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Value of Coaching in Building Leadership Capacity of Principals
in Urban Schools: A Case Study

Value of Coaching in Building Leadership Capacity of Principals
in Urban Schools: A Case Study

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how coaching support structures enabled and sustained leadership practices of urban principals. The study investigated how the intervention of coaching for academic leaders can serve as evidence based professional development for building leadership capacity. The central focus was on principals' perceptions of coaching engagements over time to identify recurring themes and essential elements of the coach-to-client relationship. With a goal of meeting 21st century school accountability requirements of standards and assessments, the urban district in this study implemented coaching for academic leaders who were selected to participate in the coaching intervention as job-embedded professional development. The district assigned a cadre of trained coach leaders to building principals with the primary goal of coaching academic leaders to attain desired goals. The district's director of professional development was a certified coach leader and had the responsibility of screening applications from principals and assigning coaches. The data collection process for this study included in-depth interviews, direct observations, and review of archival documents. Holistic analysis captured recurring themes and assertions. Essentials of participants' perceptions of coaching were collected through semi-structured interviews, analysis of textual content, coding, and categorizing by themes. The significant themes showed the perceptions of coaching as: (1) Supportive Environment, (2) Relationship Built on Trust, (3) Confidential Conversations, (4) Leadership Support, (5) Significance of Reflection, (6) Benefits of Coaching Language in Communication, (7) Co-Constructor, (8) Thinking Partner, and (9) Trust.

Executive coaches in this study offered urban leaders a unique opportunity to engage in confidential conversations, solution focused planning with a thinking partner, facilitative conversations using effective questioning, and leadership support for accomplishing

predetermined organizational goals. Findings from the study indicated that leadership is a lonely place and in many cases there is no one for the leader to confide in on issues that impact the overall success of the organization. Leadership coaching helps fill this void. The executive coaches establish trusting relationships with leaders which fosters open dialogue and genuine conversations to get at the heart of the matter. Leaders are better equipped to accomplish goals and model effective strategies after participating in leadership coaching. Trusting relationships are paramount to the success of executive coaching.

The principals in this study spoke their truths regarding the conditions and support necessary to lead effective schools. Principals valued leadership coaching in building leadership capacity and supporting leader practices. Leadership coaching for principals served as targeted support in a safe, trusting, and confidential environment.

Acknowledgements

The dissertation journey was a life changing experience for me. This experience provided opportunities for professional and personal growth. Thank you Dr. Carleton Holt for your vision and trail-blazing efforts to kick-start the Education Leadership Distance Graduate Program at the University of Arkansas. Your commitment to students' educational goal-attainment is unprecedented. Your dedicated service will always be remembered. Expressions of gratitude to Dr. Benny Gooden for serving on my dissertation committee, and imparting knowledge to students across the great state of Arkansas through distance classes. Thank you Dr. Jules Beck for your support, qualitative expertise, and for serving on my dissertation committee. A special thank you to the urban district and the educators who participated in this study.

While reflecting on the dissertation journey I was reminded of how it all began. The groundbreaking journey began with a cohort of graduate students enrolled in the first Education Leadership Distance Doctoral Program at the University of Arkansas. The students in the cohort were afforded an opportunity to make a significant contribution to the education profession. The distance program offered all the challenges one would expect from a non-traditional mode of delivering academic classes. On-the-other-hand, the distance program balanced the challenges by providing convenient locations for classes, small group net-working, and technology support to aid in successful completion of course work. Net-working was key to completion and goal attainment.

Many people, fondly known as the network, contributed along this journey. First, my dearest mother, Vhaness Chambers was my personal tour guide during this journey. This tour guide always spoke positives, provided directions, offered suggestions, planned celebrations, and

prayed daily. Next, the Rock, my husband Augusta Farver, Jr. was steadfast and unwavering in his quest to challenge my thinking, inspire my scholarly nature, organize my thoughts, focus on the goal, remove the barriers, and reject the detours. The net work also included my daughter, (Chasity Farver), mother-in-law (Vernester Farver), and sister-in-law (Pinkie Farver). These three people were instrumental in planning a day of relaxation at pivotal points along the way for recharging my mind-over-matter battery. The network definitely had an anchor. The all sufficient anchor included my St. Luke church family, aunt (Gwendolyn Starlard), aunt and uncle (Willie and Raymond Chambers), and my dear friends (Dr. Lloyd Sain, Dr. Ramey, Yolanda Monk, and Yolanda Williams). The anchor was always there willing and able to do or say whatever was needed.

I praise and thank God for his blessings throughout this journey because truly it was the Lord's doing. I am a better person, wife, mother, scholar, niece, ministry worker, and friend because of my dissertation journey.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my dear mother, Vhaness Whitaker Chambers, who transitioned to her new life on December 6, 2013. I shall forever carry in my heart her love and support, and celebrate all the good memories for years to come.

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Chapter One:

Introduction

Organization of the Chapter

Chapter One begins with an introduction and background that describes the growing issues faced by principals as they strive to meet 21st century education standards of accountability and expectations for student achievement. Literature suggests that leaders of learning organizations need context-specific support to implement research-based leadership dimensions and practices to excel in school performance and impact student outcomes. In subsequent sections, the researcher presents the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and the research question and subquestion. These are the essential building blocks for the study. The researcher continues with a statement of the study's significance.

This study intends to reveal how job-embedded leadership support might contribute to and enhance the overarching goal of excelling in school performance and improving student outcomes. Following the significance of the study, the researcher presents additional information regarding effective leadership and school reform efforts. One of the reasons for conducting this study is the need for an awakening that schools are organizations that are ever-evolving and that this evolution necessitates equipping principals with the skills to successfully lead 21st learning organizations. In the body of research on schools as learning organizations, often the roles of leadership were considered as non-essential. The researcher will discuss the importance of leadership in effective teaching, student outcomes, and school reform.

The conceptual design for the study is the next topic. Boundaries for the study are set in this section. In the theoretical sensitivity section authors Strauss and Corbin (1998) are quoted in terms of characteristics of a researcher to maintain both "objectivity and sensitivity to the

research data and the data necessary for making discoveries” (p. 43). Furthermore, these authors describe the researcher as key instrument in “collecting and examining documents, observing behaviors, and interviewing participants” (1998, p. 38). This case study employs an approach which is fundamentally interpretive (Rossman & Rallis, 2003), where the researcher’s focus is on “description, analysis, and interpretation” (p. 11). “Qualitative researchers start the study in a precise mode regarding their purpose and being, which means, we consider prior experiences that might influence our views or in other words cause assumptions” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 37). The chapter concludes with a concise summary and specifics on the organization of the dissertation.

Introduction

The United States has historically recognized the importance of educating school aged children. This recognition has led to the continuing evolution of the education process. Prior to formal research, state policies, and federal regulations, philosophers offered varied opinions on the purpose of education. Dewey (1938) presented his argument on the primary purpose of education as preparing students to live a functional life and also to teach them how to live logically and instantaneously in their present environment. Counts (1978), a progressive educator, offered the purpose of school as less about teaching individuals to live independently and more about preparing individuals to live as contributing members of society. Additionally, DeMarrais and LeCompte (1995) delineated purposes of schooling to include: (1) development of mathematical and reading skills for intellectual intention; (2) assimilation of immigrants for political purposes; (3) job preparation for economic reasons; and (4) the development of social and moral responsibility for shared purposes.

