

Document Delivery Book Chapter

Journal Title: A handbook for language program administrators

Trans. #: 1044693

Article Author: Panferov



Article Title: Transitioning from Teacher to Administrator

Call #: PE1128.A2 H33 2012

Volume:

Location: Main Library

Issue:

Item #:

Month/Year: 2012

Pages: 3-18 (scan notes and title/copyright pages for chapter requests)

CUSTOMER INFORMATION:

Imprint: Burlingame, CAAlta

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STATUS: Faculty
DEPT: English as a Second Language

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CHAPTER 1

TRANSITIONING FROM TEACHER TO LANGUAGE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

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Teaching and leading are distinguishable occupations, but every great leader is clearly teaching—and every great teacher is leading. (Gardner, 1990, p. 77)

“I want to be a Language Program Administrator.” Short and sweet, those words resounded through my ears like a joyful symphony to a conductor. Recently, I had the honor of serving on a doctoral committee for a graduate student who was also a full-time English as a Second Language (ESL) elementary school teacher in a small U.S. town near the border with Mexico. Having already had the pleasure of getting to know the student in a graduate course that I had taught on language program administration in the previous semester, I was more than happy to serve on her committee. At her candidacy exam, she was asked to justify her interest in matriculating into an educational doctoral program while at the same time remaining a full-time teacher. Hearing her begin her exam with the words above was well worth the time I personally spent on the exam myself.



Not long ago, the field of English language teaching (ELT) began setting expectations for professional teachers that required obtaining qualifying credentials to teach ESL or English as a foreign language (EFL) (Muchisky, 1998). ELT professional associations, such as Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL) and University and College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP), have also advocated professional credentials for English language teachers (see www.tesol.org and www.uciep.org). No longer is being a native English speaker or being proficient in English enough to qualify someone to teach ESL or EFL; teachers must also have professional credentials. We are now seeing an increase in the number of university students who want to be ESL or EFL teachers when they graduate. The Ph.D. student I mentioned above, however, is the first student whom I have heard state an intention to become a language program administrator (LPA), purposefully select courses that would prepare her for such a career, and develop a plan to eventually leave her position as a teacher and become an LPA. She is one of the first students in her generation to recognize language program administration as a viable career choice. This student's career path, like that of possibly others, serves as a signal that the profession of language program administration is being launched. Students (and practicing teachers) are deliberately choosing a career in language program administration and formally preparing to make the transition from teaching into administration (see Chapter 2).

For most practicing LPAs, the transition from language teaching to program administration happens quite by chance. Certainly, this phenomenon is common in other fields as well where employees have been promoted into positions of management (Boyd & O'Neill, 2006; Harper, 1994; White, Hockley, van der Horst Jansen, & Laughner, 2008). It is often the case when a position needs to be filled that a highly organized, yet unsuspecting, internal candidate is identified and charged with (or even coaxed into) stepping into an administrative position. At a recent professional meeting, sixty practicing ESL program directors were asked to identify what their "when I grow up" career plans had been, and none mentioned language program administration. Responses varied from teacher to medical doctor and even to professional baseball player, but none had foreseen a future in language program administration.

If you are one of those individuals who is transitioning from language teaching into language program administration, or you are yet to embark upon a professional career and find yourself a student in a language program administration course, this chapter is for you. The fact that you are now turning to this book for education (and hopefully not consolation) is a sign that you recognize language program administration as a career path and are educating yourself on the topic.

What Is Language Program Administration?

Language program administration is a professional area of expertise that encompasses a number of related fields (see Figure 1.1).

