made. "The NISL Executive Development Program provides a viable alternative to the much harsher, seemingly riskier (and less proven) strategy of trying to improve student achievement by changing school leadership" (p. 12-13). The practice of firing school leadership and staff for low student achievement is an identified neoliberal procedure. This evidence, although contradictory to the majority of my findings, is telling. It is a part of my final conclusions.

In order to effectively answer Research Question 1, I have presented the findings within the context of the neoliberal and privatization indicators that have been used for this study,

1. Belief that the market is a better driver of public education than the government
    a. NISL is a product of the market. It is dependent on market structures to operate in. NISL was sold to Massachusetts, which was shopping around for leadership programs. NISL is now being marketed throughout the country.
    b. *Tough Choices or Tough Times* calls for market solutions
2. Belief that education is positively correlated with the national economy
    a. There are clear examples of human capital theory within the NISL organization. There is an abundance of evidence in the curriculum that the human capital theory is a foundation of NISL objectives.
    b. Marc Tucker has been a champion of correlating and aligning public education with the national economy.
3. Belief in cutting public expenditures for social services (public education)

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a. This indicator is not present in NISL. NISL itself relies on federal funding (presently RTTT) for its implementation.

b. Tucker (2011) has made clear that education requires substantial increases in government funding.

4. Privatization of education through the support of the state and federal government

a. NISL is a private company that trains public school leaders.

b. NISL is dependent on state and federal support and cooperation in order to facilitate their training

Is NISL an example of privatization of public education? We know that NISL itself it a form of privatization (for-profit) and that the elements of accountability are an essential piece of the program. In the words of its CEO, they are a results cult. We also know that the assessment and curriculum industries (which NISL "teaches to") are example of privatization in the United States. The creation and scoring of standardized exams is a multimillion-dollar industry in the United States (McLaren, 2007). Applying Lipinski's (2006) typology, the following conclusions are made:

1. Privatization involving the transfer of ownership from public or state to private interests.

a. NISL is a private, for-profit company.

b. The decision to change from non-profit to for-profit (in the first few years of NISL) was not clearly explained. Members of NISL in fact expressed confusion regarding this decision as well (JS & JBW).

2. Private provisioning without private ownership. Contracting private companies to run public entities.

    a. NISL works in conjunction with state education departments that, in essence, use tax-payer money to contract their services.

    b. Public school leadership training is not a "public entity". But, it is vastly different from typical academic programs, which rely on peer-review curriculum and offer choice in programs.

3. Privatization is often evident in terms of governance or control, as when individuals gain more power over investing their public pensions.

    a. This indicator is not evident in NISL.

    b. There is some concern with the fact that a small group of individuals have created, and are in control of, NISL

4. Less clear are issues of funding or access where individuals pay user-fees for services that were previously provided through tax revenue.

    a. At this time, individuals do not need to pay for the NISL training. This indicator is not present.

5. Even more ambiguous are examples where goods and services remain outside private control in terms of ownership, governance, provision, funding and access, but the production or provision of such services is modeled on a private business-style paradigm. Here, market values are both elevated and internalized.

    a. This indicator is strongly emphasized in much of the NISL philosophy and approach to education training.

      b.   Market values and the business style paradigm are acknowledged elements of the NISL program and are significantly represented in the curriculum

6. As reforms in many areas seek to introduce profit-style incentives, orientations of the <u>production or provision of a good can change from a general to an individual focus as well.</u>

      a.   This is becoming more apparent with the customization of the NISL program.

      b.   <u>This would be more applicable if the program led to state certification. Presently it does not.</u>

<u>NISL is a program that was created by a small group of public school reformers from a Washington think tank (NCEE).</u> It was developed as a means to influence public education through the benchmarked training of school leaders and was initially resourced by a combination of private and non-profit organizations. NISL's philosophical foundation derives primarily from Marc Tucker and NCEE. They, in turn, benchmarked the structures and strategies of military, private business and international leadership training and education systems. <u>There is ample evidence that NISL has strong neoliberal and privatization elements imbedded in its structure, approaches and philosophical foundations.</u>

