An Internship in a Public School System

JoAnn Mulder
Western Michigan University

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AN INTERNSHIP IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

by

JoAnn Mulder

A Project Report
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Specialist in Education
Department of Educational Leadership

Western Michigan University
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AN INTERNSHIP IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

JoAnn Mulder, Ed.S.
Western Michigan University, 1985

The internship project is a requirement for the Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership. The intern chose to fulfill this requirement in a particular school district. The intern centered her project around the role of an elementary principal.

The school district is located just north of a city with a population of 50,000 on the shores of Lake Michigan. It is approximately 150 miles west of Detroit, Michigan, and 170 miles northeast of Chicago, Illinois. The school system serves students K–12 with a total enrollment of 3,600 students. In addition, the system serves as fiscal agent for a community education program which includes high school completion, recreation, enrichment, vocational training, and leisure-time activities.

The internship involved one semester and one summer break working with school personnel in the area of the duties of an elementary principal. It included planning and implementing four separate programs.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks go to Dr. Larry Schlack, for his assistance and counsel during the internship, and to Dr. Carol Sheffer, for her assistance and cooperation. In particular, I wish to thank the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Migrant Education for their guidance and counsel that made my experiences so fulfilling.

JoAnn Mulder
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CHAPTER I

A PROPOSAL FOR INTERNSHIP IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Background Information and Rationale for Internship

The professional experiences in the educational field of this intern have been with two public school systems. Those experiences have occurred while in the following positions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983-1985</td>
<td>Coordinator of Gifted and Talented, K-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-1982</td>
<td>Instructor--Freshman English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the 14 years in education, the intern's experiences have been for the most part as an elementary classroom teacher. Along with that responsibility, she also had the position of teacher-in-charge. This position required being responsible for the building in the absence of the principal. The principals in the district each had two buildings to administer, so the teacher-in-charge was responsible for the building for half of each day.

After being in the classroom for 12 years, the intern became coordinator of the gifted and talented program. This involved planning and implementing a program. Included with these duties, much time was spent working with planning committees and parent advocate groups.
The internship will offer an opportunity to experience a wide variety of skills needed for an administrative position. As part of the requirement for the internship project, a plan must be submitted prior to the internship. The proposed plan was submitted in November 1983.

The Proposed Experience

The proposed specific areas of experiences will include:

1. Goal setting.
2. Decision making.
3. Staff evaluation.
4. Time management.
5. Curriculum development.
6. Program implementation.
7. Staff development.
8. Community relations.

The areas listed will serve as a guide to explore the role of a principal at the elementary level. The internship will be under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Migrant Education. The internship will occur during the period between January 1984 and August 1984.

The primary objective of the internship is the development of specific skills. Skills to be developed include:
1. Technical skills:
   a. Understanding budgeting procedures.
   b. Understanding curriculum development and change.
   c. Understanding personnel evaluation and procedures.
   d. Organizing and directing staff development.
   e. Organizing and implementing student programs.
   f. Budgeting procedures.

2. Conceptual skills:
   a. Understanding the decision-making process.
   b. Understanding the role of an elementary principal.
   c. Understanding the process of setting and attaining goals.

3. Human relations skills:
   a. Developing communications skills.
   b. Developing a positive environment for staff.
   c. Development of empathy and understanding towards staff.
   d. Development of community relations.
   e. Develop self-awareness of leadership ability.

   These skills will be developed by working and consulting with the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Migrant Education. Evaluation will be through the summary of the daily log, from input from the supervisor, and by the Western Michigan Internship Committee.

   Chapter II will describe the skills developed by the intern during the internship.
CHAPTER II

SKILLS DEVELOPED DURING THE INTERNSHIP

The main purpose for the internship was to develop skills in three areas: technical, conceptual, and human relations. Because of the long period of time involved in the internship many of the skills developed were then practiced as part of the intern's job responsibilities.

In the area of technical skills, time was spent with the elementary principals, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Director of Migrant Education. Experiences included developing and implementing the budget for two summer programs. The intern studied the budgets from other programs and then determined line amounts for each item needed to accomplish the tasks for the programs. The intern wrote requisitions and controlled amounts spent in each line item. The mechanics of purchasing are better understood as a result of that experience.

Developing an understanding of how curriculum change happens was an area of great interest to the intern. This was a crucial area to address. It was discovered the curriculum change is a complex process that takes a great deal of time.

In planning the summer Challenge Program, a curriculum was developed. Challenge was a 2-week course that was designed for motivated, interested learners. Courses were designed to go beyond what was normally taught in the regular school year program.
Students went through a screening process in order to attend.

In planning the program, the intern first assessed the objective of the program. The objective was to provide enrichment experiences for very capable children. The second stage involved specifying particular courses and teachers who were available to teach them. A questionnaire was sent to students and from their responses courses were developed. The intern collected the questionnaires and recorded the data.