Furthermore, expectations of schooling have continued to expand. In an effort to address these varied expectations, schools have adopted and implemented learning goals to meet parental demands, education requirements, and employer needs. Moreover, the general public expects schools to promote good citizenship and to create in students a willingness to serve the greater good of humanity. Fullan (2006) purposes the performance gaps differential in education parallels the income gaps differential country by country. It has become increasingly important for schools to produce students capable of competing in a global economy. Most countries measure standards on a national level. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) responded to the measurement prospect of international standards by constructing the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA reports evaluation data on the quality, equity, and efficiency of school systems in approximately 70 countries, which make up nine-tenths of the world economy. The highest-performing OECD (2010) countries, with mean reading literacy scores of 539 and 536 points, were Korea and Finland; the United States' score of 500 points was closer to the OECD mean score of 494. OECD suggested the product and services supplied to classrooms impacts student learning and the quality of its teachers and principals cannot be greater than the education system.

The priorities of our nation's education system have changed with increased academic standards and assessment accountability as required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) noted communities have focused attention on the critical role of school administrators for achieving effective school reform. According to Reiss (2007), with ever-increasing demands placed on school systems to raise achievement standards, intensified expectations are placed on leaders throughout the organization. School leaders can face severe consequences for schools failing to meet

achievement goals. The Arkansas Department of Education ESEA Flexibility Waiver (2012) states:

Teacher and leader effectiveness are primary components for emphasis within the Priority Improvement Plan (PIP). District involvement in the needs assessment and subsequent PIP development maximizes the opportunity for assessing leader effectiveness and ensuring an effective leader is in place or developed within its Priority School(s). In the event it is determined during the needs assessment that leadership must be replaced, the district will take this action prior to development of the PIP. The PIP will be developed with participation of the new leader, rather than the leader being replaced. (p. 88)

Federal requirements under NCLB can cause low achieving schools to be classified as schools in need of improvement (NCLB, 2002). Fuller and Young (2009) explained that school districts across the county are experiencing the consequences of schools being labeled as “priority” and “needs improvement” schools to the tune of diminishing applicants for principal positions, as well as increased percentages in principal retirements, relocation, and resignations. The lack of resources and the array of student needs in urban districts create settings that are very different and often demanding for teachers and principals (Cooley & Shen, 2000). Portin (2000) further explains the job-related stress of urban administrators is much higher when compared to administrators in rural and suburban districts.

With education reform, policy development, and new guidelines for educators, leader accountability is a cornerstone to school success. According to Bottoms and Fry (2009), significant gains in student achievement can occur as principals work collectively with teachers to: (a) create a conducive learning environment; (b) complete fully aligned standards-based curriculum documents; (c) organize learning materials to support instructional delivery and enhance student learning; and (d) set high expectations for employment of personnel, professional growth opportunities and focus on teaching and learning (p. iii).

Likewise, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards issued by the Council of Chief State School Officers were used by many states including Arkansas. The ISLLC standards, revised in 2008, were designed to provide a framework for state and local leaders, policy-makers, and principals as they prepare all students to be college- and career-ready. The six standards are:

Setting a widely shared vision for learning; Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; Ensuring effective management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; Collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources; Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and Understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal, and cultural contexts. (p. 6)

Van Meter and McMinn (2001) highlight the importance of education standards including all students succeeding as evidenced by achievement gains, as well as, charging school leaders to prioritize teaching and learning to meet academic goals. These researchers also emphasized the significance of standards that pinpoint efficacy of school leaders as related to beliefs and values. Building capacity of school leaders supported by initial and on-going professional development is now carefully considered as district roles are developed in efforts to meet challenging academic goals (Peterson, 2002; Tucker & Coddling, 2002). ISLLC's (2008) revised standards strengthen the intention of the 1996 standards with improving teaching and learning for all students as the leaders' primary responsibility.

The role of federal education continues to expand in K-12 schooling, which impacts revisions to curriculum, instruction, assessment, leadership, and accountability, with expectations for organizational change and successful implementation as measured by test results. Table 1 illustrates the progression of the federal role in education.

Table 1

Federal Role in Education

| | |
|---|--|
| 1969 | National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) - President Johnson |
| 1975 | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - President Ford |
| 1979 | Cabinet-level Department of Education - President Carter |
| 1981 | Education Consolidation and Improvement Act - President Reagan |
| 1991 | National Council of Education Standards and Testing - U. S. Department of Education President Bush |
| 1994 | Goals 2000 - President Clinton |
| 2001 | Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization to No Child Left Behind - President George Bush |
| 2002 | Education Sciences Reform Act - President George Bush |
| 2009 | <i>American Recovery and Reinvestment Act - President Obama</i> |
| <i>Adapted from Cross, C., (2010). Political Education: National Policy Comes of a Age.</i> | |

Note. Over the past five decades the federal role in education has continued to grow. The most recent shift in federal policies, standards, and accountability led system leaders to implement leadership development programs for building principals in effort to meet adequate yearly progress goals. Morel and Cushman (2012) stated that in the current system of annual evaluation based on NCLB yearly benchmarks, some policy-makers became restrictive and demanded that available resources be used only for passing the assessments.

In a mid-southern state, system leaders recognized the need to build leadership capacity in schools identified for school improvement. From this cause, the School Support Program was created by Act 1229 of 2005 during the 85th Arkansas General Assembly. The School Support Program is a component of the Arkansas Leadership Academy (2005) in cooperation with the

Arkansas Department of Education and was tailored to provide professional development for districts, school leaders, teachers, and staff.

Bush (2009) explained studies on leadership development with specialized training for principals were linked to high-performing schools as evidenced by increased student achievement. Effective school improvement and widespread change over the last two decades revealed that school principals, through vision, direction, and influence, can be prominent human resources (Marks & Printy, 2003). However, there remains a gap in the literature on perceptions of building leadership capacity supported by coaching for examining principals' sense of efficacy in transactional leadership, transformational leadership, instructional leadership, and managing resources, processes and data.

Statement of the Problem

Education leaders are moving toward consensus that traditional professional development training and one day in-service sessions are not adequately preparing principals to lead learning organizations. Most principals reported that they acquired many of their skills and knowledge through on-the-job training (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005). School districts in Chicago and Denver have worked collaboratively with interested universities to design aspiring principal training programs (The Wallace Foundation, 2012) and this progress is noteworthy. The problem addressed in this study was how districts can create the conditions to systematically provide schools with principals who have the necessary preparation and support to lead successful schools. According to the Wallace Foundation (2012), analyzed data from nine states and 180 schools indicated leadership as second only to teaching among school-related factors impacting learning. Across many professions, coaching and mentoring have served as valuable leadership tools (Kay, Hagan, & Parker, 2009). Executive coaching has several models and

designs, which can include goals, actions, strategic plans, and timelines, whereas the standard processes include: (1) goal-setting, (2) assessment, (3) awareness and action planning, and (4) implementation and monitoring (Douglas & Morley, 2000). The coaching process provides an avenue for customers to increase performance, enhance skill sets to master job responsibilities, and improve the quality of life (Reiss, 2007). A coach helps an individual look at opportunities to create new patterns of thinking, brainstorm possibilities, and challenge one to step out of his or her comfort zone. Linking effective school leadership to school improvement has indicated positive outcomes. School reform efforts have provided evidence that effective leadership positively impacts student outcomes (Kelley & Peterson, 2002) and the continued efforts in building leadership capacity and practices is fundamental to future progress (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to explore principals' perceptions of one-on-one coaching and the impact of coaching on building leadership capacity for school effectiveness and improved student achievement. Specifically, the researcher wanted to know what value coaching had on reframing leadership practices. The study included two elementary principals and one secondary principal participating in an urban district's coaching program. The leadership coaching program included both novice and experienced principals. Recent research indicates improving school performance through the development of effective school leaders is a critical element in the reform agenda (Murphy, 2002/2006).

