Authoring Online Simulations: Will it Make Me a Better Principal?

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Abstract: Online simulations offer opportunities for trial and error decision-making. What better tool for a principal then to make decisions when the consequences will not have long term ramifications. In this study two groups of students taking the same course in the same semester used online simulations differently. The control group accessed online decision-making simulations and practiced making decisions for the represented scenario. Using a peer apprenticeship model, the experimental group of students created simulations and decision trees leading to solutions of the problem in an online tool called SimWriter. While both groups of students indicated that online simulations helped them solve problems, students who actually developed their own simulations walked away with more leadership skills. This process offers principal preparation programs a tool for internship experiences that also accommodates the graduate student working full time.