



Graduate School of Education  
**Penn GSE**

**Lessons From the Field:**  
*Merging Best Practices with Theory  
in Educational Leadership  
Simulation Design*

**Immersive Learning University**  
**January 2012**

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# Presentation Overview

- Overview of Penn GSE Educational Leadership Simulation Development Project
  - Who
  - What
  - When
  - How
- Next steps
- Penn Executive Doctorate Programs

# Who

## Current practitioner-leaders, working in the field

- Early adopters
- Theory and practice together – integral part of what Penn GSE is committed to
  - Strong theoretical basis with current practice experience
- Capturing the experiences of current leaders before their experience and expertise leaves the field
- Alumni network of the Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Education and Organizational Leadership
  - Network of Simulation writer/developers

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# What

Library of micro-simulations, mini-simulations, and more extensive mega-simulations covering various issues in education leadership

Simulations become a new form of scholarly, peer-reviewed publication **from** the field

# What (continued)

## □ Current pilot modules

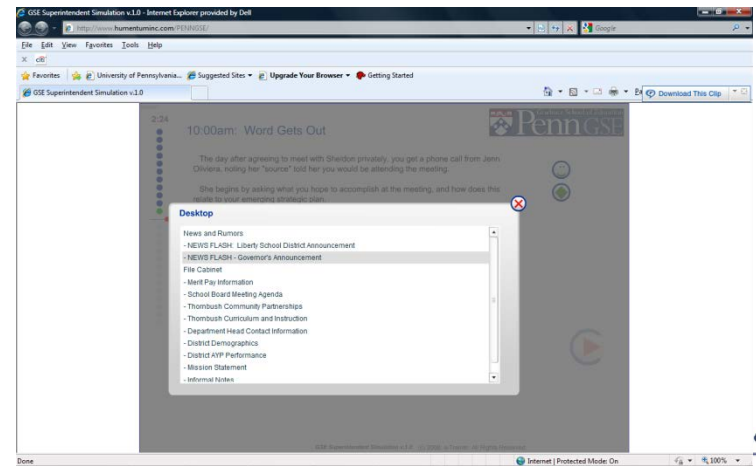
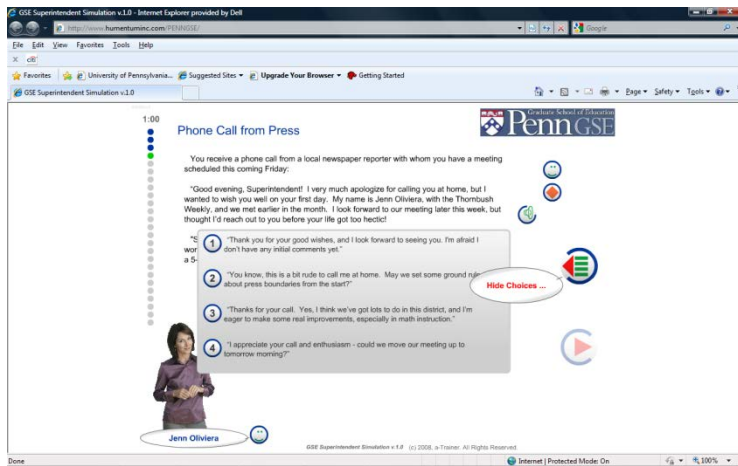
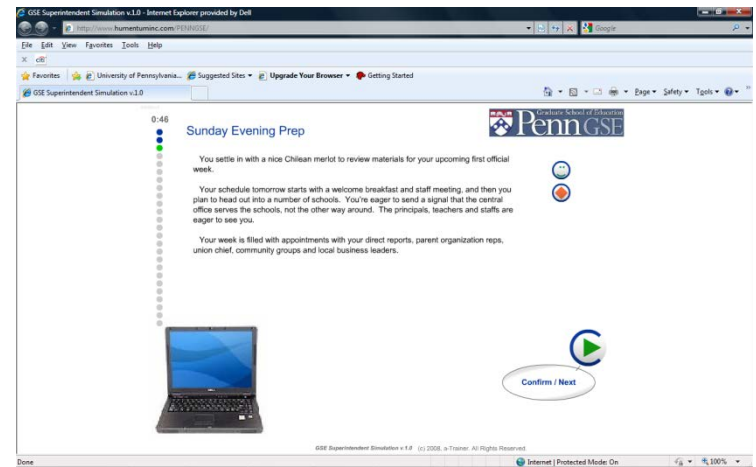
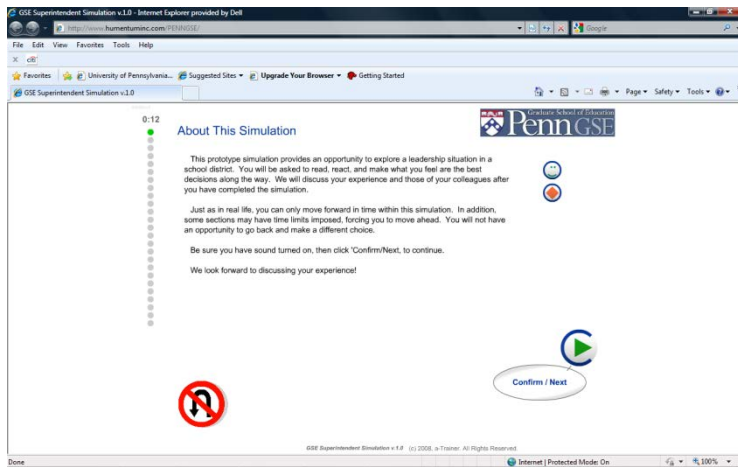
### ■ Text-based sims

