APPROACHES TO SCHOOL HEADS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING: CONNECTING THEORY TO PRACTICE

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Abstract

Preparation for school leadership is increasingly regarded as a vital component of school improvement. In Lithuania it is widely accepted that school heads play a vital role in setting the direction for successful schools, but existing knowledge on the best ways to prepare and develop highly qualified candidates is scant. The purpose of this article is to highlight the methods of experiential learning employed in principal professional preparation and professional development programs in an international perspective as well as to gather advice and insights from Lithuanian school leaders, who are already in post, on how to prepare and support the next generation of school heads through professional development programs.

Keywords: Preparation for school leadership, experiential learning, field-based methods, classroom based-methods.

Introduction

Preparation for school leadership is increasingly regarded as a vital component of school improvement. Despite globalization, the striking feature is that countries have developed very different models to address their common need for high quality leadership in schools. This diversity undoubtedly arises from the very different political, social and professional contexts which have led to provision being tailored to the particular requirements of each society. In learning from the experience of others, it is vital to recognize that what works well in one country may not succeed elsewhere. However, there are certain international trends in school heads professional preparation that may be significant for Lithuania.

The system of school heads professional training traditionally consists of three phases: pre-service preparation for school leadership; training of newly appointed school heads; in-service training of school heads or professional development. Pre-service training relates to preparation for the generic role of principal, including the development of appropriate professional norms and the acquisition of relevant competences. Training of newly appointed school heads refers to the induction of a newly appointed principal to the specific school context. This includes diagnosis of the issues facing the school and its community, becoming familiar with the strengths, limitations and needs of staff and pupils, and developing and communicating a specific vision for the school. In-service training or competence development is usually tied with certification requirements (Bush, Jackson 2002).

Pre-service and in-service training is provided through many disparate sources, including universities, school districts, county and municipal departments of education, professional associations, for-profit and non-profit organizations, and independent consultants, etc. These sources of influence use a variety of educational methods and techniques; however there is a lack of empirical data on which particular methods facilitate principals' socialization. Leithwood et al. (1996) mentions that the development of principal knowledge, skills, and dispositions lacks a strong and coherent research base. As a result, it is experimented with programs using various combinations of curriculum, methods, and program structures with a view to enhance principal practice without the solid base of empirical research to form their design. School leadership preparation and professional development programs have been under vigorous scrutiny for the past decade by such researchers as Daresh (2001), Leithwood et al. (1996), Murphy (1992), etc. The results of their researches show that the balance between conventional theory-based learning and experiential learning approaches have not been achieved yet. Murphy (1992) has argued that putting academic knowledge at the center of programs is inevitably self-defeating. No matter how effectively professors package and present the knowledge, they (or their students) ultimately face the problem of creating a bridge between theory and practice. Too often, he argues, it turns out to be

a "bridge to nowhere." Daresh (2001) notes that both academic knowledge and practical experience have limitations as well as benefits. Academic knowledge can acquaint candidates with the conceptual foundations of a very complex field and can provide a common language to talk about the problems of practice but is at best a partial sampling of what principals need to know. Field-based knowledge has obvious practical value but is oriented around existing practices rather than reforms that may be needed. Based on a review of the theory on adult learning and leadership development, high quality leadership preparation programs features can be clustered as: 1) a well defined theory of leadership to frame the program; 2) preparation strategies that maximize learning, learning transfer and leadership identity formation; and 3) strong content and field experiences.

The relevance of the research. In Lithuania it is widely accepted that school heads play a vital role in setting the direction for successful schools, but existing knowledge on the best ways to prepare and develop highly qualified candidates is scant. Among major publications should be mentioned those of Želvys (1999; 2003), Večkienė et al. (1997). However, specific empirical researches on how to improve school principals' preparation and training programs have not been carried out in Lithuania yet. The recent survey disclosed that training for school leadership roles in Lithuania is often inadequate, uncoordinated (Kontautiene, Melnikova, 2007). Despite the quite a wide range of various competences development opportunities in Lithuania, school heads face some problems. Firstly, leadership programs should go along with qualification standards and be in line with school heads' needs both for theory and for practice. A majority of school heads reported that the average leadership preparation programs were not aligned with the actualities of what is needed to effectively direct today's school systems. Moreover, only two percent of school heads surveyed reported preparation programs as most valuable in preparing for the current position held. Secondly, the content of various leadership preparation programs is very much academized and is delivered only through academic lectures. There is a lack of experience-based learning methods. Finally, the process of competence development should be more systemic and controlled. There could be provided assistance in elaborating individual competence development programs. That would help to save time and make competence development process more purposeful and focused. An assumption can be made that school heads that are neither fully prepared nor well trained are more likely to experience difficulties in the leadership role. Based upon percentage of school heads responding, the following were the top reported weaknesses of educational preparation programs: 1) lack of practical application, 2) strongly academized, theory-based content and 3) failure to link content to practice, in other words lack of experiential learning (Kontautiene, Melnikova, 2007).