2. <u>How well is the NISL agenda (as determined by critical analysis) understood or known by the educators who have been through the training?</u>

NISL is not well understood by the participants in the program. There is little

comprehension of how NISL is funded or what the relationship is between NISL, NCEE

and America's Choice. Specifically, there is profound lack of awareness of the history of

the program and the manner in which it fits in with current education reform efforts, both

public and private. Participants of NISL have shown that they do not understand the

NISL agenda for public education reform. It is easy to see why that is. The program

does not present the evolution of NCEE and how it led to the current NISL curriculum.

From my research, this is the only way to truly understand NISL. There are two other

reasons this may be true. Participants may either miss some of the subtle forms of

evidence during the training (I am an example of this) or they could have not just given it

enough attention. Some in the training were told to be there by their superintendants.

Regardless of the reason, participants do not have a genuine understanding of the

program.

NISL does not demonstrate that they value historical awareness or understanding of

education reform. Although there is a case study called Using History, it is used to

analyze the strategies used by the President Kennedy and his staff during the Cuban

Missile Crisis. It is an exercise in strategic thinking. There is zero literature in the

curriculum that reviews the history of education reform. Books like Tyack and Cuban's

Tinkering Toward Utopia, A Century of Public School Reform (1995), Ravitch's *Left

Back, A Century of Battles Over School Reform* (2000) and Kliebard's *Changing Course,

American Curriculum Reform in the 20th Century* (2002) are just a few of the many great

historical educational studies that would add context and meaning to the NISL program.

I used these three books to do just that. There is a strong correlation with the fact that participants are ignorant of the historical context of NISL and that NISL does not value (in the curriculum and instruction) the use and importance of history.

Inferences and Implications

As noted previously, there are examples of evidence that contradicts some of the conclusions I have come to. There are examples of evidence that presents NISL as not being neoliberal or not having privatization tendencies. These examples do not change my conclusions. They do show that this is not a black or white issue. There are three possibilities there is some confliction of evidence obtained regarding neoliberalism.

1. Tucker has evolved. Similar to Dianne Ravitch, Marc Tucker's view on public education has changed. Consequently, some of his earlier works demonstrate higher degrees of neoliberalism.

2. Neoliberalism is evolving. Some of the strategies of earlier manifestations of neoliberalism are no longer feasible. For example, cutting public expenditures does not allow for public supported funding of neoliberal programs (like NISL)

3. The criteria established in this research fell short and should be further tweaked. It is possible that the indicators used in this study do not effectively identify neoliberalism

As a researcher, I find myself in a difficult position in regards to the implications of the results. NISL is a program that has been shown to be effective. Students taught in schools led by NISL trained leaders have shown improved test scores. School leaders

trained by NISL have overwhelmingly reported positive experiences both personally and professionally. I have also benefited from my experience in the program. Strategies like strategic thinking are essential components of my leadership style. As a school administrator, I see the value in the strategies and the approaches NISL advocates. During my investigation of NISL, I found myself enjoying the company and discussion I had with its leaders and facilitators. I genuinely liked these individuals. They deeply cared about making positive changes and were driven to improve public education. Yet, there are genuine concerns illuminated by this research. The findings strongly support the belief that NISL is both neoliberal and an example of privatization. This research has also concluded that NISL is not understood by its participants and has not been sufficiently examined by the public.

Why does NISL not benchmark or look to learn from areas that would seem more applicable to the public sphere? For instance, would it make sense to benchmark the Red Cross? Specifically, why not engage in more research in fields that embrace ethics and morality? This is one of the areas that business and the military have not been as effective in. NISL does dedicate a section of their training to ethics and morality. The Unit 10 readings are relatively short and consist of two excerpts from *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Reform* (2003) by Anthony Bryk and Barbara Schneider and excerpts from *Creating a Positive Moral Culture in School* by Thomas Lickona. Regarding the curriculum, what studies and literature were not utilized? What else could cohort member have been introduced to that may have presented different perspectives?