The intern motivated staff by providing in-servicing time and planning time. The intern instructed teachers in the use of higher level thinking skills. Each day the intern visited classrooms and offered assistance and support. An open house for parents was planned by the intern. A schedule of activities was written and announcements sent to parents.

An evaluation of the program was done by sending questionnaires to parents. The intern recorded the data collected and made a written report for the school's curriculum director. The report contained areas of improvement needs.

For each of the programs the intern administered, time lines were developed. First, a list of activities that needed to be accomplished were written and then they were put into a time frame. It made for a great deal of ease when planning and implementing the programs.

Both conceptual and human relation skills were developed throughout the internship. Decision-making skills were used over and over with each of the programs. Administrators and supervisors were
observed in committee meetings and relationships observed. The migrant program offered many opportunities to practice decision-making skills. Because the first step in decision making is planning, the intern, along with the director, planned the summer program. Part of the planning involved clarifying the goals of the 7-week program. The intern made a report of the goals of the program. Those goals were: (a) to provide the students with oral language experiences, (b) to prescribe three math and three reading objectives to each student after pretesting, and (c) to maintain health and nutritional care for the students. These goals had previously been developed, but the report reemphasized the goals of the program for the teachers. Along with this report the intern wrote roles and responsibilities for the aides and teachers. Each teacher and aide received a copy of this at a staff meeting and it was explained by the intern.

As problems developed the intern used a decision-making model. In the case of a student who was disruptive on the playground, the intern discussed solutions with the teacher. The problem was first stated and then alternative solutions were determined. Solutions formulated were not allowing the student on the playground, confining him to certain areas, or employing a behavior modification plan. It was decided to use the behavior modification plan. If he was able to stay out of trouble during recess he would receive a ticket from the aide. That allowed him passage to the next recess. It was determined that the intern, the aide, the teacher, and the student would be involved. Upon evaluation, the student was found to improve his
playground behavior. He missed two recesses in a week instead of six recesses in one week.

The intern also developed communication skills. Letters to parents were written. The letters described the Grasp Program and the Challenge Program and also instructions to register their children. Many parents called by telephone and requested additional information. Letters were also written to teachers explaining what was expected of them. During the programs the intern developed a friendly and positive atmosphere by being supportive and encouraging to the teachers. Materials and supplies were secured upon request from the teachers. Positive relationships between the teachers and intern developed and those feelings in turn reflected on the students.

In summary the following specific skills were developed or improved as a result of the internship:

1. Technical skills: understanding budgeting procedures, curriculum development and change, purchasing procedures, and short-range planning and development.

2. Conceptual skills: understanding the decision-making process, the workings of a summer program, and clarifying the roles and duties of an elementary principal.

3. Human relations skills: improving competencies in communication, developing a favorable and caring environment for personnel, and showing friendliness and understanding.

The experiences were varied and the intern found them to be both satisfying and fulfilling.
Chapter III will be a summary of the intern's experiences.
CHAPTER III

SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES

The internship revolved around five main experiences and took place over an 8-month period of time. Those experiences included responsibility for the planning, development, implementation, and administration of the summer Challenge Program, Grasp Program, Young Authors' Day, 2-day staff development, and shadowing the director of the summer migrant program during the 8-month period.

Challenge Program

The Challenge Program was a 2-week session held in the summer for gifted and talented students, K-5. A total of 65 hours was spent in planning and implementing the program. The first planning meeting was held in January. The intern acted as the chairperson of a committee of eight. The committee was composed of the director of curriculum, the intern, and six parent volunteers. At the initial meeting a time line was developed and subcommittees organized. The intern was involved with each of the subcommittees. The first subcommittee meeting was held to discuss recruitment of teachers. It was decided the positions would be posted within the school district and calls would be made to persons in the community.

Another Challenge committee met to develop the brochures. The intern was responsible for developing course descriptions and establishing the schedule. The intern also was responsible for
distribution of applications, screening procedures, and all correspondence to enrolled students.

During the 2 weeks the program was in session the intern was in attendance each day. Eight teachers comprised the staff. The intern facilitated their needs and made for a friendly and comfortable atmosphere.

An open house was held for parents with over 350 people in attendance. An evaluation was completed by parents and the intern compiled the results. Recommendations were made for next summer's program.

Grasp Program

The Grasp Program was a summer correspondence program for students K-8. It was designed to enable students to review what was learned the previous school year. The school district serviced seven other school districts with this program.

The intern was responsible for administering the program. A total of 53 hours was spent. A time line was developed with the administrator previously responsible for the program. A budget process was explained and carried out by the intern.

In order to generate as much interest as possible the intern held staff meetings at each building within the district. This enabled teachers to gain an understanding of the program. Many phone calls were received from the public and much time was spent dealing with this.
The program was run with two teachers and one aide. The teachers checked assignments from students that had been mailed in and called students if there were specific problems. The intern was responsible for directing these people and helping with problems as they occurred.