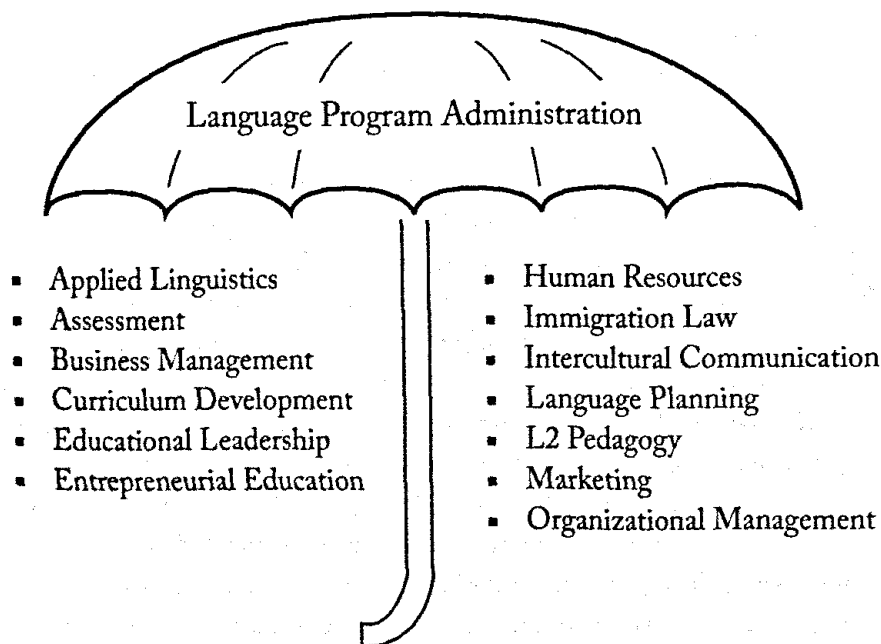


Figure 1.1. Fields of study that inform language program administration.

Mirroring the interdisciplinary evolution of the field of second language acquisition (Gass & Selinker, 2008), language program administration has grown to encompass the concerns of numerous professional fields of study, including, but not limited to, applied linguistics, assessment, business management (marketing, budgeting, revenue genera-

tion and allocation), curriculum development, educational leadership and policy, entrepreneurial education, human resources, intercultural communication, international and federal immigration law, language planning, marketing, and organizational management. Issues in these various areas confront teachers as they transition from language teacher to administrator, in whatever type of language program they are directing. To limit the scope of this chapter, the focus is on English language program administration and the challenges that administrators face in the different contexts in which English language programs exist.

As the demand for learning ESL and EFL increases across the globe, so does the need for professionally prepared and experienced LPAs (Schulz, 2005). English LPAs might find themselves directing an intensive ESL program in the U.S., supervising elementary school ESL teachers, organizing an adult EFL course in Asia, running a foreign language center in Europe, heading an English department in Mexico, or overseeing a language immersion elementary school in Canada. The contexts, both linguistically and geographically, in which English LPAs find themselves vary greatly. What unite LPAs in these different contexts are the leadership roles that they must assume and the underlying educational goals of English language teaching.

In many ways, being an English LPA is similar to being a language teacher. Both are *ELT professionals*, skilled in helping students navigate cultural issues that arise in learning languages and in mastering new language systems. Language teachers and LPAs value the development of pedagogical expertise in the classroom and value quality communication both inside and outside the classroom. They also distinguish the field of ELT from other professional fields of teaching. Most language teachers and program administrators are quite adept at counseling students in issues related to intercultural communication. They both study the challenges of acculturation and language identity. English language teachers who transition into administration can use the knowledge and skills that they develop about teaching, draw on their teaching experiences, and then apply these skills to contexts beyond the classroom. The greatest challenge in transitioning from teaching to program administration rests with the difficulties administrators face in meeting new leadership responsibilities. In addition, most transitioning LPAs attempt to meet these new responsibilities without prior formal administrative training.

Because the majority of English LPAs are trained in fields of study such as applied linguistics and TESOL and because formal courses in program administration are only just now beginning to surface in teacher education programs in these fields, it is not surprising to find that the majority of first-time LPAs have not had professional administrative training prior to stepping into roles as LPAs. Although this situation mirrors trends in educational management, educational leadership, and other fields of education (Law & Glover, 2000), it does not make the transition any easier. Given the complexity, variety, and scope of tasks that LPAs must manage, most inexperienced program administrators find that the addition of new administrative responsibilities, for which they are unprepared, makes balancing their professional lives difficult (Harper, 1994). In fact, White et al. (2008) state that without a clear understanding of both teaching and administrative realms, the LPA may be disadvantaged and marginalized (see Chapter 2). To fill the gap in expertise, professional training in program administration and leadership is needed; such training can affect how easily and successfully new LPAs are able to transition from teaching into their roles as administrators.

To investigate the formal training and preparation that LPAs receive prior to taking on leadership positions in program administration, I surveyed practicing ESL program administrators in the U.S. (N = 106). The results are reported in Table 1.1 (and referred to throughout the chapter). The majority of LPAs surveyed received advanced degrees in TESOL/Applied Linguistics. About 12% of respondents had earned an MBA or advanced degree in Educational Administration.