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From a critical perspective, the most alarming issue with NISL is in regards to the voice of the program. With voice comes power. Whose voice does NISL accentuate? Whose view of how public education should operate is expressed through NISL? Specifically, it is important to ask whose voice is not being heard. Upon reflection, there are a lot of voices not heard. Where are the stakeholders? Where are the family, classroom teacher, social worker, and counselor voices? Never mind the lack of philosophers, human rights workers, artists and writers whose voice is also missing from the curriculum design. NISL was developed primarily through the efforts of a small circle of people affiliated with the Washington NISL/NCEE connection. From this elite group, a strategic, well-thought out program for training public school leaders has been developed. A handful of NCEE affiliated theorists maintain the voice and ultimately the power over the NISL program. There are many positive aspects of the NISL program. It has been thoroughly researched and thoughtfully applied. Yet, there is very little 'public' in NISL's design for the training of public school leaders.

Topics for Future Study

Researching NISL has led me down many paths. It has also led to many more questions. During the research stage for this dissertation, I had to keep my focus on the topic of NISL. There was many times when I found myself focusing on concepts that were not part of the research design. For instance, how does the role of school purpose play into the NISL program? What exactly is NISL's interpretation of the purpose of public education? There are also many elements of the NISL program that I found

related and interesting. One identified topic for future research is Marc Tucker. By the end of my research, I realized that Marc Tucker was the most important individual in regards to the creation of NISL. Unfortunately, I came to this understanding late in the research and was unable to make contact with him. Tucker truly is the man behind the curtain. NISL is but one component of Tucker's influence on public education reform. What is even more amazing is the fact that there is so little known about his contributions and influence. Future research on Tucker would help clarify the history, role in public reform efforts and the agenda of this individual. It would be helpful to understand what Tucker believes in regards to teacher, student and community voice.

Another area that could use future research is the relationship between NISL, America's Choice and NCEE. These three programs have established a unique partnership with each other. They are all initiatives that originated from NCEE. To what degree does this represent strategic thinking on the part of NCEE? What other affiliations are they operating within? From my research, there is evidence that the three cooperate with each other in a seamless manner. The State Alliance for High Performance (NCEE, NISL, America's Choice, The Council of Chief State School Officers, The Consortium for Policy Research in Education and the Asia Society) is a collaboration that deserves more analysis. What role do these organizations play in educational reform? Since Pearson "acquired" America's Choice in 2010, there is substantial reason for exploration.

Researching NISL again in five years may also provide revealing information. This research analyzed NISL from its inception in 2001. The program began training

public school leaders in 2005. What will NISL look like in 2015, 2020? As it evolves, will it continue to mirror government initiatives? <u>Will it drive policy?</u> Will the objectives and enterprise change in time?

Limitation

As presented in the inference section, concerns regarding the criteria established for neoliberalism and to a lesser extent privatization are genuine. Particularly in regards to neoliberalism, are these indicators sufficiently succinct to distinguish and identify neoliberal beliefs? The neoliberal indicators were developed from the initial research conducted. They are the product of this researcher. <u>There are no established criteria for neoliberalism. Consequently, there is the possibility that the indicators are not entirely effective in identification</u>.

There are also possible limitations in regards to the people I chose to interview and the manner in which the interview took place. I gathered the perspective of school, NISL and DESE leaders. If the research was extended to a more diverse collection of NISL participants, more data could have been collected.

Conclusion

Cycles of reform talk and action result, we believe, from the conflicts of values
and interests that are intrinsic to public schooling. The rhetoric of reform has
reflected the tensions between democratic politics, with its insistence on access

and equality, and the structuring of opportunity in a competitive market economy.

(Tyack & Cuban, p.59)

When I began my work on this dissertation, I sought to make sense of the NISL organization within the context of current education reform efforts. Using the lens of critical analysis, I deeply researched NISL. Upon the completion of this journey, I am left with better understanding of the program and a profound sense of the magnitude of public education reform. Only through an appreciation of the scope of educational history, the conflicting perspectives of reform organizations and the deep contextual understanding of the social and political environment is this truly possible.