Research Question

What are principals' perceptions of coaching engagements in supporting and sustaining leadership practices?

Subquestion

(1) What was the impact of leader practices on promoting professional teacher practices?

(2) What factors influence principals' decisions to participate in leadership coaching?

Significance of the Study

Principal roles are ever-changing in high-stakes environments and research-based interventions are necessary to support effective leader practices (Short and Greer, 2002). The most significant point of the study was to focus on the value of coaching in building leadership capacity in urban schools. Improving schooling is a critical issue at the federal, state, and local levels. Short and Greer (2002) reported citizens changed from being passive and accepting communities to significant forces challenging educators on how to administer schools. Across the United States, battle lines were established and school affairs were public matters (2002). Thus, reframing mental modes of principals are essential in building leadership capacity to champion their evolving job responsibilities. Fullan (2006) explains capacity building as a policy, set of strategies, or actions employed to increase the combined efficacy of a group to improve achievement, expand resources, and increase motivation individually and collectively.

Hallinger and Heck (1998) demonstrated general patterns of belief that principals exercise a measurable though indirect effect on school effectiveness and academic achievement and suggest that additional scholarly and practical work is yet to come. Lambert (2003) asserts the theory of leadership capacity derives its meaning from substantive research concerning school reform efforts and communities of learning and the association of these adult learning factors to student achievement. Leadership capacity, as defined by Lambert (1998), a range of multiple skills and talents a leader can use to bring about meaningful and sustainable school reform.

Education is the enterprise of teaching and learning. Principals are challenged from political, social, economic, and theoretical frameworks on what creates an effective school. As instructional leaders continue efforts to provide high-quality education for all and enable students to compete globally, adjustments in professional learning styles are necessary to meet the goals within the organization. The idea of learning organizations is not new. Peter Senge (1990) asserted that learning organizations are where groups desire results and they purposefully work on capacity building, where innovative and uninhibited thought processes are encouraged, where shared goal setting evolves openly, and where shared learning is a continuous process. DuFour, Eaker, and DuFour (2005), suggested that all well-implemented strategies are socially-based and supported routinely in professional learning communities.

Conceptual Design for Data Collection

The researcher employed purposeful sampling in the identification of cases to achieve different perspectives on the problem (Creswell, 2007).

Conceptual Diagram

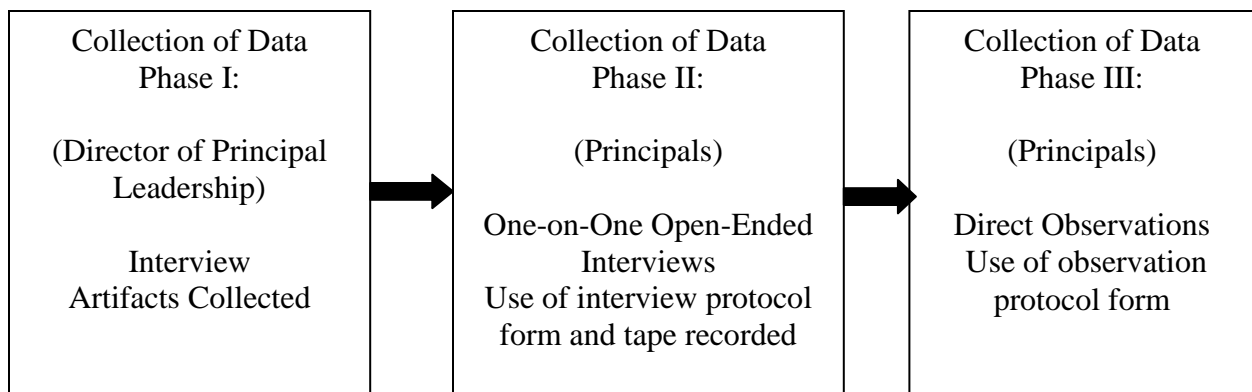


Figure 1. The initial contact with each participant occurred through email to secure their informed content and provided an overview of the study with specific details on interview dates and times.

As recommended by Yin (2003), a series of qualitative data were collected. The collected data included physical artifacts, direct and participant observations, and interviews. Holistic analysis of data provided descriptions from the case study, which centered on themes and assertions (Stakes, 1995). These qualitative methods provided means for triangulation.

Theoretical Sensitivity

Lev Vygotsky's social development theory was used to frame content for this study. McLeod (2007) recounted Vygotsky's work as foundational research theory in cognitive development. Vygotsky's theories stressed social interaction as a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Piaget's stance on learning was that a child's development preceded learning. Vygotsky argued that children need to experience developmental growth and learning in a natural environment to aid in the process of developing culturally and psychologically. In other words, social learning tends to precede development (McLeod, 2007). The framework for this study was grounded in theoretical underpinnings of social development theory, effective leader dimensions and practices, and learning environments built on trust, goals, and reflective feedback.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) described theoretical sensitivity as the characteristics of a researcher to maintain both "objectivity and sensitivity" to the research data and the data "necessary for making discoveries" (p. 43). The various parts of theoretical sensitivity are (a) personal experience, (b) professional experience, (c) personal knowledge of the literature, and (d) analytic rigor. As a graduate student and a new employee in an urban district with numerous schools in school improvement, I sought training opportunities in leadership coaching. After several days of intense training and coaching circles, which included opportunities to practice coaching skills, the journey of coaching began. I made a connection with my coaching training

while reading literature on the social development theory of learning by Vygotsky and was influenced to investigate tenets of leadership coaching as my dissertation topic.

The researcher's qualitative assumptions were based on findings in the social development theory of learning by Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1978) defined Zone of Proximal Development as: "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). Vygotsky offered that individual development can only be understood when it is referenced to the social and cultural context into which it is embedded. A current application of Vygotsky's theory is reciprocal teaching in which the teacher and student work together and practice on four essential skills: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. Vygotsky further suggested that humans use tools that grow from a culture, like speaking and writing, to mediate their social environments and that the internalization of these tools lead to higher thinking skill. The purpose of this study was to investigate leadership coaching for principals in their social environment and collect data on the value of coaching for improving academic outcomes.

Parameters of the Study

The three principals in this study worked for an urban school district in the mid-south. The study assembled information for improving leadership preparation programs to support professional growth of principals working in complex and transforming environments. The preliminary idea for the study started with a conversation in December 2011 with the district's director of secondary professional development regarding the coaching initiative for instructional leaders.