The content of principal preparation and professional development programs should reflect the current research on school leadership, management, and instructional leadership. However the role of school leader includes more than simply management theory-based learning. Leadership also includes values and dispositions to move the school forward and encourage the development of school vision and goals. Thus, training programs must go beyond simply competency-based strategies for teaching management skills. Program content should be delivered through a variety of methods to best meet the needs of adult learners and to allow principals or aspiring principals to apply the curricular content in authentic settings and toward the resolution of real-world problems and dilemmas. There is therefore the need to create real and simulated leadership experiences for participants in preparation programs who would otherwise lack the experiential base. That is why it is important to highlight the approaches that would ensure effective learning and integration of theory and practice in principal preparation programs.

The aim of the article is to highlight the experience-based methods employed in principal professional preparation and professional development programs in the international perspective as well as to disclose the opinion of Lithuanian school heads on the extracted methods.

The objectives of the article:
- to identify theoretically the methods of experiential learning in principal preparation and professional development programs;
- to present informants' opinion on the extracted methods.

The methods of the research:
The analysis of scientific literature, anonymous open-type survey in writing; content analysis.

The theoretical background of the research
In recent years, the interest in experiential learning techniques in leadership education has grown. Experiential learning can be described as learning that arises out of reflection on experience, leading to purposive action in order to test out the 'hypotheses' that arise out of this reflection. This action in turn leads to further experience and reflection, so that experiential learning can be seen as a continuous cycle or spiral within the educational context. This learning can be promoted either through reflection on past experience or through reflection on either planned for experience,

such as work placements, or on simulated experience enacted within the educational context. Hence, experiential learning education can be divided into three types: (1) field-based experiences (such methods as internships, mentorship, etc. that involve working with practitioners); (2) prior learning assessment; and (3) experiential classroom-based learning (teaching methods that involve students learning by doing) (Kolb, 1975). The article seeks to analyze field-based and classroom-based methods. These methods are aimed at integration of theory and practice and could be implemented in school heads' pre-service and in-service training programs.

The following section discusses the methods of experiential learning that were extracted reviewing literature on leadership preparation. The brief description of each method is provided.

1. Field-based learning methods

Job Shadow is a pre-internship method for aspiring heads to find out what it is like to be in a specific school leader's profession. Job shadowing can help aspiring heads explore a range of career objectives because job shadowing is aimed at helping them make educated decisions about career choices. The method is based on observations only and aspiring heads may not be engaged in productive work at the workplace. **Study visits to schools is a method** that focuses on practice – on the real-life situations in the everyday work of the principal. The cornerstones of the method are familiarizing with the practical work of the school leader according to the annual routines in one of the cooperative schools. The studies thus form a bridge between everyday leadership and management practices at the school level. The visits and topics to be discussed are carefully planned with the tutors. After each visit, the learning experiences are discussed in groups. These visits expose participants to a range of school practices, designs, and cultures and help build critical friends' groups within the network. **Internship** is a field-based method when an intern or stagier works in a temporary position with an emphasis on on-the-job training rather than merely employment, making it similar to an apprenticeship. Aspiring heads are required to carry out certain tasks as an 'associate head'. There is little doubt that internship has the potential to foster leadership development for heads and other school leaders. Today, more than 90 percent of all administrator credential programs require an internship experience of some kind (Murphy, 1992). Ideally, strong internships provide candidates with an intense, extended opportunity to grapple with the day-to-day demands of school administrators under the watchful eye of an expert mentor, with reflection tied to theoretical insights through related coursework (Daresh, 2001). **Mentorship** in educational administration training programs has become increasingly popular in recent years. Mentoring is "generally used to refer to a process whereby a more experienced individual seeks to assist someone less experienced". Typically, mentors are practicing administrators within the school in which the candidate is appointed, although other models are possible. In well-structured mentoring programs, the mentor and mentee make a mutual commitment to work collaboratively and toward the accomplishment of an individually tailored professional development plan (Daresh, 2002). Mentoring relationships should serve to reduce the distance between a learner's independent problem-solving performance and his/her potential developmental level achieved through problem solving with guidance from an expert. The primary role of a mentor is to guide the learner in his or her search for strategies to resolve dilemmas, to boost self-confidence, and to construct a broad repertoire of leadership skills. Competent mentors do this through modeling, coaching, gradually removing support as the mentee's competence increases, questioning and probing to promote self-reflection and problem solving skills, and providing feedback and counsel (Lave, 1991). **Coaching** is "a structured process-driven relationship between a trained professional coach and an individual or team which includes: assessment, examining values and motivation, setting measurable goals, defining focused action plans and using validated behavioral change tools and techniques to assist them to develop competencies and remove blocks to achieve valuable and sustainable changes in their professional and personal life." Training may include seminars, workshops, and supervised practice. The ultimate goal of coaching is to help individuals develop internal and external structures that help them achieve success and to increase their potential by expanding their sense of what is possible. Coaches encourage individuals to develop the necessary skills, attitudes, and knowledge that will help them develop action plans to meet goals. In the coaching process coaches are seen as collaborators that work with the individual by tackling obstacles such as time management, organization, problem solving, and navigating through the learning curve by using support, encouragement, teaching skills, and goal setting (Davidson, Gasiorowski. 2006).