Table 1.1
Advanced Degree Fields of Study of Practicing ESL Administrators (N=106)

<i>Field of Study</i>	<i>Administrators Receiving Advanced Degrees in this Field</i>
Communicative Sciences	1
Computers in Education	1
Cultural Anthropology	1
Early Childhood Education	1
History	1
International Relations	1
Social Studies	1
Translation/Interpretation	1
Intercultural Communications	2
MBA	2
Psychology	2
English	3
Literature	3
Multicultural /International Education	3
Spanish	4
Education	5
Educational Administration	10
TESOL/Applied Linguistics	64

As suggested in Table 1.1, TESOL and applied linguistics are typically the areas of study that LPAs embark upon prior to becoming administrators, fields of study that provide few opportunities for training in program administration. While managers in noneducational fields characteristically complete at least minimal course work in administration before assuming their positions, LPAs rarely have such formal credentials, nor do many job postings require such courses or degrees. Professionals in other situations, if they assume jobs for which they have had no formal prior training, normally supplement their expertise with ongoing professional training or receive such training by the employer at the beginning of the job. For many LPAs, such training is rarely offered.

To probe this assumption further, the ESL program directors surveyed were asked specifically about the additional professional development or training they had received

in educational administration, beyond the training associated with their advanced degrees, to prepare them for their jobs. Eighty-seven percent reported that they had not had any formal training specific to their assignment as a program administrator prior to assuming their first administrative position. Paradoxically, in this rapidly advancing field, most LPAs continue to assume their leadership roles with no formal training in administration nor any supplemental professional development. If the English language teaching profession supports the argument that being a native or highly proficient speaker of English is by itself not sufficient to qualify someone to be a professional language teacher and that formal training is required, then it seems logical that professional training should also be required to become a qualified LPA. We no longer expect teachers to learn to teach “on the job” without formal training, so how can we allow administrators to learn their craft without the tools necessary to ensure their success? Therein lies the premise for this chapter: It is the deliberate acquisition of professional knowledge and expertise that successfully guides the language teacher in transitioning to an LPA.

How Is Language Program Administration Different from Language Teaching?

Transitioning from language teaching to language program administration is similar to experiencing the culture of a different country for the first time. There will be many similarities between the new culture and the familiar culture, and in some cases, even some of the same participants (the same students and teachers, for instance). However, despite the sense of familiarity, experiencing the culture of a language program from the viewpoint of an LPA is a different cultural phenomenon than experiencing it from the teacher’s viewpoint. There will be differences in what one sees and in how one interprets events. Some differences will be quite obvious, while others are subtle and may take some time to unravel.

The most noticeable differences between teaching and administration are manifested in changes in the demands on one’s time, the configuration of one’s workload, the types of tasks in which one must engage, and the skills required in varied types of communicative encounters. Collectively, these differences give new administrators a sense that the work is never done. For example, language teachers generally have a defined set of responsibilities that includes lesson planning, teaching, curriculum development, assessment, and interactions with students and colleagues—tasks that can be completed within a set time frame. At the end of each course, semester, or term, grades or evaluations are submitted, and, then, many language teachers enjoy a welcome respite from teaching. With administration, however, there is no respite. During the time between terms, administrators expend much time and effort in completing tasks associated with ending the previous term and in preparing for the start of the next term; consequently, for most LPAs, the well-defined sense of closure at the end of a term evaporates. As the boundaries of time and extended responsibilities morph together, the workload spills over into break time with seemingly endless lists of tasks. New administrators must find strategies to meet these demands so that they can balance their workloads and avoid the potential for frustration associated with experiencing one’s work as never being completed.

A helpful metaphor that I have used to describe making the adjustment to different demands on time is to compare carrying out administrative duties to keeping up with one’s laundry. Laundry is never completely done; however, as long as the piles of laundry

are not too overwhelming and a constant effort is made to control their growth, the task remains manageable. The trick is not to fret when more laundry comes in, because the truth about administrative work is that there will always be more to do. While teachers typically focus on meeting short-term goals in the execution of their courses within the parameters of a specific time frame established by the program, LPAs must think beyond these parameters—continually moving forward, working toward the achievement of short- and long-term goals, and anticipating future challenges and solutions for the betterment of the entire language program.