Table 2

Case Study Timeline

| Activities | Timeline |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Principal Coaching | July 2011 – June 2013 |
| Researcher conducts study | September 2013 – November 2013 |
| Analysis of data | December 2013 – February 2014 |

Note. The case study included open-ended interview questions to discover repeated patterns as explained by Merriam (1998).

Additionally, Merriam recommended collection of artifacts, therefore, artifacts collected by the researcher included: (a) classroom walkthrough reports, (b) scholastic audit summary reports, (c) self study report, (d) augmented criterion referenced achievement school reports, (e) administrative leadership council agenda, (f) Coaching For Results Global Coaching Frame, (g) school leadership indicators district form, (h) coaching circles reference cards, and (i) the executive coaching program for school leaders (final proposal).

Assumptions

This study operated under the following assumptions:

1. Participants responded to interview questions candidly and truthfully.
2. Participants understood the confidentiality of their identifies and their responses.

Limitation of the Study

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), the researcher-as-instrument is an active respondent in the research process. In this study, the researcher constructed specific sets of open-ended questions for participants to contribute their perspectives with little or no limitation as imposed by closed-ended questions (Chenail, 2011). The researcher was essential in

obtaining data from respondents by: (1) enabling interaction in context; (2) facilitating the communication flow; (3) identifying cues; and (4) setting responders at ease (2011).

The researcher's mother was an elementary principal and the researcher's father was a middle school principal in a mid-south school district. The researcher's feelings on professional development support for principals are mixed based on shared experiences from parents over a time span of 23 years. The researcher used a journal for logging instinctive awareness, perceived emotions, and reactions during this study to lessen the influence of the researcher's own biases on the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The researcher's journal allowed me to note time and place as well as thoughts and insights I had during these experiences. The researcher's journal included a reflection on each interview; descriptions of the participants, their body language, and our conversations as well as objects, places, and activities were described. The journal was used as an opportunity to reflect and increase my sensitivity and awareness; therefore, the researcher recorded mistakes made, inadequacies, and biases experienced during this study. The research journal was also used as a method to speculate on the researcher's learning and ways to precede which provided concurrent data collection and analyses. The journal also helped to establish an audit trail to verify the rigor of fieldwork and confirm data collected (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Also, the sample size was restricted due to the number of principals who met the criterion of being coached one or more years. The purpose for the sample selection criterion will be presented in Chapter Three.

Definitions of Terms

Capacity building: According to Lambert (2003), the broad-based skillful participation that creates meaning and shared knowledge.

Coaching: As defined by Douglas and Morley (2000), a method used to provide people with techniques, resources, and information related to on-the-job responsibilities to sustain and to support effective leader practice.

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Instructional Coaching: As defined by Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren (2005) “is an approach in which the coach shares his or her own experience, expertise, and craft wisdom with the client by using traditional teaching strategies” (p. 16).

ISLLC: Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium.

Leadership: Includes influencing people to put aside during a specified timeframe their apprehension and to follow the goals relevant for the responsibilities and interests of the collective group (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994).

Mentoring: Providing support for activities in a learning process by a person who usually has more experience and expertise (*Arkansas’ Standards and Indicators Audit Guidebook*, 2006).

NCLB: No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Social Development Theory: Vygotsky’s theory that the foundational premise of social interaction precedes development.

Transformational Leadership: As defined by Northouse (2004), a process that changes and transforms people.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): The meeting point of the learners' foundation level of knowledge and the capacity to answer problems independently versus having assistance from a teacher.

Summary

The researcher presented the case for conducting this study on building leadership capacity of urban principals through coaching. The researcher also believes that the study was substantiated based on federal legislation and state requirements to meet K-12 student achievement targets. This study focused on documenting the value of leadership coaching in building capacity of principals to achieve school improvement reform goals, which included understanding their significance in impacting student achievement.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter One introduced this study by providing the problem statement, purpose, research question, and significance of the study. The conceptual design, theoretical sensitivity, parameters, assumptions, limitations, and definitions were also segments of Chapter One. The literature review in Chapter Two presents related literature on leadership theories, leadership styles, leader practices, and coaching. Chapter Two also includes academic and practitioner research for building capacity of school leaders, as well as the context and conceptual framework. Chapter Three provides a thorough explanation of the methods employed to conduct the study, the explanation for the chosen sample, and the processes implemented for data collection. Chapter Four presents a descriptive case analysis and a summary of data based on themes, assertions, and generalizations. Chapter Five summarizes the findings and implications and offered recommendations for future studies.

Chapter Two:

Review of the Literature

Organization of the Chapter

Chapter Two is the literature review detailing the historical perspectives of leadership. Those include leadership theory, leadership development, leadership in organizational context, and leadership practice. In addition, coaching in the education setting as well as coaching school leaders was reviewed and described. The chapter closes with a discussion of the theoretical framework and an examination on the significance of coaching in education.

Introduction

Increasingly, policy-makers at the national, state and local levels are holding schools, specifically building administrators, accountable for academic achievement of all students (Spillane & Hunt, 2010). The data indicated that countries improving from great to excellent allocate 78% of their intervention resources to professional development and just 22% in the area of accountability (Fullan & Knight, 2011). The infusion of professional development for administrators and teachers influenced leader practice and instructional delivery to promote effective leadership and positive student outcomes. However, the epoch of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) failed to put forward sufficient guidance for school leaders on how to effectively build capacity to achieve accountability standards to meet federal legislation (Pepper, 2010).

Aarons (2006) asserted that systems and their employees are connected by leadership. Leadership demands require various leadership styles and leader practices. The purpose of this literature review is to investigate the impact of leadership types, leader practices, and leadership coaching on student outcomes and a range of organizational outcomes. This review of literature

focused on leadership theories past and present, leader practices, principal as leader, and coaching for school leaders with particular attention on literature for building capacity of school leaders in urban districts. School leader for this review is equivalent to the school principal, building principal, or building administrator. The intent of this literature review was to present educators, system leaders, and scholars with a review of research on cultivating leader (principal) practices that was evaluative, extensive, and up-to-date.

Background

Spillane and Hunt (2010) stated that empirical research with reference to leadership practices for building principals is somewhat small and this literature precedes the standards and accountability reform that has primarily changed the environment of most schools in the United States. A review of literature by Hallinger and Heck (1996a) acknowledged deficiency in the research and that which was overlooked because of theoretical and epistemological biases for comprehending leadership practice. The case that leadership makes a difference is increasingly accepted, although there is continuing debate concerning what training is necessary to develop the optimum leadership behaviors (Bush, 2009). Elmore (2003) explained that the majority of principals are ill-prepared for high-stakes accountability in today's schools, which intensifies the problem of building capacity. Additionally, the lack of capacity-building support for administrators in this new quest for improving test results is a recipe for little success or even failure.

The current attention given to test scores to satisfy accountability requirements in the absence of guidance or assistance for capacity building could unintentionally be producing a condition whereby principals feel fully responsible for school-wide instructional programs and

procedures (Pepper, 2010). Education leadership and principal training programs have infused the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards as a foundational component of preparation programs. Some of the information, content, and presentations given by ISLLC are research-based, and some are sound educational practices (Streshly & Gray, 2008).