It should be mentioned that coaching is not the same as mentoring. Mentoring involves a developmental relationship between a more experienced "mentor" and a less experienced partner, and typically involves sharing of advice. A coach can act as a mentor given that he or she has adequate expertise and experience. However, mentoring is not a form of business coaching. A good coach need not have specific

experience in the same field as the person receiving the coaching in order to provide quality leadership coaching services. Coaching also differs from mentoring in being more directive and in having clearer intended outcomes. Mentors are typically senior organizational insiders in job-alike positions. The most effective coaches are generally outsiders who, while professional experts, have leadership coaching as their primary work. Novice principals should have a mentor as a source of advice and information regarding district matters. In addition, novice (and perhaps all) principals need an external coach as a source of confidential and expert support around the wide-ranging, problematic and often deeply personal issues that they must deal with from their first days on the job.

2. Classroom-based learning methods

Action learning method is an educational technique whereby the participants study their own actions and experience in order to improve performance. This is done in conjunction with others, in small groups called action learning sets. The method enables each person to reflect on and review the action they have taken and the learning points arising. This should then guide future action and improve performance. Smith (2001) focuses on the use of action learning in leadership development. He states that action learning "embodies an approach based on comrades in adversity learning from each other through discriminating questioning, fresh experience and effective insight. It is a form of learning through experience . . . based on the premise that we can only learn about work at work" (p.35). **Role-play simulation method** is a learning method that depends on roleplaying. Learners take on the role profiles of specific characters or organizations in a contrived setting. Role-play is designed primarily to build first person experience in a safe and supportive environment. **360 degree assessment** or **VAL-ED method** has become popular in leadership development programs. Alimo-Metcalfe (1998) describes it as one of the major areas of growth in supporting leadership development. VAL-ED assesses principals in six core components related to student learning, including high standards, rigorous curriculum and performance accountability. Six additional evaluation areas of key processes measure leadership skills such as planning, advocating and communicating. Alimo-Metcalfe (1998) says that 360 degree feedback promotes self-awareness: "Self-awareness is about seeing oneself as others see us. It involves modifying one's perceptions of oneself as a result of receiving feedback from others, and modifying one's behaviour as a result . . . a more accurate insight into one's own leadership behaviour may be importantly related to one's performance and potential" (p.37). This requi-

