



**Introduction to this special issue
of the *eJournal of Education Policy***

**Reimagining Educational Leadership
Within and Beyond the Pandemic**

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Educational leaders in Arizona, the U.S., and around the world have experienced numerous challenges to education amidst the Covid 19 pandemic, including rapid shifts to and from virtual education, major increases in social emotional needs among students and adults, and inequities illuminated by disproportionate access to technology and internet. For this special issue of the journal, the editors of *eJEP* called on recognized authors who provided keynote addresses or led panel discussions at the 2021 Arizona Professors of Educational Leadership Annual Conference, titled *Breaking the Mold: Challenges of Preparing School Leaders for Supporting Transformative Teaching and Learning Environments in a Post-COVID World*. Their contributions provide valuable insights and perspectives to inform and transform the preparation of educational leaders. Abstracts from the first two articles within the special issue highlight challenges and opportunities for leadership preparation in the U.S. and Europe. The two articles that follow contextualize contemporary challenges to education and leadership historically and consider relationships among education and democracy. Finally, the last article summarizes highlights from the conference and the articles with implications for leadership preparation within and beyond the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Michelle Young, Kathleen Cunningham, Bryan Van Gronigen, and Ann O'Doherty provide a description of the Powerful Learning Experience (PLE) framework, an outgrowth of a University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) project. The PLE framework includes ten key attributes that encourage active teaching and learning processes, problem-based, context-rich products, and

other evidence of learning outcomes. They assert that leadership preparation experiences that reflect these attributes foster a more profound understanding of educational leadership and contribute to the development of essential knowledge and skills.

Stephan Huber and Nadine Schneider discuss trends in the development of school leadership, as well as the use of self-assessment and feedback as part of the professional development of school leaders and the impact of professional development on leadership practices. They argue in favor of approaches to professional development using multiple learning approaches. They also propose the evaluation of the quality of professional development to take a wide range of didactical aspects and different levels of impact into account, from the increase in competence to the change in performance and its consequences in the school. They also bring attention to the value of an evaluation process that draws on various sources, besides participant perception, and which also includes the views of others including school staff.

Carl Hermanns and David Berliner discuss the many challenges facing democracy in the U.S., including restrictions on voting rights, declines in the rule of law, disputed elections, and the non-peaceful transfer of power, and they assess the historic failure on the part of K-12 education systems and university leadership preparation programs to prepare students for living in a democracy. To achieve more democratic outcomes, the authors propose a greater emphasis on transformative education, in which leaders strive to create the conditions to enact democratic education in ways that truly prepare K-12 students to engage with their communities as informed and constructive participants in democratic institutions.

Rose Ylimaki reconsiders education for the growth of individuals and democratic societies amidst and beyond the Covid 19 pandemic. Ylimaki presents insights from Arizona educational leaders who shared their experiences with virtual education in 2020 and the ongoing challenges to education, pedagogy, and equity that emerged from virtual education amidst the Pandemic. Ylimaki then juxtaposes the educational challenges for individual and social learning and growth in virtual environments to John Dewey's education theorizing from an earlier time of challenge as well as contemporary studies of culturally responsive pedagogy designed to address societal inequities. The article concludes with implications for transformative education beyond the Covid 19 situation.

Frank Davidson summarizes the findings from a panel discussion held at the May, 2021 Arizona Professors of Educational Leadership Conference which focused on what could be learned from efforts to provide meaningful principal internship experiences through the ongoing challenges and shifting approaches to schooling brought on by the global pandemic. The author discusses adaptations made by interns, site mentors, and university faculty that may be helpful in creating innovative clinical experiences in the future. The article includes a discussion of implications for planning and supervising internships and offers policy recommendations and suggestions for future research.