The Council of Chief Staff School Officers published:

Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 organizes the functions that help define strong school leadership under six standards: (1) Setting a widely shared vision for learning; (2) Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; (3) Ensuring effective management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; (4) Collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources; (5) Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and (6) Understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal, and cultural contexts. (CCSSO, 2008, p. 6)

Search Strategy

The review of literature for this study was based on three criteria: (a) scholarly nature, (b) empiricism, and (c) relevance. While reflecting on the relevance of this study, the importance of research questions were determined by the researcher. In an effort to consider the historical significance of principals as managers and leaders, the research consisted of older studies that were then connected with recent research to reflect the changes in leadership practices and models of effective school reform.

Qualitative and quantitative studies were selected using criterion of relevance, rigor, sample size, validity, and findings. Publications, including books, technical manuals, monographs, and journals, that did not present evidence to support the conclusion were restricted. Additionally, the reviewer included educational organizations and legislative decisions relevant to the study.

ProQuest, ERIC, Education Abstracts, Google Scholar, Policy Briefs, books, dissertations and educational journals were used to complete electronic research within data-bases. The U. S. Office of Education and the Arkansas Department of Education provided relevant data. In regard to the enormous amount of studies and articles to be included or excluded from the study, the criterion for selection was based on the research question. The descriptors used for searching various data bases included leadership, leadership development, professional/staff development, school effectiveness, school improvement, student learning outcomes, effective leadership practices, coaching, executive coaching, and leadership coaching.

Historical Perspective

According to Short and Greer (2002), education reform initiatives in the 1800's were continuous as systems worked to meet the challenges of growing enrollment and minimal resources. Two ideas emerged from this reform: efficiency and individual growth (Kastle, 1990). Callahan (1962) summarized the progress of the efficiency movement for the first half of the 20th century. The second half of the 20th century focused on efficiency and measurement (Short & Greer, 2002), excluding the short time periods when the focal point was students with disabilities and inclusion of racial and ethnic groups. Also, the term "efficiency movement" was changed to "accountability movement" (Kastle, 1990).

Leadership Theories

The essence of leadership has been influenced by theories for many years. This review of leadership theories will include past and current research on leadership approaches and styles, as well as, reported findings in which traditional and modern theories share similar characteristics. Barnard (1938) explained executives have managerial and emotional functions, which he named cognitive and cathectic. Cognitive leadership functions were guiding, directing, and constraining

choices and actions; whereas, cathectic leadership functions were emotional and motivational aspects of goal setting and developing faith and commitment to a larger moral purpose.

Table 3

Trait Theory

| Author | Research | Methods | Conclusions |
|------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|--|
| Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) | Article | Document | Reported six traits leaders must possess; leaders can be born with these traits, learn them or both. |
| Lord et al. (1986) | Article | Analysis/ Document | Offered meta-analysis findings for trait theory with individuals' perceptions of leaders as intelligence, masculinity and dominance. |
| Mann (1959) | Article | Analysis/Document | Reported findings on personality and leadership within small groups that intelligence, adjustment, and extroversion are highly related to leadership. |
| Northouse (2004) | Book | Literature review/ Analysis | Provided reviews and analysis of selected leadership theories/approaches applied in organizations and summarized the five major leadership traits. |
| Northouse (2010) | Book | Literature Review | Described the trait theory assumptions of leaders as innate distinguished or characteristic. |
| Stogdill (1948) | Article | Literature Review/ Survey | Reviewed 124 studies, reported the leader surpasses the average member or the group in five categories: capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation and status. |
| Stogdill (1974) | Handbook | Document | Reported determinants of leadership included personality and situational factors. |

Note. Northouse (2004) suggested scholars’ interest in the trait approach in mid-20th century given it was among the first methodical studies of leadership. Instructional, transformational, and transactional theories of leadership were the foundational theories leading up to the 1970’s.

The trait theory, referred to as great man theory, assumed leaders had innate distinguished traits or characteristics (Northouse, 2010). Research studies conducted by Stodgill in (1948/1974) reported the first analysis and synthesis of more than 124 trait studies, and later his second study included analysis of another 163 new studies which offered findings as to how individuals’ traits contribute to the process of leadership.

Table 4

Leadership Traits summarized by Northouse

| Summary of the five major Leader traits | |
|---|---|
| (1) Intelligence | Possessing strong verbal ability, perceptual ability, and being an improved leader through reasoning; |
| (2) Self-confidence | Having certainty regarding one’s competencies and skills; |
| (3) Determination | Owning characteristics of initiative, persistence, fortitude and drive to get the job completed; |
| (4) Integrity | Having honesty and trustworthiness as leadership qualities; and |
| (5) Sociability | Being inclined to seek out good social relationships. |

Adapted Northouse (2004). Five major Leadership Traits

Note. Northouse summarized leadership traits as intelligence, self-confidence, integrity, sociability, and determination.

The first report by Stodgill (1948) noted leadership was not a passive state but was an outcome of working relationships among the leader and other group members. Stodgill’s findings reported five categories of leadership traits in which the leader surpasses the average person in a group:

- (1) Capacity (intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality, and judgment);
- (2) Achievement (scholarship, knowledge, and athletic achievement);
- (3) Responsibility (dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence, and desire to excel);
- (4) Participation (activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability, and humor); and
- (5) Status (socio-economic, position, and popularity). (p. 55)

The second study reported both personality and situational factors as leadership determinants (Stodgill, 1974). Mann's (1959) study related to personality and leadership within small groups offered a review of more than 1,400 findings with conditional conclusions that personality traits could be used to distinguish leaders from non-leaders. Mann agreed that dominance, interpersonal sensitivity, and masculinity were positively related; this researcher generally believed that intelligence, adjustment, and extroversion related highly to leadership. The meta-analysis conducted by Lord, DeVader and Alliger (1986) reaffirmed Mann's findings that personality traits can be used to differentiate leaders from non-leaders and further concluded individuals perceived leaders to have traits such as intelligence, masculinity, and dominance. Kirkpatrick and Lock (1991) argued the importance of leadership and offered leaders are not like other people. According to their study, leadership traits make some people different from others and recognizing these differences is vital to the leadership process. Six effective leadership traits were identified by Kirkpatrick and Locke: (a) drive, (b) leadership motivation, (c) honesty and integrity, (d) self-confidence, (e) cognitive ability, and (f) knowledge of the business (p. 48).

Northouse (2004) also identified behavior as a core leadership trait. The behavioral approach emerged from Ohio State University researchers in early 1950s. Halpin (1957) explained the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) was constructed by The Ohio State University Personnel Research Board employees under the direction of Dr. Carroll L. Stattle. Stodgill (1963) explained the LBDQ as an opportunity for workers to offer feedback on their supervisor.