res participation from the community at large, in the form of either surveys or written evaluations. Respondents should ideally include not only teachers, but also support staff and district personnel. That being said, it provides the leadership candidate with a much more thorough picture of his/her leadership strengths and weaknesses. Only by addressing the specific concerns of the school community can one become a more effective leader. **Cohort groups is an educational method** that aims on grouping of administrative candidates as well as experienced school leaders into cohorts has become increasingly popular. Proponents of cohort grouping strategies maintain that adult learning is best accomplished when it is part of a socially cohesive activity structure that emphasizes shared authority for learning, opportunities for collaboration, and teamwork in practice-oriented situations. The positive effects of cohort structured learning experiences include enhanced feelings of group affiliation and acceptance, social and emotional support, motivation, persistence, group learning, and mutual assistance. Cohorts can help learners build group and individual knowledge, think creatively, and restructure problems from multiple perspectives. Cohort's model is the type of team building that is increasingly encouraged among school faculty (Browne-Ferrigno, Muth, 2004). There is also evidence that cohorts can foster improved academic learning and program completion rates among administrative credential candidates. Because teachers give higher ratings to the leadership practices of principals who participated in cohort training structures, it may be that cohorts not only benefit aspiring and practicing principals, but the faculty in the schools they ultimately lead (Leithwood et al., 1996). **Project-based learning methods** are very effective methods of experiential learning. Through project-based learning aspiring principals must analyze school-based data, develop and implement strategies for change, evaluate program outcomes, and make mid-course corrections as necessary. Aspiring principals review critical literature associated with their projects and visit other schools to inform their work. **Problem-based learning methods** also provide opportunities for candidates to test newly acquired leadership skills and receive feedback through authentic demonstrations and assessments. Most educators agree that effective pre-service programs feature instructional activities and assessments that focus on problems of practice and stimulate effective problem-solving and reflection. As Hallinger (1993) states, "It is not enough for principals to have a repertoire of behaviors; they must know how and when to use them, and they must be careful to monitor their effects on student learning." For these reasons, over the past decade the use of problem-based learning (PBL) has

become increasingly popular in principal preparation programs (Hallinger, 1993). PBL activities simulate complex real-world problems and dilemmas, promote the blending of theoretical and practical knowledge, improve problem-solving capacity, and help enhance candidates' self-concepts as future school leaders. By participating in challenging and relevant simulations, aspiring heads develop new attitudes and skills, experiment with various leadership roles, and, ideally, practice the discipline of self-reflection. **Networking activities** as the educational techniques are aimed at reflection from experience. Aspiring and mentor principals come together for **network seminars** to share best practices, provide support and critical feedback, and discuss theory and research related to educational leadership. Seminars regularly involve book and article discussions, journal sharing, or subject-specific workshops on topics such as law or finance. At seminars, aspiring principals present their work and receive in-depth assessment of their learning plans, project-work, and portfolios.

The methodology of the research

The purpose of the empirical research was to gather advice and insights from school leaders, who are already in post, on how to prepare and support the next generation of school heads through professional development programs. 28 school principals, who had a minimum of five years of educational leadership experience, were selected for a survey consisting of open-type questions pertaining to the adequacy of professional preparation and the role of professional development in promoting and sustaining sound leadership skills. The survey consisted of two parts. The first part of the survey focused on the trends of school heads' professional preparation. The results are presented in other publications (Kontautienė, Melnikova, 2007; 2008). The second part of the survey disclosed the opinion of school principals on methods employed in leadership programs. Principals were asked to assess the methods and techniques employed in leadership preparation programs and to adjust them to Lithuanian context. The attention is drawn to the fact that open questions DO NOT impute the possible answers. Informants have an opportunity to put an accent on various sides of a question, even those not predicted by a researcher. So the content analysis is distinguished by heuristic potential, and the manifestations received allow disclosing true attitudes and beliefs of research participants.

The results of the research

School heads, participating in the survey, distinguished **mentoring** as the most effective means of adaptation for those principals who are moving for headship for the first time. The following comments visually illustrate this: *"As part of their organizational socialization, new heads are attempting to make sense of their role and to gain a clear understanding of what it is to be a principal. They also have to learn the complex task of managing change and reshaping the school culture to improve teaching and learning. Mentoring offers a powerful means of assisting this process"*. *"The opportunity of being accompanied by experienced mentor would have made my first years in headship less complicated, I believe"*. *"Mentoring during a new leader's first years would be a tremendous asset"*. Among the disadvantages of the mentoring method the risk of mentees becoming dependent on the mentor was stressed. *"On the one hand, the lack of knowledge and skills of newly-appointed principals solving problems in everyday school life is obvious so assistance received from mentor is very helpful; on the other – you become dependent on it"*. Furthermore it was emphasized that good mentor should not only be an experienced school head dedicated to profession, but as well possess a number of personal traits like for instance tolerance, patience and sympathy. On the whole, respondents-principals spoke up for the official mentors as a part of leadership preparation programs. *"Sometimes you get some help and support from experienced colleagues, though nowadays carrier-oriented people are not prone to waste their time and share knowledge with others. I think mentoring in Lithuania should receive formal status"*.

