Enhancing District Leadership Through the Use of Online Branching Simulations

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Penn Educational Leadership Simulation (PELS) Project
Presentation Overview

- Overview of project
- SME Sim Authoring Model
- Sim Implementation in District Leadership Development
- Current/Future Sim Development
- Opportunities for Involvement
Project Overview

What is simulation and what is the PELS Project?
Project Goals

The PELS Project will:

- provide incumbent educational leaders the opportunity to develop and author simulations; and

- offer pre- and in-service leaders various opportunities to use simulations developed by their peers (P2P PD) as a basis for learning through local and/or extended professional learning communities
Types of Simulations

- **Medium**
  - Live action
  - Online Multi-media
  - Online Text-based
  - Paper-based

- **Scale**
  - Macro-Simulations
  - Micro-Simulations
PELS Project Sims

- Online delivery
- Micro-sims (specific problems of practice)
  - Modular
  - Standards-aligned (ISLLC)
- Various levels of multi-media production
  - Full multi-media production (audio/video)
  - Animation
  - Images and audio
  - Images and text
  - Text-only
Simulation Development Evolution

Text-Based Simulations to Full Multi-Media Simulations
Text-Based Prototype

One Year & Two Face to Face Sessions Later

Full Multi-Media Sims
Sims Across the Educational Leadership Career
Subject Matter Expert
Authoring Model

Who develops the PELS sims?
Subject-Matter Expert Authoring Model
Peer-to-Peer Professional Development: P2P-PD

- PELS Fellows – Sim Authors
  - “Professionally crowd-sourced”
    - Practitioner-based
      - All authors are experienced K-12 educational leaders
        - Traditional public schools/districts
        - Magnet/charter schools/CMO leadership
        - Independent schools (religious and non-religious affiliated)
  - Theory-integration
    - All authors hold advanced degrees (beyond the Masters)
    - Integrated peer-review through author collaboration
Project-Driven Research/Evaluation

Built-in peer review model

- “Experiential validity”
  - Are the scenarios real
  - Are the consequences and outcomes realistic
  - Are the intended learning objectives explored
  - Are the decisions/choices grounded in theory

- Modification – version revision
  - Based on data gathered
  - Are choices consistent with author expectations?
    - Why or why not?
Peer-to-Peer PD (P2P-PD)

Sims in Ed Leadership Professional Development

- Resistance to scorecards
- Not “compliance-oriented”
- Sims not stand-alone
- Social learning model
Social Learning With Sims

- shared experience provides basis for social learning
- encourage critical thinking about and challenging discourse around difficult issues in leadership
- serve as the basis for reflection on and analysis of decisions made in the face of complex challenges in school and district leadership.
- help make explicit and assess the rationale for why an individual might make certain decisions
- clarify district leadership decision-making values and considerations
Leveraging Sims in District Leadership

Potential Uses
District Applications

- Superintendent/District-level Leader PLC
- Administrative Team Professional Development/PLC
- Aspiring School Leader Programs in District
- Other uses
  - Hiring Process
  - Board Training
Superintendent/District-Level Leader PLC

- District leadership is insular/isolated – Use of sims in professional learning communities (PLCs)
  - Bring together central office staff in single district
  - Create a PLC of local superintendents
  - Join a virtual PLC (vPLC) with superintendents across the region or country [PELS Partnering with AASA]
Administrative Team Professional Development

- District A-Team PLC
- Deploy online sim
  - Whole-group, small group, individual
- Discussion of decisions
  - What choices made? Why?
  - What choices missing?
  - District priorities impacted
  - District practices explored
- Taking the top off the “black box” of district leadership decision making
Aspiring School Leaders

- Facilitated in district by acting administrators
- Provide “sand-box” opportunities for emerging school leaders
- Opportunities to expose aspiring leaders in district to each other and to district values around leadership decisions
Other Uses

- Hiring Process
- Board Training
Current Sim Development

What do they look like? What’s coming?
Current Simulation Development

Multi-Media Micro Sims

- Teacher Goal Setting Simulation
  *Instructional Leadership Strand*

- Parent Concern Simulation
  *Public Leadership Strand*

- Teacher Dress Code Simulation
  *Organizational Leadership Strand*
Instructional Leadership Strand

Teacher Goal Setting Simulation
You are principal of Worthing Middle School.
You have been at Worthing for four years.
Preparing to meet Everett Goodall.
Developing his annual goals.
Goodall has signed his one-year ten-year career teaching social studies at Worthing.
Performance line indicates satisfactory performance overall.

Institutional goal is to align curriculum with ELLA Common Core Standards for English Language Arts.
85% of 8th grade students are scoring at proficient or above in state assessment.

- Mr. Goodall's Grade Report
- IBELL Standards

You have asked all teachers to send you their annual goals and objectives. Mr. Goodall has sent the following goals:
1. To incorporate more technology into social studies lessons.
2. To find appropriate social studies apps for the iPad.