The Tyack and Cuban quote above depicts public education as a continuous debate between conflicting views of its purpose and goals. NISL and Tucker clearly have a strong voice in this debate. I hope that this research has illuminated NISL and its application in the public education reform debate. I also hope that, in doing this research; I have added my voice as well.

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

University of Massachusetts Boston
College of Education and Human Development
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston MA 02125-3393
John Perella
Doctoral Candidate
Leadership in Urban Education
jmperella@gmail.com
781-521-9472

Consent Form	**A Critical Exploratory Analysis of The National Institute of School Leadership in Massachusetts**

Principal Investigator: John Perella

Introduction and Contact Information
You are being asked to take part in research on The National Institute of School Leadership (NISL) in Massachusetts. The principal researcher is Mr. John Perella, doctoral candidate in the Department of Leadership at UMass Boston. Please read this form and feel free to ask questions. If you have further questions at a later time, you may call me at 781-521-9472.

Description of the Project:
The purpose of this research investigation is to conduct a critical, exploratory research study of the NISL program. Participation in this study will take place from July 2011 through December 2011. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer some questions regarding your perspective of NISL in one or more face-to-face interviews. Each interview will last no longer than one hour.

Risks or Discomforts:
This research poses minimal risk for participants. The primary risk associated with this study is the emergence of negative or distressful feelings during the interview regarding your participation or involvement in the NISL program. You may speak with John Perella to discuss any distress or other issues related to study participation. If you wish to discuss concerns with a counselor instead, you are encouraged to contact the Chair of my

dissertation committee, Dr. Jack Leonard, who will direct you to appropriate counseling services (617-287-4026 or jack.leonard@umb.edu).

Confidentiality and Anonymity:
The information you share will not be **anonymous**. However, your part in this research is **confidential**. The information gathered for this project will not be published or presented without your permission in a way that would allow anyone to identify you. The information gathered for this project will be stored in a locked file cabinet at my residence. I will be the only person with access to the data.

Voluntary Participation:
The decision whether or not to take part in this research study is voluntary. There are no monetary incentives. If you do decide to take part in this study, you may terminate participation at any time without consequence. If you wish to terminate participation, you should contact John Perella (see contact information above) or the Chair of my dissertation committee (Dr. Jack Leonard at 617-287-4026 or jack.leonard@umb.edu).

Rights:
You have the right to ask questions about this research before you sign this form and at any time during the study. You can reach John Perella at the contact information provided at the top of this letter. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, which oversees research involving human participants. The Institutional Review Board may be reached at the following address: IRB, Quinn Administration Building-2-080, University of Massachusetts Boston, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125-3393. You can also contact the Board by telephone or e-mail at (617) 287-5370 or at human.subjects@umb.edu.

Signatures
I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM. MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. MY SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM INDICATES THAT I CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I ALSO CERTIFY THAT I AM 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER.)

_____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____
Signature of Researcher   Date

_____
Typed/Printed Name of Participant

TAPE CONSENT FORM
CONSENT TO AUDIOTAPING & TRANSCRIPTION

Project Title: **A Critical Analysis of the National Institute of School Leadership in Massachusetts**

Principal Investigator: Mr. John Perella, doctoral candidate in the Department of Leadership in Urban Education at UMass Boston.

This study involves the digital recording of your interview with the researcher. Only the researcher will be able to listen to the recordings.

The recordings will be transcribed by the John Perella and erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice or picture or position) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study. Immediately following the interview, you will be given the opportunity to have the tape erased if you wish to withdraw your consent to taping or participation in this study.

By signing this form you are consenting to:

❑ having your interview taped;

❑ to having the tape transcribed;

❑ use of the written transcript in presentations and written products.

By checking the box in front of each item, you are consenting to participate in that procedure.

This consent for taping is effective until the following date: February 2012. On or before that date, the tapes will be destroyed.

Participant's Signature _____Date

RESEARCH MATRIX FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(RQ1) 1. What does critical analysis reveal about NISL's origins, objectives and financial and philosophical foundations?