An evaluation of the program was completed and recommendations made for the future.

Young Authors' Day

The intern was responsible for planning and implementing the first district-wide Young Authors' Day. Seventy-five children, eight teachers, and two principals were involved.

A presenter was contracted from Good Apple, Inc. and other activities were planned for the half-day session. The activities included lunch, sharing of books written by the children, and a creative dramatics section.

The frustrations and complexity of organizing that many people and planning for a varied day were experienced. Upon completion of the day a great deal of satisfaction was felt.

Staff Development

The highlight and real motivator to the intern was the planning and attending of a 2-day staff development with Dr. Mary Leiker from Denver, Colorado. The intern planned the day in cooperation with the Intermediate School District. Over 50 teachers registered for the 2-day session held in mid summer.
The intern contacted Dr. Leiker and made all arrangements with her contract. Dr. Leiker was contracted because of a 3-year plan that was developed by the intern for the gifted and talented program. The focus of the 2-day session was how to incorporate higher level thinking skills into the regular curriculum.

Dr. Leiker had been an elementary principal and was very inspiring for the intern. She was truly an instructional leader as she worked with the teachers. Her skills and caring quality stood out as a real quality needed in a top administrator.

The intern had the opportunity to meet alone with Dr. Leiker and was most impressed. The intern gained a great deal discussing the elementary principalship with the caliber of person that Dr. Leiker is. Her energy level was high and her enthusiasm equal to that.

Another benefit the intern received from planning the workshop was the new understanding about teachers. Teachers are eager and willing to learn new techniques. As a principal it is important to give teachers the opportunity and encouragement.

A total of 43 hours was spent.

Migrant Program

The summer migrant program ran for 7 weeks. The intern was able to work closely with the director and made decisions as a team. A great deal was learned with this experience because it most closely represented an actual principalship. On an average, 200 students, K-8, attended the program daily. Tasks of the director closely resembled an elementary principal's tasks.
The intern planned the staff in-service and also conducted a 2-hour creative writing session.

The intern also was involved with student placement and scheduling. This was difficult to determine because children enter and leave the program as their parents migrate to another area.

The intern had an opportunity to conduct staff meetings and plan the agenda for those. This was a good experience because the intern was able to work on time management to bring the group to task. At two meetings the intern was able to work with the staff concerning the oral language and writing curriculum. The intern presented specific techniques and strategies.

The intern added a new component to the program dealing with enrichment activities. The intern became involved in the classrooms working with teachers on techniques to use to differentiate for special abilities. It was very successful and will be expanded next year.

Included with staff development the intern became involved with developing a guide for teacher roles and responsibilities and also the administrators' roles and responsibilities. It was good for the teachers and administrators to take a close look at the roles of each and made for better rapport among them.

Working with the migrant program was a very useful experience. A total of 80 hours was spent with the program.

Chapter IV is the daily log. The log specifically states each day's activities.
CHAPTER IV

DAILY LOG

As part of the requirement for the internship, the intern must keep a daily log. The following is a written description of the log.

Challenge Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning meeting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting to recruit teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booklet design</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop flyers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collate flyers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange for printing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize and record applications</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribute applications</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening of applicants</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop communication</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open house planning and attendance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program in action</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent communications</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total hours                                   65
Grasp Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning meeting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher meetings</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booklet design</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher meetings</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other districts' communication</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent communication</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of applications</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record applications</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise distribution of packets</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise correction center</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total hours 53

Young Authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two planning meetings with director of curriculum</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with principals</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrangements/food, speaker, etc.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize activities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program implementation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total hours 25
### Staff Development With Dr. Leiker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning meeting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracting Dr. Leiker</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of communication</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan agenda</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for lunch</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
</tr>
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### Migrant Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preservice</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student placement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher meeting and planning session</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff development</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrichment planning and implementation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct teacher meeting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom instruction</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open house</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification of teacher and administrator roles</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing discussion with director about administration</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organized and implemented RIF

Total hours

Chapter V is a critique of the internship experience and includes recommendations.
CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE INTERNSHIP

The intern believes that it was valuable to have the internship last for 8 months. Many of the goals developed during the internship were then practiced with the intern's regular job responsibilities. The intern found it very useful to be able to immediately relate the skills learned to a practical situation. This length of time for the internship is recommended for future interns.

The intern also believes that it would have helped a great deal to be involved with a group of other interns to discuss other projects. While involved in the internship many situations developed that would have been valuable to discuss with colleagues.

Another recommendation would be to give more assistance to an intern as the prospectus is being developed. Determining the amount of work that could be accomplished within the limits of the time frame caused some difficulty in developing the prospectus.

The intern believes the internship was the most valuable experience she had while enrolled in the specialist's degree program.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