- The “Super Sim” – simulating the first four days on the job as a new superintendent
- The “Budget Sim” – simulating a middle school principal tasked with a 15% budget cut

### ■ Multi-media sim

- The “Post-Ob Sim” – simulating the teacher conference with the principal after a classroom observation

# Initial proto-type: The new superintendent



# Macro simulation 1: The budget cut

0:14

### About This Simulation

This computer-based exercise is designed to be a catalyst for dialogue among principals, administrators, school staff, and other key stakeholders.

While the primary focus of this program is determining an optimal budget for the coming year, please note that there are not necessarily "correct" choices in the simulation. You face scenarios, then make decisions and see the consequences of your choices. There are trade-offs involved in most decisions.

Just as in real life, you can only move forward in time. You will not have the opportunity to go back and make a different decision unless you restart the simulation.

At the end of the simulation, you will be able to review each decision choice you made, referenced to the relevant ELCC Standards.

To begin the simulation, click the "Confirm/Next" button to the right.

Good luck!

Confirm / Next

1:58

### January 13th: Budget Cut Request

You get an email from the Superintendent:

"As you know by now, we are again faced with the need to bring our spending in line with the cuts to our state funding expected to be passed by the state legislature, proposed by our new governor, Harold Tomlin.

"This means you will need to reduce your school's budget by 15%. Please submit your revised numbers to Bill Yes, Finance Director at the district office, two weeks from today.

"Thanks for thinking creatively about how we can maintain the highest level of academic excellence during these difficult fiscal times."

Dr. Carla Rodgers

Confirm / Next

2:08

### How Would You Address Budget Cuts?

In the box below, draft a memo to your staff outlining how you will respond to a request for a 15% budget reduction at your school. Include a justification for your approach.

Click "Confirm/Next" when you are finished.

Confirm / Next

6:38

### DECISION: Make Cuts Or Continue?

After getting the committee's recommendation, you are considering if you should go back to the idea of determining how to implement the cuts yourself. Maybe the committee approach is not the best course of action after all. On the other hand, you certainly have buy in for Safety as a priority.

What will you do?

- 1 Accept the committee's recommendation and work the budget accordingly.
- 2 Reconvene the team and take a more active role in establishing priorities.

Confirm / Next

# Macro simulation 1: The budget cut (continued)

**7:38**  
**DECISION: Ranking The Priorities**

You have determined to share what you see as the school's priorities as a guide to allocating the budget.

From the following options, pick what you would choose as your top priority. Click "Confirm/Next" when you are ready to move forward.