Interestingly, **coaching** as a separate method was not highly rated by informants. The reason mentioned was: *"Lithuanian people are quite reserved, so a matter of confidence would arise. Sometimes it is quite difficult to entrust all the failures and misfortunes to somebody, especially when you are responsible for the whole organization"*. In this aspect coaching was characterized as *"a matter of personal necessity"*. Still, in case coaching is provided by a mentor it has a great value.

The methods of **job shadowing** and **internship** were assessed as valuable in pre-service preparation programs. However, it was mentioned that in Lithuania traditionally advanced and experienced teachers become school heads and pre-service preparation is not mandatory for appointment for headship. That is why these methods were considered to be not very relevant. Respondents could hardly imagine a newcomer from business on post of school principal. *"I strongly doubt that business management program graduates would ever come and lead an educational organization. In this case, having in mind the specifics of school as an educational organization, internship is just vital"*. This fact points to quite a conservative attitude towards school principal's position.

Respondents highly rated the opportunities of **networking**. In their opinion networking *"is a perfect way to exchange knowledge and experience". "Today's complexity and instability induces the necessity of cooperation, creation of networks and associations for school leaders"*. Networking helps to *"mitigate the feeling of isolation and stress"*. To respondents' mind, today's school heads should be more active and take initiatives of creating networks and professional unions as well as participating there.

Most of the participant heads highly valued **action learning** as experience-based method. The following comments perfectly illustrate this: *"Action Learning is very challenging: you have to explain your problems to others, they listen and discuss and finally feedback suggestions to alleviate your area of difficulty". "Working in sets or groups, people tackle important issues or problems and learn from their attempts to change things"*. In the opinion of school heads the main issues of leadership where action learning is especially important are:

- facilitating cooperation in school community;
- nurturing cooperation with parents.

The method of **360 degree assessment** was acclaimed as a valuable tool for principal self-assessment. *"If this works, we think it will provide the first reliable way to identify principal strengths, and what their development needs are, and the ways that they're improving over time"*. The whole school community should participate in the survey and this *"requires positive climate based on democratic values and shared beliefs, otherwise the assessment would not be objective"*. Still, a matter of ethics is very important. School community should clearly understand the goals and the benefits of the method thus ensuring its validity.

Finally, classroom-based experience was highly rated. **Cohort groups, problem-based learning** all were mentioned as invaluable aids to master. What appears to work best for principals are workshops *"with a more explicit agenda,"* that provide specific information and skill building with immediate application to the everyday running of schools.

Informants, conceding themselves overburdened with theories, spoke up for practice-based learning to integrate theory and practice. As one respondent said, *"pre-service administrators desire quality practical experience components, ideally with release from the classroom, not just little 'leadership' projects."* When asked to add more methods that would be useful in principals' training programs,, respondents wished for even more opportunities to **design programs**, **role play** and **receive critiques**, engage in **case study analyses**, and take part in **Questions and Answers sessions** with a diverse group of leaders. Table 1 summarizes the experiential learning methods that could be employed in leadership preparation and professional development programs in Lithuania:

Table 1

Approaches employed in leadership preparation and professional development programs

Experiential learning methods		
	Field-based methods	Classroom-based methods
Pre-service preparation	Job shadowing Study visits to schools Internship / Apprenticeship	Action learning Questions and answers sessions with experienced principals Role-plays Cohort groups
Newly appointed principals	Mentorship Coaching	Case study analyses 360 degree assessment Problem-based learning
In-service training	Study visits to quality schools Networking	Networking Project-based learning

Conclusions

1. The content of principal preparation and professional development programs should reflect the current research on school leadership, management, and instructional leadership. However the role of school leader includes more than simply learning management skills. Leadership also includes values and dispositions to move the school forward and encourage the development of school vision and goals. Thus, preparation programs must go beyond simply competency-based strategies for teaching management skills. They must contribute to the leadership sensitivities and dispositions that contribute to a culture of reform, improvement, and success for all students. Program content should be delivered through a variety of methods to best meet the needs of adult learners and to allow principals or aspiring principals to apply the curricular content in authentic settings and toward the resolution of real-world problems and dilemmas. There is therefore the need to create real and simulated leadership experiences for participants in preparation programs who would otherwise lack the experiential base. Based on a review of the theory on adult

learning and leadership development, high quality leadership preparation programs features can be clustered as: 1) a well defined theory of leadership to frame the program; 2) preparation strategies that maximize learning, learning transfer and leadership identity formation; and 3) strong content and field experiences.