Another difference between teaching and administration relates to how one's workload is configured as a result of a change in tasks. Perhaps the most noticeable change is the loss of control of one's own daily schedule. It is a bit jarring at first for a teacher to move from a predictable daily work schedule with regular class meetings and scheduled office hours to a less predictable schedule punctuated with frequent administrative meetings that often arise at the last moment and never seem to end. Language teachers often define their jobs in terms of a set number of teaching hours; however, LPAs must define their jobs in terms of specific tasks. To complete those tasks, they may find themselves facing more than 40 hours a week at the office, in addition to other planning and meeting times. Daily interruptions and minor administrative "fires" disrupt the best-laid schedule. To deal with these new but predictable challenges and to meet the demands of his/her new schedule, an efficient LPA must devise time management strategies, such as minimizing interruptions and balancing the time spent in meetings with the time needed to complete other necessary tasks. Regularizing times for on-going and necessary meetings helps bring some control to the calendar, as well as offers reassurances to those who need to schedule meetings in the future that the administrator will indeed have time for them. Developing such protocols lessens the need for constant interruptions.

Similar to teachers, LPAs value their professional relationships and work with many people. However, the people with whom administrators interact are no longer primarily students and other teachers but may include staff, university leaders, admissions officers, testing agents, embassy representatives, marketing sales forces, community leaders, etc. LPAs receive numerous requests for appointments and meetings from visitors who make special requests of the administrator or pose problems that the administrator must solve, regarding topics unrelated to the issues that language teachers must deal with on a regular basis. For instance, it is not uncommon for an LPA to deal with issues related to class schedule changes, complaints about test results, and exceptions to policy from other units, such as those related to documented cases of cheating or plagiarism or requests from university admissions. In lean economic times, language programs housed in higher education contexts may receive requests from university administrators for a transfer of the language program's carryover funds to support university personnel hiring lines; it is the LPA who must respond to these requests. Less common, but certainly not unheard of, are calls from the local police, trips to court, surprise visits from foreign government embassy leaders, or even a visit to an LPA's home by immigration authorities. It is important that new LPAs anticipate the diversity of people that they will deal with and know that these people will come with requests that are very different from those typically directed to language teachers.

In addition to learning how to manage different demands on time and workload, the LPA may need to find new strategies for communicating with others, when, for example, supervising faculty and staff, interacting with other stakeholders who may have very different expectations of the language teaching program, and navigating institutional politics. Managing people who are not one's own students is often a different experience for new LPAs and requires new skills. It may be the case that the program has an established and stable (and sometimes entrenched) group of faculty and staff. Communication can be even more complex if the new LPA was a teacher in the same program and must take on the responsibility of supervising former peers (and perhaps, in some cases, personal friends). Of course, it might also be the case that the administrator is responsible for launching a new language program and may have the opportunity to hire new faculty and staff. Finally, there will often be circumstances when the LPA must advocate for his/her program or the stakeholders associated with the program in a broad social context, such as on a university campus or at a regional level, and must call upon others to act on behalf of the program or its stakeholders. An LPA, for instance, may chair a university international student recruitment committee with members from all corners of the university, be asked by department chairs to consider admitting a student with a lower score than is required on an English language proficiency exam, or be assigned the role of liaison with a student's scholarship sponsor on behalf of the university. Developing interpersonal skills to be an effective advocate takes time and practice. (See Chapter 9 in this volume for more information on advocacy issues.)

What Is the Scope of Responsibilities of a Language Program Administrator?

When the initial shock associated with the differences between language teaching and language program administration wears off, the new LPA must focus on understanding the scope of responsibilities that will help in transitioning into a new administrative role. The roles of LPAs vary slightly from one context to another, but the primary responsibility that they share is oversight of the language program, including the supervision of faculty and staff, responsibility for financial matters, and assurance of program quality, including the curriculum. In many cases, the LPA is also responsible for the oversight of student services, including co-curricular activities, immigration issues (including document processing and advising), housing, health insurance, and marketing.

White et al. (2008) classify the majority of LPA responsibilities into knowledge areas and skill sets associated with each area of knowledge. They recommend that LPAs have current knowledge of professional issues in English language teaching, much as a teacher would. However, in addition to a pedagogical knowledge base, they suggest that effective LPAs develop knowledge about language program markets (demand, pricing, etc.), available and needed resources, the larger institutional organization in which the program may be situated, and a familiarity with management theory and practice. "Just as teaching requires a knowledge of approaches to teaching and of methodologies and techniques, so, too, must an LPA be familiar with the field of management" (White et al., 2008, p. 20). Furthermore, White et al. stipulate that like teachers, successful LPAs need strong communication skills. Strong listening skills are particularly important given that program administrators spend a good deal of time in a typical day communicating with others, such as when listening to requests for allocating the program's precious resources or to

complaints from disgruntled employees or students. Program administrators also have to develop skills in saying the right thing at the right time, such as when they may have to face a conversation with an underperforming teacher who is about to be fired or to lead discussions with faculty about possible future downsizing. As with teaching, developing patience and active listening skills (i.e., focusing on making certain that others are heard) are vital in program administration. Other skills that White et al. (2008) stipulate are critical for LPAs include management functions, particularly those skills associated with planning, organizing, and leading. These skills are similar to planning, executing, and assessing for classroom teachers, and LPAs will no doubt benefit from transferring classroom management skills to their new administrative roles.