(RQ2) 2. How well is the NISL agenda (as determined by critical analysis) understood or known by the educators who have been through the training?

Interview participants

A   NISL Leadership
B   DESE Representatives
C   Cohort Members

Question 1 (A, B & C) RQ1 & RQ2
In your opinion, what are the goals of the organization; what do they hope to accomplish (say within 5 years)?

Question 2 (A, B & C) RQ1 & RQ2
What is the vision of the organization; where do they hope their organization will be in 5-10 years?

Question 3 (A, B & C) RQ1 & RQ2
What are the motives for the NISL movement; what is the rationale for the program?

Question 4 (A, B & C) RQ1 & RQ2
In your view, who does NISL speak to/for? Who benefits most from the implementation of NISL strategies?
     Who shapes and holds the goals of the organization?
     Who determines the vision?
     Who is the intended audience? Who should be paying attention?
     Who will benefit from NISL?

Question 5 (B & C) RQ1 & RQ2
What would you change about the program?
     What is missing, left out or needs to be expanded in regards to the readings?
     What is missing, left out or needs to be expanded in regards to the lectures?
     What is missing, left out or needs to be expanded in regards to the presenters?

Question 6 (A, B & C) RQ2
How would you characterize the presenters/speakers/teachers in NISL?
      What group do they represent? What group(s) does the NISL presenters not represent?
      How were they selected? (**A only**)

Question 7 (A, B & C) RQ1 & RQ2
How would you characterize the readings for NISL?
      Whose voice is being heard here? Whose voice is missing?
      How were these selected? (**A only**)
      Who decides if and when it should be updated (**A only**)
      What is the thinking behind the changes? (**A only**)
      Are there philosophical shifts or updates? (**A only**)

Question 8 (B & C) RQ2 - this is a foundation question
Try to remember what you believed about education prior to your experience with NISL?
How has NISL changed your thinking about:
      Leadership
      Student Achievement
      Developing a school vision
      The role of public education

Question 9 (A, B & C) RQ1 & RQ2
What do you know about the history of NISL and the reasons for its development?

Question 10 (A, B & C) RQ2
Could you describe the essential components of your experience with the NISL program?

Question 11 (C) RQ2
Have you discussed any aspect of the NISL curriculum with your colleagues? If so, please explain.

Question 12 (C) RQ2
As a result of the NISL training, are you doing anything differently in your current professional work?

APPENDIX C

NISL CURRICULUM MAP

PHASE 1

Course 1 – World Class Schooling: Vision and Goals

Unit 1 – The Educational Challenge. (January 2008)
Purpose: To build a sense of urgency why deep education reform is a necessity.
Required Readings:
- Friedman, Thomas 2006. *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the 21ˢᵗ Century. (pp. 50-200, 323-359).*
- The New Commission on Skills of The American Workforce. 2006. *Tough Choices or Tough Times Executive Summary.*
- Tucker, M., and Codding, J. eds. 2002. *The Principal Challenge.* (pp. 1-40)
- Carnevale, Anthony, and Desroches. 2003. *Standards for What? What's at Stake?*
- The Singapore Experience Case Study
- Gardner, John 1990. *On Leadership*, pp 193-199

Unit 2 – The Principal as Strategic Thinker. (January 2008)
Purpose: To illuminate why and how a principal should utilize vision and strategy that can be measured.
Required Readings:
- Codding, Judy. 1999. "Does This School REALLY Have a Vision?"
- Deibel, Terry. 1995. "Thinking About Strategy and Security"
- Hamel, Gary and Prahalad, C.K. 1994. *Strategic Intent.*
- Kotter, John. 1996. *Leading Change,* 25-30, 57-66, 77-83.
- Tucker, Marc and Codding, Judy. 1998. *Standards For Our Schools*, 25-29, 65-72, 133-138.
- Allison, Graham T and Zelikow, Philip. 1999. Essence of Decision Making: Explaining the Cuba Missile Crisis.
- Hararari, Oren. Open Doors: Colin Powell's Seven Laws of Power. *Modern Maturity*
- Russo, Edward J., and Schoemaker, Paul. 1990. *Decision Traps: Top Ten Barriers to Decision-Making and How to Overcome Them.*
- Thinking In time: The Uses of History for Decision Making Case Study
- Transformation at Ford; Harvard Business School Case Study