- 1 Community/Safety
- 2 Instruction/Curriculum
- 3 Technology Initiative

7:38 Middle School Budget Challenge v1.0 (c) 2008. All Rights Reserved. Internet | Protected Mode On

**8:38**  
**DECISION: Determining Next Steps**

Your clarification of priorities helps the team become aligned. Now you need to determine how to allocate the budget with those priorities as a guide.

Which of the following options seems like the best choice?

- 1 Fully fund your top priority and distribute the remainder as best you can.
- 2 Determine a weighting to your top two priorities and allocate the budget accordingly.
- 3 Build the budget up from zero - determine what is required to be in **Balance**, then consider how to best achieve your priorities.

8:38 Middle School Budget Challenge v1.0 (c) 2008. All Rights Reserved. Internet | Protected Mode On

**9:34**  
**January 13th: Intercom**

You are on lunch duty and hear your Administrative Assistant over the school intercom requesting that you return to the office.

What will you do?

Your Choice: **ELCC Standards ...** 1/3

Other Choice(s):

3.1 Manage the Organization  
3.1(c) Candidates demonstrate an ability to manage time effectively and deploy financial and human resources in ways that promote student achievement.

9:34 Middle School Budget Challenge v1.0 (c) 2008. All Rights Reserved. Internet | Protected Mode On

**9:34**  
**Congratulations!**

Congratulations on completing the Middle School Budget Challenge!

To restart the simulation and try a different path, click the "End/Restart" button below.

To go back to reviewing your decision choices, click the left arrow button below.

**Desktop**

- Desktop
- Professional Development Plan - Technology
- Professional Development Plan - Reading and Math
- Thornbush Middle School Notes
- Thornbush Middle School Background
- Preliminary Budget

9:34 Middle School Budget Challenge v1.0 (c) 2008. All Rights Reserved. Internet | Protected Mode On



# Future micro-simulations (multimedia interface)

- Focus on instructional leadership
  - The post-conference (a simulation of a post-observation conference with a math teacher)
- Focus on family engagement
  - The parent group (a simulation of a principal's parent advisory group meeting)
- Focus on legal issues
  - The expulsion (a simulation of the response to a significant behavioral incident)
  - The IEP Team (a simulations of an Individualized Education Plan team meeting)

# Standards Alignment

- All decision-points aligned to national or local standards
  - Currently aligned to Educational Leadership Constituents Council (**ELCC**) *Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership*.
  - Easily also aligned to Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (**ISLLC**) *Standards*
  - Custom alignment to appropriate local standards

# When

- Throughout the education leadership life-cycle as a professional development tool
  - Education-leader preparation programs
  - On-going administrative team professional development
  - Pre-employment screening process step
  - CEU continuing education for veteran education leaders