2. On the basis of analyzed literature a number of experience-based methods were extracted. These methods were classified as field-based methods and classroom-based methods as well as were divided into several groups according to various principals' career stages. Participants of the survey gave their feedback on these methods. After the content analysis of informants' answers the following tendencies were disclosed: methods employed in pre-service training programs are not very relevant because pre-service preparation is not mandatory for appointment as a principal in Lithuania; mentorship was distinguished as the most effective means of adaptation for those principals who are moving for headship for the first time; competence development programs for school heads are overburdened with theories on leadership and management and this does not stimulate learning, so the major implication is that today's principals spoke for integration of theory and practice and wished more experience-based activities in professional training programs.

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Mokyklų vadovų profesinio rengimo principai: teorijos ir praktikos integravimas

Santrauka

Mokslininkai konstatavo, jog efektyvus vadovavimas mokyklai yra vienas iš svarbiausių mokyklos sėkmės veiksnių, t.y. direktorių vadovavimo kokybė daro didelę įtaką bendrajam mokyklų veiklos efektyvumui.

Pasaulio globalizacijos procesas, Lietuvos švietimo integracija į Europos Sąjungos švietimo erdvę kelia naujus reikalavimus ir mokyklų vadovams. Šiandien reikalingi aukščiausios kvalifikacijos vadybos specialistai: kompetentingi, turintys reikiamų žinių ir įgūdžių, nuolat tobulinantys savo kvalifikaciją bei vadybinius gebėjimus, darantys įtaką kaitos procesams savo mokyklose.

Mokyklai ir mokyklos veiklos vadybai visada buvo skiriama daug dėmesio, tačiau būdai, kaip mokyklų vadovai išsiugdo vadovavimo įgūdžius buvo palyginti mažai tyrinėti. Švietimo organizacijų vadybos tobulinimas neįmanomas be specialių profesinių žinių ir atitinkamo supratimo

apie šią veiklos sritį. Per pastaruosius dešimtmečius švietimo vadovų rengimo programas pradėjo analizuoti užsienio mokslininkai, tarp jų paminėtini Daresh (2002), Leithwood (1996), Murphy (1992) ir kt. Lietuvoje publikacijų, analizuojančių švietimo vadovų rengimo ypatumus aptikta mažai. Šiame kontekste paminėtini Večkienės (1997), Želvio (1999;2003) darbai.

Ugdymo įstaigų vadovų rengimas Lietuvoje – spręstina problema. Nėra ugdymo įstaigos vadovų darnios rengimo sistemos, kai kalbama apie jų gebėjimų ir kompetencijų tobulinimo būdus nesusitariama, kokių gebėjimų ir kompetencijų reikia ir reikės ateityje švietimo įstaigų vadovams, menkai tyrinėjami švietimo įstaigų vadovų kvalifikacijos tobulinimo poreikiai, vangiai kinta mokyklų vadovų kvalifikacijos tobulinimo formos pačiose švietimo įstaigose, vyrauja dalykinės kvalifikacijos kėlimas, per mažai taikomi praktinio mokymosi metodai.

Apklausos rezultatai (Kontautienė, Melnikova, 2007) rodo, jog mokyklų vadovų rengimo programų turinys dažniausiai yra labai formalizuotas bei akademizuotas. Nors yra įvairių šaltinių ir tipų studijoms tobulinti, pavyzdžiui, situacinis mokymasis, probleminis mokymasis, grupinis mokymasis, projektų metodas ir t.t., bet tokio pobūdžio medžiagos stokojama. Kartais tiesiog paviršutiniškai susipažįstama su bet kurioje švietimo valdymo programoje vartojama medžiaga. Dažniausiai tenkinamasi auditorinėmis paskaitomis. Taigi mokomosios medžiagos ir laiko stoka lemia auditorinę studijų sistemą. Tokiomis sąlygomis tikėtina, kad atsiras ryškus atotrūkis tarp teorijos ir praktikos, kuris labai sunkiai įveikiamas.

Straipsnyje teoriškai išskirti patirtinio mokymosi metodai, kurie yra naudojami mokyklų vadovų profesinio rengimo programose pasaulinėje praktikoje, bei pateiktos Lietuvos mokyklų vadovų nuomonės apie šių metodų taikymo galimybes profesinio rengimo programose.