Unit 3 – Standards-Based Instructional Systems and School Design. (January 2008)
Purpose: To analyze the standards-based system within ones own school and identify how to better align it.
Required Readings:

- Marsh, David and Codding, Judy. 1999. *The New American High School*, 89-110.
- Tucker, Marc. 2002. "The Roots of the Backlash." 42-42, 76.
- Kohn, Alfie. "The Case Against Tougher Standards"
- Wiggins, Grant and McTighe, Jay. 1998. "What is Backward Design" and "Implications of Organizing Curriculum"

Unit 4 – Foundations of Effective Learning. (January 2008)
Purpose: To understand NISL's 10 Principles of Teaching and Learning
Required Reading:

- Hill, Peter. 2002. *Principles of Learning and Their Implications.*
- Hill, Peter. 2002. *Focused Teaching.*

Course 2 – Focusing on Teaching and Learning

Unit 5 – Leadership for Excellence in Literacy (April 2008)
Purpose: To provide an overview of the NCLB Act as it pertains to literacy and to present current literature on reading strategies
Required Reading:

- Langenberg. D.N. 2000. *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications For Reading Instruction: Summary Reports,* pp 1-3, 7-18.
- Black, Paul and Willams, Dylan. 1998. "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment"

Unit 6 – Leadership for Excellence in Mathematics (April 2008)
Purpose: Introduce and Model effective math instruction
Required Reading:

- American Institute for Research, Jan 28, 2005. *What the United States Can Learn from Singapore's World-Class Mathematics System (and What Singapore can Learn From the United States.): An Exploratory Study*.
- Daro, P. "Systematic Catch-up for Middle School Students."
- Haycock, K. 2002. *Still at Risk, Thinking K-16*, pp 3-11, 14-16, 18-23.
- Stigler, J.W. and Hiebert, J. 1999. "Refining the Images" and "Teaching is a Cultural Activity."

Unit 7 – Leadership for Excellence in Science (February 2008)

Purpose: Preparing principals to support and implement effective science education
Required Reading:
- Allen, Rick. 2006. *The Essentials of Science, Grades K-6.*
- *Taking Science to School: Learning and Teaching Science in Grades K-8.*

Unit 8 – Promoting Professional Knowledge (2006)
Purpose: Teach the importance a culture of learning while promoting professional knowledge in a standards-based school.
Required Reading:
- DuFour, Richard, Eaker, Robert and Dufour, Rebecca, eds. 2005. *On Common Ground: The Power of Professional Learning Communities.*
- Stigler, Jim and Hiebert, James. 1999. Japan's Approach to the Improvement of Classroom Teaching. In *The Teaching Gap*, 103-127.
- Hill, Peter and Crevola Carmel. 2003. Organizational Learning. In *Handbook of Educational Leadership and Management, 398-*403.

Coaching Institute (After Phase 1)
Purpose: Prepare and help facilitate participants to instructionally coach in their school
Required Readings:
- Lyons, Carol and Pinnell, Gay Su. 2001. "Coaching for Shifts in Teaching". 138-153.
- Joyce, Bruce and Showers, Beverly. 2002. "Research on Training" *Student Achievement Through Staff Development,* 3rd edition. 74-80.

PHASE 2

Course 3 – Developing Capacity and Commitment

Unit 9 – The Principal as Instructional Leader and Team Builder (September 2008)
Purpose: Help participants identify, implement, and support improved instruction by using distributed leadership principles.
Required Readings:
- Collins, Jim. 2005. *Good to Great and the Social Sectors.*
- Elmore, Richard. 2000. *Building a New Leadership Structure For School Leadership*, 1-25.
- *Defining Instructional Leadership.* NISL
- Katzenbach, Jon and Smith, Douglas. 2000. "The Discipline of Teams".
- Ennis, Warren and War, Patricia. 1997. *Organizing Genius: Secrets of Collective Collaboration*, 196- 218.