To learn more about the scope of program administrators' responsibilities, I asked LPAs in my survey to list the typical responsibilities that might confront them in any given day. The most frequently mentioned responsibilities appear in Table 1.2, along with the percentages (arranged in descending order) of total respondents identifying the area of responsibility.

Table 1.2
Variety of Daily Responsibilities of a Language Program Administrator (N=106)

<i>Areas of Responsibility</i>	<i>% of Administrators Listing the Responsibility</i>
Personnel issues	80.9
Curriculum	67.4
Marketing	64
Budgeting	59.6
Staff evaluation	52.8
Time management	50.6
Cooperation with university programs	48.3
Teacher training	46.1
Immigration and legal issues	44.9
Customized program development	43.8
Policy	34.8
Accreditation	32.6
Technology—purchasing, implementation, and ongoing support	30.3
Fundraising	2.2
Programs abroad	2.2

The number of different areas of responsibility that appear in Table 1.2 might seem a bit overwhelming when one thinks of them as occurring as part of an LPA's typical day or even week. Nevertheless, they are representative of the range of responsibilities that LPAs typically face, although the time frame in which these responsibilities occur varies depending on the context. With the exception of curriculum issues and perhaps teacher training (mentioned by 67.4% and 46.1% of respondents, respectively), the majority of the administrative tasks are very different from the daily tasks associated with teaching. Budgeting, personnel issues, and marketing are generally not associated with teaching; yet, they are among the areas of responsibility that survey respondents mentioned most frequently. Working on so many new tasks while at the same time managing interruptions when trying to complete unfamiliar tasks can overwhelm a new LPA. Learning how to be flexible and how to prioritize tasks are essential skills for LPAs. As language program teachers transition into administrative roles, they must focus on these skills, be open to the diversity of responsibilities that their jobs require, and be flexible enough to "shift gears" as issues arise.

Just as a teacher sets goals for teaching, so, too, must a new LPA set goals and establish priorities for learning about administration. Given the immense range of responsibilities a new LPA might face, it is helpful to prioritize areas for training. Rather than attempt to become an immediate expert in all administrative areas, it might be useful for new administrators to set priorities for training either consistent with their personal preferences or in the areas of responsibility in which current practicing LPAs indicate they spend the majority of their time.

What Are the Most Time-Consuming Responsibilities for Language Program Administrators?

Administrators' task priorities are likely to shift depending on the context in which the language program is situated. To study the similarities and differences among LPAs' responsibilities in different geographic regions, Kling and Panferov (2011) conducted a survey of 190 university language center administrators. Respondents were U.S.-based Intensive English Program (IEP) administrators and European-based foreign LPAs. Figure 1.2 compares the two groups of administrators based on their most time-consuming areas of responsibility.