How will you address these goals?

a. You set a meeting with Mr. Goodall. You send Mr. Goodall the school goal and ask him to reflect on ways that he can incorporate strategies for the ELLA Common Core Standards into his teaching goals.
b. You set up a meeting with Mr. Goodall. You have a faculty meeting at which you review the ELLA Common Core Standards and school goals. You expect Mr. Goodall will revise his goals based upon the information presented at the faculty meeting.
c. You send the goals back to Mr. Goodall and instruct him to review them so they are not "good enough." You ask...
a. I have reviewed your students’ grades and they do make progress from the beginning of the year to the end. However, when I tested the state standard, I was surprised. I found that 90% of the students weren’t proficient, especially when it came to reading comprehension. We need to address this in your goals this year.

b. I have reviewed your students’ grades and they do make progress from the beginning of the year to the end. However, our focus this year needs to be on the ELA Common Core Standards.

c. I have reviewed your students’ grades and they do make progress from the beginning of the year to the end. However, I notice that 50% of the grades come from participation and homework. Also, when I looked at you, most of the classroom activities were recall and fact memorization. You didn’t ask the students to do any critical thinking, evaluating, or analyzing the subject matter.

Mr. Gonzales still seems apprehensive about how the ELA Common Core Standards fit into his specific content area.

What can you say to help him understand what you need?

a. You provide Mr. Gonzales with a specific example of how to integrate the ELA Common Core Standards with the area he teaches. You emphasize the benefits of preparing in advance of the meeting.

b. In accordance with the district’s grading policy, you explain that participation and homework should not be the sole criteria for grading. You suggest that you could develop additional activities in class, unlike substitutes, do not support the goals of the ELA Common Core Standards.

Objectives

- Promoting student growth and development (ELCC Standard 2)
- Enhancing curriculum design, implementation, assessment and refinement (ELCC Standard 2)
- Supporting adult learning and professional development (ELCC Standard 2)
Public Leadership Strand

Parent Concern Simulation
**Issue: Coach Swearing at Students**

Player 1: “Coach said, ‘What the hell’s going on with you guys?’ He was yelling at us during practice.”
Player 2: “I heard from another player that he said, ‘What the hell is the problem?’ during practice last Tuesday.”

Player 3: “Coach was mad because we couldn’t hit a shot from the free throw line. I don’t think what he said, but he was yelling.”
Player 4: “I’ve never heard Coach D curse. He wouldn’t do that.”
Player 5: “You heard him say ‘hell’ before, but never directed at anyone in particular.”

Coach DeVinsaid: “We are so close to the championship; they are such a good team. I was trying to motivate them because they weren’t playing up to their potential. I probably went too far when I asked them, ‘What the hell are you doing out there? You’re not even trying!’ It won’t happen again.”

Athletic Director David Jeter: “I didn’t see that email you forwarded before Christmas. I called her and she never talked to me back. There are many times when I watch DeVinsaid’s practices and he treats the girls like athletes; he does push them hard and he definitely gets excited from time to time, but I have never seen him go overboard. Pushing them is why he is winning. He is a good coach—one of the best we’ve had in years.”

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**Objectives**

- Using information about family and community concerns, expectations, and norms regularly (SLLC Standard 4)
- Training people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect (SLLC Standard 5)
- Protecting the rights and confidentiality of students and staff (SLLC Standard 5)
Organizational Leadership Strand

Teacher Dress Code Simulation
You are the principal of S.R. Elementary.
This is your first year at this school.
You have been an elementary principal for 5 years.
Staff is made up of many young teachers who work collaboratively.
You have received complaints from staff members about a colleague’s attire.

Since the weather has gotten warmer, I feel I need to make sure you know that Miss Brown’s attire has become increasingly inappropriate. I noticed at bus duty this morning as she helped students getting off the bus, that her midriff was exposed and the top of her undies was clearly visible. I was most concerned by the fact that some of the 10th grade students were staring and giggling as they walked past her and I have definitely heard staff members talking about her clothing, too.

I have always believed Miss Brown to be a caring teacher, but I am concerned about the climate that her inappropriate dress might be creating for our children. Let me know if you would like me to say something to her regarding this situation.

T.B. for Professional, Dress Code

Resources

Professional Dress Code
ISLLC Standards

Continue
It’s Friday at 10:30 a.m. and your scheduled meeting with Miss Brown is about to begin. Click the link below to review the district dress code policy. When you are ready to begin the meeting, select the "Next" button.

District Dress Code Policy

- Do not wear any clothing that is revealing or inappropriate.
- No hats or caps are allowed in the meeting room.
- Shoes with cleats are not allowed.
- No large bags or backpacks are allowed in the meeting room.

Objectives

- Establishing a culture of professionalism within the school (SSLG Standard 2)
- Maintaining an effective supervisory relationship while giving feedback around sensitive issues (SSLG Standard 2)
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)
Demonstration presentation:
www.tinyurl.com/PELS-SD2

Prototypes:
- Prototype 1 – Teacher Goal Setting
- Prototype 2 – Parent/Community Relationships
- Prototype 3 – Staff Morale and Teacher Attire
Opportunities for Involvement

How can I engage with the PELS Project?
Opportunities for Involvement

- In-house, district simulation development
- Participation in the PELS Project
  - Authorship training
  - Workshops
- PELS Sim utilization in your district
Opportunities for Involvement

- Building a database that records the actual decisions of school leaders
- Deconstruction of educational leaders’ decision-making processes
- Sortable decision-making database by context, background, experience, etc.
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