Table 5

Behavior Theory

| Author | Research | Methods | Conclusions |
|--|----------|-----------------------|--|
| Blanchard and Hersey (1996) | Article | Journal | Presented the four leadership styles of telling, selling, participation, and delegating. |
| Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Zigarmi (1985) | Book | Document | Presented the Situational Leadership Model II on patterns of behaviors to influence others. |
| Halpin (1957) | Manual | Document | Explained initiating structure and consideration as two dimensions of leadership and provided instructions for the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). |
| Halpin and Winer (1952) | Report | Analysis/ Document | Reported finding on leadership behaviors of airplane commanders with correlation between two leadership dimensions. |
| Short and Greer (2002) | Book | Document | Explained LBDQ's purpose was to collect group members' observations on their leaders in consideration (human relations) and initiating structure (organizing the work). |
| Stogdill (1963) | Manual | Document | LBDQ-Form XII explained four new factors for the questionnaire to address the member of variables operating in social groups. |

Note. Halpin and Winer (1952) reported findings in a leadership behavior report on 52 aircraft commanders with correlation between two dimensions: (1) initiating structure, and (2) consideration.

Halpin summarized the dimensions:

Initiating Structure refers to the leader's behavior in delineating the relationship between himself and the members of his group, and in endeavoring to establish well-defined patterns of organization, channels of communication, and ways of getting the job done. Consideration refers to behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust,

respect, and warmth in relationship between the leader and members of the group. (1957, p. 1)

Short and Greer (2002) further explained LBDQ was used to collect group members' observations of their leader in the dimensions of consideration (human relations) and initiating structure (organizing the work). The majority of current theories on organizational leadership still include these two factor descriptions of leadership behavior.

Fielder (1967) suggested assessing situations by three factors: (1) leader-member relations, (2) task structure, and (3) position power. According to Fielder, the degree of group atmosphere in relations to confidence, loyalty, and attraction for the leader explained leader-member relations; the degree of clarity and details of tasks explained task structures; and the degree of leadership authority to reward or penalize group members described position power (p. 34). Fiedler's three-factor situation model offered techniques for building principals to assess situations which may affect student outcomes and non-academic outcomes. Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Zigarmi (1985) developed the Situational Leadership Model II, which refers to behavior patterns of individuals who attempt to influence others. Figure 2.1 presents two leadership styles: directive (task) behaviors and supportive (relationship) behaviors which can be classified further by four unique categories.

Blanchard and Hersey's Directive and Supportive Leadership Categories

| Category of directive and supportive behavior | Leadership Styles |
|---|---|
| (1) Directing | High directive – Low supportive behavior |
| (2) Coaching | High directive – High supportive behavior |
| (3) Supporting | High supportive – Low directive behavior |
| (4) Delegating | Low supportive – Low directive behavior |
| <i>Adapted: Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Zigarmi (1985) Leadership and one minute manager: Increasing effectiveness though situational leadership.</i> | |

Figure 2. A critical factor to effective leadership is influencing personnel through tasks and relationships.

Northouse stated, “One of the more widely recognized approaches to leadership is the situational approach, which was developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969a) based on Reddin’s (1967) 3-D management style theory” (p. 87). Northouse (2004) explained situational leadership is handled on a case by case method where the leader could use both directive and support actions in addressing the situation. Directive leadership actions include setting goals, prescribing actions, assigning duties and responsibilities, establishing timelines, and developing methods of evaluation. This style operated with top-down communication with scripted points of clarification on who, what, when, and where. A high-directive leader provided direction and monitored the completion of tasks. The coaching style was high directive and high supportive with clearly defined plans of action and continual support to effectively achieve desired goals and outcomes. Supportive behavior considered the concerns of the group. The coaching leadership style supported the social and emotional needs of the group to foster a sense of organizational well being as the group works to accomplish set goals. The coaching style included open dialogue, team-work, collaboration, listening, two-way communication, and developing and working the plan. Behaviors related to the supporting style included intentional listening, praising, reflective feedback, and positive reinforcement. Northouse described style of low directive and low supportive as allowing personnel to implement the plan with autonomy to increase the employee’s confidence in their ability to achieve the set goals. Blanchard and Hersey stated, “with the development of situational leadership, we named quadrants one through four: telling, selling, participating, and delegating” (1996, p. 44).

The effective principal understands the capabilities of his followers and their willingness to perform at maximum potential to achieved set goals. Building trusting relationships and implementing high-yield practices for improving organizational outcomes will ignite improved teaching and learning.

The contingency theory’s focus was leadership styles and situations (Northouse, 2004). House’s (1971) path-goal theory is about leaders motivating followers to achieve prescribed goals.

Table 6

Contingency and Path-Goal Theory

| Author | Research | Methods | Conclusions |
|-------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|---|
| Fiedler (1967) | Book | Analysis/ Document | Recommendation of three different leadership styles as related to favorability of the leadership situation, i.e. leader-member relations, task structure, and position power. |
| Frame (1987) | Manual | Document | Explained initiating structure and consideration as two dimensions of leadership and provided instructions for the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). |
| Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) | Book | Document | Presented a summary of six leadership styles, emotional intelligence, and how effective leaders create resonance. |
| House (1971) | Article | Document | Offered the path-goal theory identified four leadership behaviors: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. |
| House and Mitchell (1974) | Article | Document | Suggests leadership motivates when the path defines goals, clarifies paths, removes obstacles, and provides support. |
| Northouse (2004) | Book | Literature Review/ Analysis | Suggested leadership styles and situations as primary focus in the contingency theory. |

Note. The situational approach, proposes that leaders adjust to the development level of followers. The contingency theory places emphasis on matching the leader's style to specific variables. In comparison to the fore mentioned, path-goal theory placed emphasis on the bond connecting the leader's style and the characteristics of the followers and the work environment (Northouse, 2004).

House's (1971) highly recognized contingency theory asserted that "the motivational function of the leader consists of increasing personal payoffs to subordinates for work-goal attainment and making the path to these payoffs easier to travel by clarifying it, reducing roadblocks and pitfalls, and increasing opportunities for personal satisfaction" (p. 324). House and Mitchell (1974) advanced the following propositions:

Leader behavior is acceptable and satisfying to subordinates to the extent that the subordinates see such behavior as either an immediate source of satisfaction or instrumental to future satisfaction. (p. 84)

Leader behavior is motivational, i.e., increase effort to the extent that (1) such behavior makes satisfaction of subordinate's needs contingent on effective performance and (2) such behavior complements the environment of subordinates by providing coaching, guidance, support and rewards necessary for effective performance. (84)

Effective leaders progressing through the various requirements and timelines for completing school improvement planning and goal setting often consider relevant literature and reported findings on what works. Effective leaders take into consideration the multiple leadership styles, leadership behaviors, leadership characteristics, team types, and team natures of followers working to achieve desired academic outcomes. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) asserted that effective leaders move people in positive emotional directions because they are cognizant of their feelings and in turn create resonance. The leader's individual values, paths and priorities are authentically articulated from a confident emotional course (p. 38).

Accordingly, resonance is birthed with intellectual features that come clearly to people with

intrinsic emotional intelligence including relationship management, self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness (p. 38). These authors summarized leadership styles and characteristics as:

- Visionary: Inspires, holds individual vision, considerate, offers clarity to how and why people’s efforts support to the vision;
- Coaching: Listens, assist others in identifying their own strengths and limitations, counsels, delegates, and promotes;
- Affiliative: Advances harmony, kind, empathetic, encourages morality, and resolves conflict;
- Democratic: Outstanding listener, team worker, collaborator, and persuader;
- Pacesetter: Driven to achieve, lofty standards, initiative, short on empathy and collaborative efforts, numbers driven, and hands-on manager; and
- Commanding: Command includes do it because I said to, intimidating, rigid control, monitoring, serious, inventive dissonance, taints everyone’s mode, forces talent out (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002).