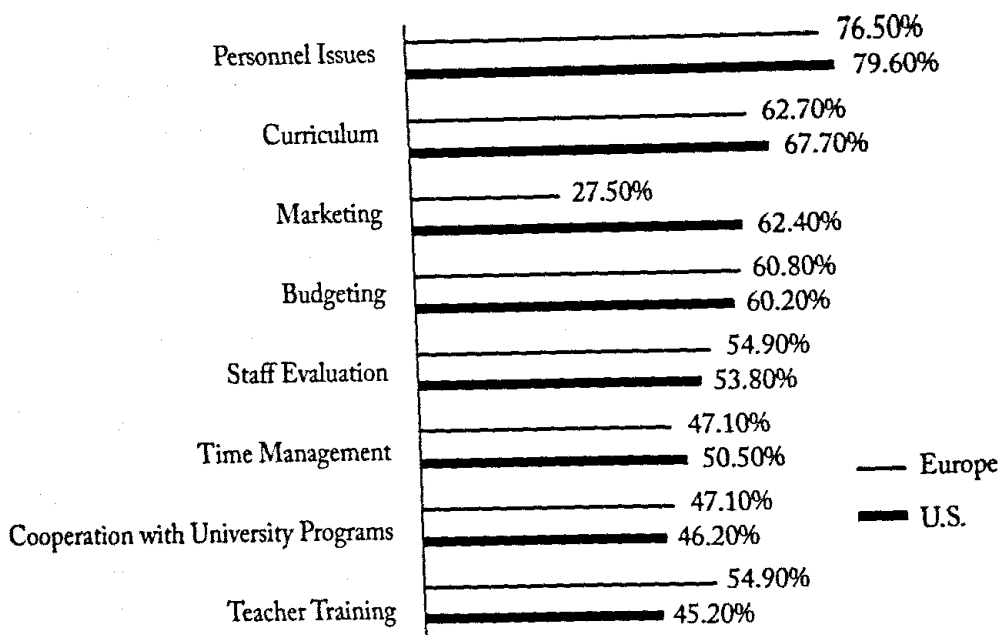


Figure 1.2. The top time-consuming responsibilities of language program administrators (N=190).

The U.S.- and European-based administrators indicated that the most time-consuming responsibilities included personnel issues, curriculum, budgeting, and staff evaluation. The U.S.-based respondents indicated that marketing was also a time-consuming area of responsibility. Given that many U.S. ESL programs are funded by student tuition monies and that enrollment in ESL courses is often not mandatory, it is not surprising that promoting quality instruction via marketing and student recruitment efforts are top priorities for these administrators. Conversely, European-based foreign LPAs found the task of marketing less important, presumably because European students are required to take foreign language courses as part of a regular university curriculum and do not need to be recruited (Kling & Panferov, 2011).

What Do Language Program Administrators Wish They Had Known?

In the U.S. and European program administrators' survey (mentioned above), respondents were asked to reflect on what they wished they had known before transitioning from language teaching to administration. Respondents noted that they wished they had known the following about personnel issues:

- how much time would be spent handling human resource issues,
- how much time would be spent sorting out personnel issues,
- how to work with office personnel (not teachers, students, administrators, etc.),
- how to motivate and keep teachers, and
- how to deal with problem employees, particularly disgruntled teachers.

These responses indicate perceived problems relative to the time required to deal with personnel issues and to motivate and resolve problems with difficult employees.

Formal training in how to resolve personnel issues effectively, as well as hands-on experience over time, can help the new program administrator be successful in such endeavors. Often university, school district, regional, or employment human resource offices offer workshops on personnel issues. Taking advantage of such resources and seeking them out before any problems actually arise can be extremely useful for new LPAs.

In reference to budgeting and finances, survey respondents indicated that they wished they had known more about the following budgetary matters:

- budget constraints and issues,
- budget projections,
- budgeting principles and processes, and
- the budget and financial system of the university.

Budgeting issues were identified as one of the most time-consuming responsibilities by more than 60% of both U.S. and European LPAs, who work in vastly different funding situations. It is not surprising that so many current administrators wish they had had more training in budgeting before assuming their language program administrative positions. Certainly either formal or informal training in budgeting, as well as opportunities to learn about the university or district-wide financial system in which the language program operates, would be beneficial for all new LPAs.

A third area of responsibility that provided interesting commentary from survey respondents was what they wished they had known about *cooperating with other university programs* and *understanding university relations and politics*. Program administrators wish they:

- had developed a better understanding of the larger university environment and culture,
- could negotiate with upper administration,
- could navigate an institution politically,
- could work with people to achieve goals,
- understood the lack of support from the campus community in general, and
- knew more about university policies.

While the majority of respondents were university-based, one might extrapolate that managing politics internal to any educational organization (preschool, secondary, post-secondary, private or public) may be particularly difficult for new administrators. To be effective administrators, they need to be able to sort out, from their new vantage point, the competing needs and wants of the various stakeholders involved and understand how to manage them. (See Chapter 10 in this volume for more on managing internal politics and establishing academic legitimacy.) The fact that experienced LPAs in both the U.S. and Europe identified facets of institutional politics as an area that they wished they had known more about before becoming administrators suggests that over time these administrators managed to deal with institutional politics; yet, they found institutional politics to be particularly difficult during the initial transition from teaching to administration.

The fact that experienced LPAs identify similar issues in their “wish I had known” and “top time-consuming tasks” lists suggests that there is a need for formal training



relative to these two areas for both new and seasoned LPAs. The stark reality is that LPAs typically learn these skills on the job without the benefit of specific training and education, thereby making the task and transition even more challenging.