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Unit 10 – The Principal as an Ethical Leader (September 2008)
Purpose: To articulate the important role of being an ethical, fair leader.
Required Reading
- Bryk, Anthony and Schneider, Barbara. 2003. *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource to School Reform*. 40-45.
- Lickona, Thomas. 1998. *Creating a Positive Moral Culture in the School*.

Course 4 – Driving for Results

Unit 11 – The Principal as a Driver of Change
Purpose: To examine the role of the principal as a strategic change agent
Required Readings:
- Schultz, H and Yang, D.J. 1997. *Pour Your Heart Into It: How Standards Built a Company One Cup at a Time*. Chapter 7 and 9.
- Olivier, Dianne F. 2004. "Against All Odds: Reculturing a Troubled School." Pp. 114-126.
- Corporate case study reading: New United Motors Manufacturing, Inc. 1-13.
- Education case study reading: Marshall, Ki. 2003. "A Principal Looks Back: Standards Matter."
- Fouts, Jeffrey, Stuen Carol, Anderson, Mary Alice and Parnell, Timothy. 2000. "The Reality of Reform: Factors Limiting the Reform of Washington's Elementary Schools."

Unit 12 – Leading for Results (September 2008)
Purpose: The Necessity of balancing accountability with school success in light of NCLB and ESEA mandates.
Required Reading:
- National Forum on Educational Statistics (2005)
- Fullan, Michael; Hill, Peter; Crevola, Carmen. *Breakthrough*. 57-82.
- Schmoker, Mike. 2006. *Results Now*. 2-10.

Greenwood Middle School Simulation
Purpose – Participants take part in a computer simulation in which one must react to issues and problems by answering the correct questions.

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET

Strategy consists of three parts:
1. Where one wants to be?
2. What one has to work with?
3. How will one get there?

Strategic Thinking Process
- This process requires a leader to focus on available assets and capabilities and decide how they can be used in new ways and prioritized to achieve objectives. Strategic thinking forces a leader to look at the whole context and make assessments before taking action. Strategy is the product of strategic thinking, which is as much an art as it is a science.

Thinking Strategically
1. Context

To define the context a leader asks the question, "where are we now?" It is at this point a leader does not react to the situation but begins the process of gathering data, assessing the available resources, and capabilities in the environment surrounding the leader. It is the process of analyzing the internal and the external challenges and opportunities the leader may have at his/her disposal.

Where are we now regarding:
-

2. Vision

The vision is where one wants to be. It is the end result that you begin to build your strategy around and is achieved by using available resources and tactics.

Where do we want to be?
-

3. Strategy

Strategy is the determination of how to best orchestrate, prioritize, and use available resources and capabilities to achieve identified ends. Strategy bridges the gap from where you are to where you want to be. The principles and logic of strategy never change. Strategy is a rational activity even if and when it deals with non-rational dimensions. Strategy is a search for a relative advantage.

How are we going to get where we want to be?
-

Elements of Strategy
- Assumptions:

  _____
  _____
  _____

- Interests:

  _____
  _____
  _____

- Objectives:

  _____
  _____
  _____

- Capabilities:

  _____
  _____
  _____

- Threats:

  _____
  _____
  _____

- Risks:

_____

_____
_____

Operational Planning
- Operational planning is the act of developing the plans to execute the part of the strategy that will move the organization closer to its ultimate goals. In planning process specific resources are selected and prioritized on a time line to accomplish sub-goals

Operations
- The discrete set of actions which, when joined, will accomplish part of the strategy. Operations achieve incremental ends or sub-goals that are vital to achieving the full strategic goals. When achieved, an operation will provide a short-term success and will be building to achievement of the total strategy

Tactics
- What are the building blocks of operations? Tactics are the way one uses assets or capabilities in a specific context.

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