The term servant leadership credited to Greenleaf (1970/1977) was leadership emerging from aspirations to help others.

Table 7

Servant and Ethical Leadership Theories

| Author | Research | Methods | Conclusions |
|------------------------|----------|-----------------------|---|
| Graham (1991) | Journal | Analysis/ Document | Described servant leaders as being placed for the purpose of removing inequalities and social injustices. |
| Greenleaf (1970, 1977) | Manual | Document | Argued that leadership was imparted on an individual who’s naturally a servant. |

| Author | Research | Methods | Conclusions |
|-------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|--|
| Heifetz (1994) | Book | Analysis/ Document | Formulated an ethical leadership approach where leaders assist followers to deal with conflict. |
| Kitchener (1984) | Article | Document | Offered the path-goal theory identified four leadership behaviors: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. |
| Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) | Book | Literature Review/ Analysis | Suggested five critical skills of servant leadership as nurturing those inside the organization. |
| Northouse (2004) | Book | Literature Review/ Analysis | Northouse explained the social responsibility of servant leadership and that ethical theories associated with leadership conduct are divided into two types. |

Note. The servant leader theory was put into practice to eliminate differences and social injustice (Graham, 1991).

According to Northouse (2004), the servant leader has a social responsibility to be concerned with those who have less and to recognize them as equal stakeholders in the life of the organization.

Nurturing those within the organization is the cornerstone for servant leadership. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) offered five essential servant leadership skills: (a) considerate of personal needs in the organization, (b) healing hurts based on differences in the organization, (c) having stewardship over resources in the organization, (d) building skills of personnel in the organization, and (e) exhibiting attributes of an effective listener. Greenleaf (1970/1977) proposed that leadership was imparted onto a person with a servant nature and the leader-follower relationship is fundamental to ethical leadership. Kitchener's (1984) principles of ethical leadership are: respecting autonomy, doing no harm, helping others, being just, and being trustworthy. These principles serve as building blocks for ethical decision making.

According to Northouse (2004), ethical theories associated with the conduct of leaders are divided into two types: (a) theories focusing on consequences of leader’s actions; and (b) those stressing the duty or rule prevailing over leaders’ actions. Northouse explained: “Ethics is central to leadership because of the nature of the process of influence, the need to engage followers to accomplish mutual goals, and the impact leaders have on establishing the organization’s values” (p. 307). Heifetz (1994) offered an approach to ethical leadership with emphasis on how leaders assist followers to deal with conflict and to produce change from conflict. “The leader promotes a healthy environment inclusive of trust, nurturance, and empathy” (p. 113). Leaders specifically use authority: “(1) to get people to pay attention to the issues; (2) to act as a reality test regarding information; (3) to manage and frame issues; (4) to orchestrate conflicting perspectives; and (5) to facilitate the decision-making process” (p. 113). Ethical leadership is a principle that effective leaders hold in high regard as a professional standard and code of conduct. Ethical leadership frames the daily work of teaching and learning with a continual reframing as issues develop in the context of school life.

Transformational and transactional leadership was unveiled to corporations, education communities, and other business entities by James Burns (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Table 8

Transactional and Transformational Theories

| Author | Methods | Research | Conclusions |
|---|---------|-------------------|---|
| Antonakis, Avolio, and Sivasubramaniam (2003) | Article | Research Analysis | Reported characteristics of transformational leaders in being proactive by inspiring collective interests and motivating followers to achieve advanced goals. |

| | | | |
|--|---------|-----------------------------|--|
| Avolio and Bass (2004) | Book | Document | Explain transactional leadership as management-by-exception (passive); management-by-exception (active); and constructive transactional. |
| Bass (1985) | Book | Literature Review/ Analysis | Bass' model identified four transformational leadership factors for motivating followers: charisma, inspiration, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation. |
| Bass (1990) | Book | Analysis | Bass offered transactional leadership placed emphasis on contingent rewards – rewarding followers for meeting set performance goals; and managing by exception. |
| Bass (1997) | Article | Analysis | Bass (1997) explained transformational leadership as a theory in leadership. |
| Bass (1998) | Book | Document | Bass explains transformation leadership style. |
| Bass and Avolio (1993) | Book | Literature Review/ Analysis | Bass and Avolio the augmentation effect, which stipulates that transformational leadership adds to the effect of transactional leadership. |
| Burns (1978) | Book | Analysis | Burns authored a hearty and persuasive definition of leadership. |
| Den Hartog, Van Muijen, and Koopman (1997) | Article | Analysis | Authors suggested ideas from trait, style, and contingency approaches were integrated in the transformational leadership model. |
| Hallinger (2003) | Article | Literature Review/ Analysis | Hallinger's transformation model of leadership suggested the organization utilizes multiple sources of leadership. |
| Howell and Avolio (1993) | Article | Document | Howell and Avolio expressed viewpoints of transformation leadership. |
| Judge and Piccolo (2004) | Article | Document | Judge and Piccolo summarized ideas from the four transformational leadership factors. |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|--|
| Kuhnert (1994) | Article | Document | Kuhnert asserts transformational leaders have strong values and they can motivate people to accomplish the greater good for the organization and the community. |
| Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) | Book | Analysis | Researchers proposed transactional leaders are characterized as being influential because doing what the leader wants is in the best interest of subordinates. |
| Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) | Article | Literature Review/ Analysis | Leithwood and Jantzi reviewed 23 studies and almost half showed transformational leadership to have a small indirect influence on student achievement outcomes and social outcomes relating to students. |
| Marzano et al. (2005) | Book | Literature Review/ Analysis | Researchers concluded their meta-analysis of 35 years of research indicated school leadership does have an effect on student achievement. |
| Miller and Miller (2001) | Article | Review | Researchers provided explanation on transformational leadership as contrasted with transactional approaches. |
| Yukl (1994) | Book | Review | Leadership in education for attaining organizational success. |

Note. “In general terms, *transactional* is defined as trading one thing for another..., whereas transformational leadership is more focused on change.” (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p.14).

Burns (1978) authored a hearty and persuasive definition of leadership:

I define leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivation—the wants and the needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers. And the genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and their followers’ values and motivations. (p. 19)

Transactional and transformational leadership were often referred to in the writings of Burns. Bass (1985) explained that transformational leadership inspires followers by: (a) raising followers' levels of consciousness about the importance and value of specified and idealized goals, (b) getting followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team or organization, and (c) moving followers to address higher-level needs (p. 20).

Bass and Avolio (1993) suggested that transformational–transactional leadership theory has been discussed with minimal investigation on “the *augmentation effect*, which stipulates that transformational leadership adds to the effect of transactional leadership” (p. 69). Bass (1998) explained “transformational leadership styles build on the transactional base in contributing to the extra effort and performance of followers” (p. 5). Howell and Avolio (1993) agreed with this viewpoint that transformational leadership complements transactional leadership and that effective leaders often supplement transactional leadership with transformational leadership.