Transitioning As Language Program Administrator: Manager, Promoter, and Leader

There are a number of different ways in which to configure the roles of the LPA. For the purposes of this chapter, three distinct roles seem appropriate—manager, promoter, and leader. Because issues both external and internal to a language program shift over time, so, too, will the roles of the LPA. When I surveyed practicing LPAs about what they wished they had known about administration before the transition from teaching, 65% of the respondents referred to managerial issues such as budgeting, hiring, and personnel concerns. Twenty-seven percent referenced issues related to promotion, including topics such as navigating the institutional culture, advocating for their programs, and supporting change. Less than 10% referred to issues related to language program leadership, such as developing a strategic plan, setting goals for the program, and capturing a vision for the program's future.

From these data, one might surmise that new LPAs will face many management-related tasks. As LPAs gain experience and develop expertise in dealing with managerial tasks, they can direct less energy to management issues and devote more time to roles of promoter and leader. The relationship between management tasks, on the one hand, and promotion and leadership tasks, on the other, is represented in Figure 1.3, in a format similar to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of basic needs.

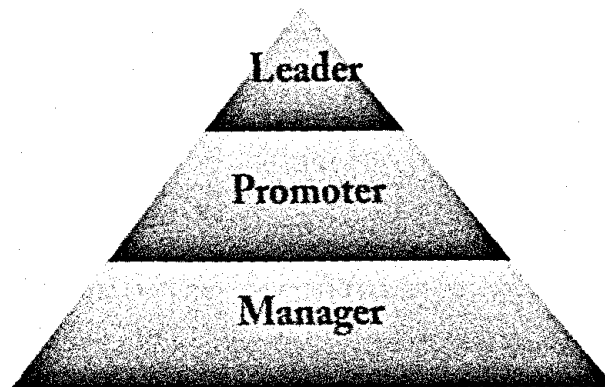


Figure 1.3. Roles of language program administrator.

Successful LPAs need to fulfill basic responsibilities as managers, such as keeping finances in order and making certain that new hires are progressing satisfactorily. These are foundational tasks and are represented as such in Figure 1.3, with manager responsibilities completing the base of the pyramid. Administrators must also be willing and able to advance professionally into the roles of promoter and leader. The role of the promoter is to advocate for students, staff, and faculty in situations that might not be directly related to language teaching and learning (e.g., student visa problems). The promoter markets the program, speaks highly of his/her team of faculty and staff, and recruits students to further the program's mission. The LPA also becomes a leader by planning for the future

and sharing the program's vision for future educational endeavors. Each of these three roles—manager, promoter, and leader—are expanded on in later chapters in this book.

Administrator Professional Development

Professional development is important throughout one's career, but developing a plan for on-going professional development in the first year as an LPA is critical. New LPAs need to seek out opportunities for their own professional development *within* the program itself. Initially, there might be opportunities to shadow the previous administrator or at least discuss with him/her the upcoming challenges that an administrator of that particular program may face. Short interviews with experienced faculty and staff can also provide insights into what they see as being the most important issues and concerns on which the new program administrator should focus. Strategically important, as well, is a meeting to set priorities with the program administrator's supervisor (who might be a dean, a provost, a headmaster, a school principal, a district superintendent, a board of directors, or a chief executive officer [CEO] in a business). These types of interactions provide opportunities for professional development. Beginning a new position with some level of knowledge about the internal structure of the program, vetted and evaluated critically by the new administrator, will prove to be a faster "on ramp" to functioning effectively in the new position.

In addition to the on-going professional development opportunities internal to the program itself, many other avenues are available. Reading about language program administration, in a book such as this one and in the additional resources recommended at the conclusion of individual chapters in this volume, will provide valuable information on how to respond to current issues and anticipate issues that are yet to come.

When I surveyed intensive ESL program directors about the professional development opportunities they most commonly accessed, they indicated that attending workshops and sessions at professional association conventions, such as NAFSA, IATEFL, UCIEP, and TESOL, was very helpful. Informal networking at association meetings was also cited as a common avenue to professional development. Some professional exchange associations, such as the Fulbright Scholar Program and the Institution for International Exchange, offer short administrative professional development opportunities. Additionally, involving oneself in advocacy issues related to language program administration not only protects the professional integrity of one's own program but also expands the professional circle of colleagues with which one associates, creating opportunities for idea sharing, collaborative presentations, and even program expansion. Some administrators have also found that workshops or coursework in other fields of study are quite useful, such as those provided by a college or faculty of business in a university, a Human Resources office, or other entities offering continuing education units.