# When – Lifespan Learning in Education Leadership

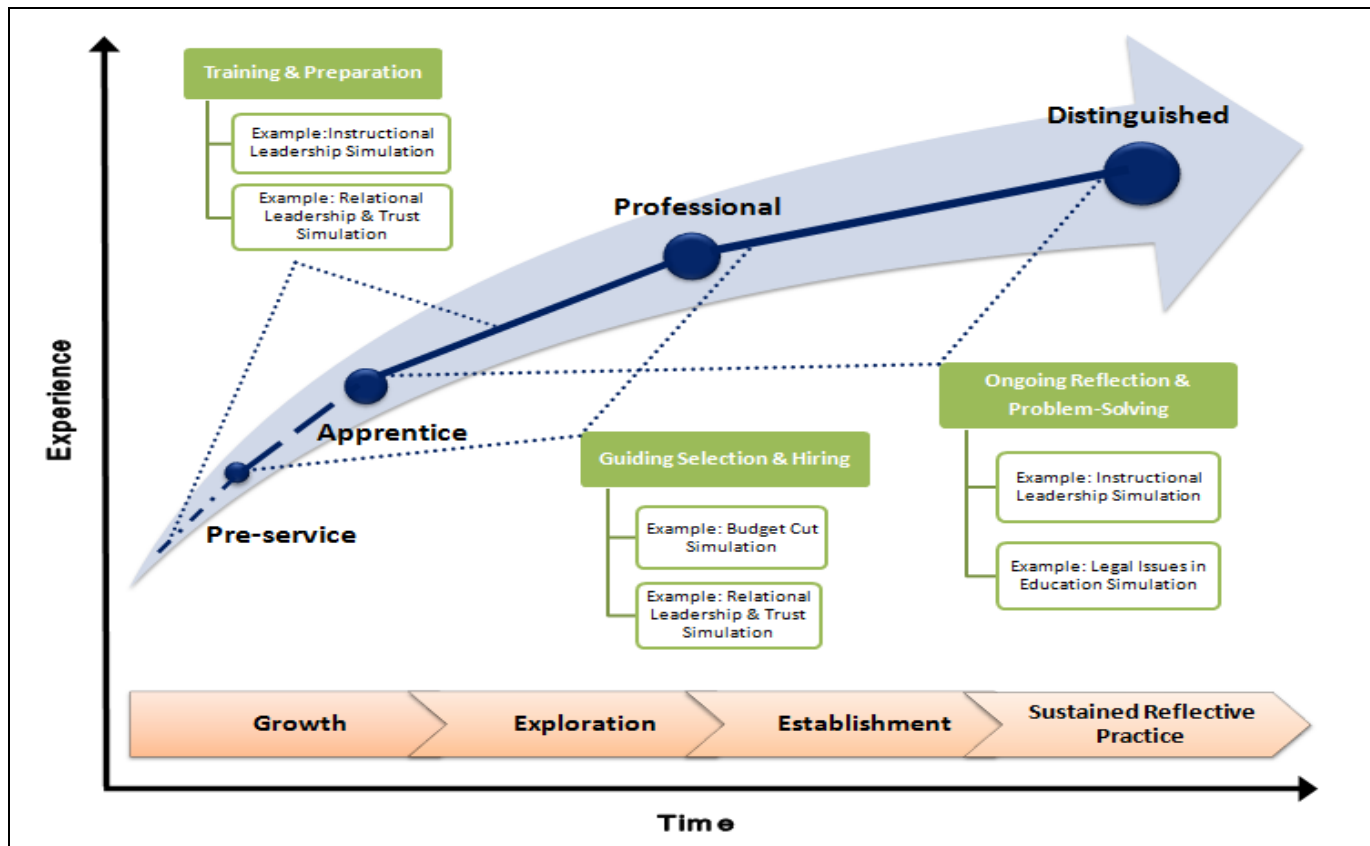


Figure 4. Lifespan of a School or District Leader: Applications of the Simulation Tool

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# When (continued)

## ■ Extensions

- Aspiring school/district leaders
- Parents
- School board members

# How

Different versions depending on the “when”  
[Cassie and Karen’s session]

- Primary design – Formative/Collaborative professional development or classroom use (blended instruction model)
- For individual learning – Board member training
- For assessment – Summative/Independent pre-employment screening element; administrator preparation program capstone assessment; CEU awards

# Next Steps

- Initial training on SimWriter Pro for Mid-Career Network Alumni “early adopters”
- Funding opportunities for training and deployment – grant proposals, etc.
- Development of peer-review standards for content: Does the sim accurately represent the practical experience and the application of theory?
- Vertical markets – expansion to include teacher education, Independent Schools, Higher Ed, and CLO

# Penn GSE Executive Leadership Programs

- Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Education Leadership
  - [http://www.gse.upenn.edu/degrees\\_programs/mid\\_career](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/degrees_programs/mid_career)
- Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management
  - <http://www.gse.upenn.edu/execdoc>
- PennCLO – Chief Learning Officer
  - <http://www.gse.upenn.edu/node/1083>



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# Discussion/ Questions & Answers

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**Interested in using this tool  
in your program or district?**

For further details, contact:

Eric Bernstein, Coordinator

Educational Leadership

Simulation Development Project

[erbernstein@alumni.upenn.edu](mailto:erbernstein@alumni.upenn.edu)