Mentoring, whether formal or informal, is yet another avenue for professional development. Teachers have a plethora of colleagues to turn to for mentoring about professional issues, but LPAs have few colleagues to turn to, particularly in their own unit. Consequently, finding a mentor through professional associations or perhaps among university leaders is important. Mentoring can take place in both face-to-face and virtual electronic forums, the latter occurring most notably through Listservs¹ and direct email exchanges.

Conclusion

I came to the role of an LPA with a wide array of teaching experiences, in contexts ranging from first grade in primary school to graduate-level courses at the university; however, I had only some experience in administration. In learning how to function in my new role as an LPA, I found that my experiences in research were perhaps the greatest tools I had at my disposal. Initially, I approached language program administration as a research project in which I worked to unravel data—the daily issues with which I was confronted—and began systematically to delve deeper into just how language program directors, like myself, were being (or not being) prepared for such positions.

An LPA is, in a sense, simply a teacher with a different set of students. For new LPAs, keeping this perspective at the forefront of one's own approach to this new position offers the security of the familiar that is embedded in an orientation wherein educating is the top priority. Instead of teaching about grammar rules or pronunciation, the LPA educates teachers and others about curriculum alignment, fair professional employment standards, intercultural communication, and goal setting for academic language success. The LPA also educates others about budgetary approaches to producing an efficient curriculum, options for creating customized programs, as well as solid practices for maintaining the program's status with immigration. It is imperative that language teachers who transition into roles as program administrators seek out opportunities for specialized training and professional development in the knowledge and skill areas in which they have less formal education or experience. Just as we encourage our own students to become lifelong learners, so too must LPAs become lifelong learners in order to increase their own expertise and stay current with rapidly changing practices, policies, and world events.

The benefits of being an LPA are many. Meetings with students and leaders from other countries, consultation with publishers on new innovations, travel to meetings with colleagues, and recruitment trips to all corners of the globe are some of the many new opportunities that an LPA might enjoy. Most importantly perhaps is that still at the core of all that the LPA does is the opportunity to break down traditional barriers around the world and build new bridges for communication across cultures.

I am indebted to the fine cadre of LPA colleagues that I have met during this journey. I have learned from them, shared with them, cheered with them, cried with them, and even traveled the world with them; I am honored to call many of them my friends. I find that their openness and willingness to share and their collective will to continue to learn more about language program administration have been my best tools for learning as I transitioned from language teaching to administration. As you embark on this transition, I hope that you will find the same collegial support in other program administrators as I have found. In addition, I hope that you discover a keen interest in language program administration and an enthusiasm for learning new skills.

Endnotes

¹ Electronic mailing lists are often referred to as Listservs although Listserv is actually just one type of mailing list.



Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Work with a small group of peers. Think of a language program with which you are familiar and make a list of ten responsibilities that an LPA might face in this context.
2. Imagine that you are the chair of a university-based EFL department and that you have been given an opportunity to take a sabbatical. You must prepare the person who will be acting chair while you are gone. Describe for him/her the six major tasks that you would expect him/her to complete while you are away.
3. Transitioning from language teaching to language program administration can be very different if you are being promoted into the position or are coming in as an outsider. Discuss the differences one might face in each situation and the advantages and disadvantages for each scenario.
4. Imagine that you are embarking upon a new position as LPA of a large foreign language center associated with a university. You are new to the center and have never taught there. Describe the steps that you would take during your first week, first month, and first year as program director.

Suggested Readings

Burak, P., & Hoffa, W. (2001). *Crisis management in a cross-cultural setting*. Washington DC: NAFSA.

While preparing to transition into language program administration, one of the last topics one thinks about is how to prepare for a major crisis in the program. This book covers a wide range of topics from preparing policies for groups of students to go on trips, to managing work load distribution, to how to handle the media. Many of the topics are new for administrators, and so this is a helpful “crash course” resource for any new administrator. A must read that you will hopefully never need.

Coombe, C., McCloskey, M., Stephenson, L., & Anderson, N. (2008). *Leadership in English language teaching and learning*. Ann Arbor, MI: University Michigan Press.

This book includes a wonderful selection of topics including leadership roles, professional development, convention planning, marketing, and more. Each chapter offers resources and a variety of practical suggestions for leaders in any language program administrative context.

White, R., Hockley, A., van der Horst Jansen, J., & Laughner, M. S. (2008). *From teacher to manager: Managing English language teaching organizations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

With a very detailed look at management issues, this book is a great reference for reviewing managerial skills including evaluation, accounting, and change management. In addition, this book offers numerous case studies that are helpful for evaluating one's own language program.

For an additional list of helpful resources, visit <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/print/2673>

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