A process used by transactional leaders is to switch things of value with subordinates to progress their subordinates' agenda as well as their own (Kuhnert, 1994). Transactional leaders are characterized as being influential because doing what the leader wants is in the best interest of subordinates (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). Miller and Miller (2001) provided an explanation on transformational leadership as contrasted with transactional approaches:

Transactional leadership is leadership in which relationships with teachers are based upon an exchange for some valued resource. To the teacher, interaction between administrators and teachers is usually episodic, short-lived and limited to the exchange transaction. Transformational leadership is more potent and complex and occurs when one or more teachers engage with others in such a way that administrators and teachers raise one another to higher levels of commitment and dedication, motivation and morality. Through the transforming process, the motives of the leader and follower merge. (p. 182)

Bass (1997) also explained transformational leadership as a theory in leadership literature. Transformational leadership was described by Hallinger (2003) as a model wherein

the organization utilizes multiple sources of leadership. Sources of leadership could include teacher leaders, department chairperson, assistant principals, and instructional coaches to name a few. Bass (1985) contended transformational leaders inspire followers to perform above work expectations by doing the following: (a) elevating followers' stage of consciousness around the significant value of specified and idealized goal, (b) moving followers to rise above their own self-interest for the good of the organization or group, and (c) getting followers to deal with higher-level needs (p. 20). Bass' model includes four transformational leadership factors for motivating followers: charisma, inspiration, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Judge and Piccolo (2004) summarized ideas from the four transformational leadership factors:

- (1) Dimension one, charisma or idealized influence, is the degree to which the leader behaves in admirable ways that cause followers to identify with the leader. Charismatic leaders display conviction, take stands, and appeal to followers on an emotional level;
- (2) Dimension two is inspiration, where the leader leads with inspirational motivation challenging followers with high standards, communicating optimism about future goal attainment, and providing meaning for the task at hand;
- (3) Dimension three is individual consideration to which the leader attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower, and listens to the follower's concerns and needs; and
- (4) Dimension four is intellectual stimulation, the degree to which the leader challenges assumptions, takes risks, and solicits followers' ideas (p. 755).

According to Yukl (1994), transformational leadership was created for attaining organizational success in reaching goals, increasing organizational commitment, and strengthening processes aligned to organizational objectives. Den Hartog, Van Muijen, and Koopman (1997) suggested ideas from trait, style, and contingency approaches were integrated in the transformational leadership model. Characteristics of transformational leaders are:

- Inspiring followers to move above personal interests for the good of the organization to accomplish the vision (Avolio & Bass, 2004);
- Proactive in raising followers' awareness by inspiring collective interests and motivating followers to achieve advanced goals (Antonakis et al., 2003);
- Capable of causing shifts in beliefs, needs, and values of followers in a profound and extraordinary manner whereby followers become leaders (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987);
- Increase consciousness of followers in the organization with vision and strategies they create (Avolio & Bass, 2004);
- Renew the organization by defining the change needed, commit to new vision casting, and provide organizational awareness of vision and goals (Den Hartog et al., 1997); and
- Develop higher levels of professional and personal needs for followers in achievement, autonomy, and performance (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) reviewed 33 studies and almost half showed transformational leadership to have a small indirect influence on student achievement outcomes and social outcomes relating to students. According to Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins (2008), "at least ten mostly recent, large-scale, quantitative designed studies in Australia and

North America have concluded that the effects of transformational school leadership on pupil engagement are significantly positive” (p. 29).

Leithwood and Montgomery (1982) proposed the instructional leadership model considerably shaped the viewpoints of effective principal leadership that circulated in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Table 9

Instructional Leadership Theory

| Author | Research | Methods | Conclusions |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Blase and Blase (1998) | Handbook | Analysis/ Document | Suggested findings from 800 elementary, middle, and high school US principals on three behaviors of effective leadership: conferencing with teachers, promoting teachers’ professional growth, and fostering teacher reflection. |
| Broughton and Riley (1991) | Article | Analysis | Suggests principal’s role in elementary schools with hands-on monitoring of classroom instruction, teacher quality, and student achievement. |
| Edmonds (1979) | Article | Analysis | Reported research on effective schools identifying strong, directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction in elementary schools in poor urban area. |
| Goldring and Pasternak (1994) | Report | Analysis | Studied 34 Israeli elementary schools and found academic excellence was not one of the top five goals in either low or high performing schools. |
| Hallinger (2000) | Article | Literature Review/ Analysis | Reviewed two decades of research on the principalship using Principal Instructional Management rating scale and conceptualized this model with three dimensions: defining the school’s mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school. |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|---|
| Hallinger (1998) | Article | Literature Review/ Analysis | Reported several paths of leadership influences on student learning outcomes, to include, school goals, school structure, and social networks, people and organizational culture. Findings also included the principal's role in shaping the school's direction through vision mission and goals. |
| Hallinger and Murphy (1986) | Article | Document | The role of the principal in building the school mission is influenced by school contexts features, such as, socio-economic status and school size. |
| Heck and Hallinger (1999) | Handbook | Document | Handbook of research on conceptual models, methodology, and methods for studying school leadership. |
| Jacobson and Bezzino (2008) | Article | Document | Described principals leading effective schools worked with determination to produce safe and orderly educational environments, set clear instructional objectives, increased time on task anticipating high performance. |
| Leithwood and Montgomery (1982) | Article | Review | Reported research on effective schools identifying strong, directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction in elementary schools in poor urban area. |

Note. Heck and Hallinger (1999) identified two conceptual models, instructional leadership and transformational leadership, after reviewing numerous research studies on educational leadership that covered over twenty years.

Instructional leadership research during the era of effective schools characterized leadership as strong and directive, curriculum-focused, and instruction-driven and utilized in schools serving students from poor urban communities (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Hallinger's (1998) "review revealed several paths of leadership influences on student learning outcomes, [to include] school goals, school structure, and social networks, people and

organizational culture. Findings also included the principal’s role in shaping the school’s direction through vision mission and goals” (1998, p. 187).

Table 10

Instructional Leadership Research

| Instructional Leadership effects: | Source: |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Principal’s role in shaping the purpose of schooling; | Goldring and Pasternak (1994) |
| Principal’s role in building the school’s mission is effected by school context, such as school size and socio-economic status; | Hallinger and Murphy (1986) |
| Principal’s role in the school mission impacts outcomes through alignment of instructional standards, curriculum, and instructional time; | Hallinger and Heck (1996a, 1996b) |
| Principal’s role in elementary schools with hands-on monitoring of classroom instruction, teacher quality, and student achievement; and | Broughton and Riley (1991) |
| Instructional leadership employed by the principal is impacted by school context. | Hallinger and Heck (1996a, 1996b) |

Note. Hallinger and Murphy offered three broad categories of instructional leadership: (1) define school mission; (2) manage instructional program; and (3) promote school climate (1986).

Blase and Blase’s (1998) research finding with 800 K-12 principals offered effective instructional leadership behaviors consist of three facets: (a) teacher conferencing; (b) promoting teacher professional growth; and (c) fostering teacher reflection (1998). Principals leading effective schools worked with determination to produce safe and orderly educational environments, set clear instructional objectives, increase time on task, anticipating high performance from teachers and students, and developed positive home-school relations (Jacobson & Bezzina, 2008). As a result, instructional leadership was seen as the key player between principal practices and student achievement.

The leadership theories discussed in this chapter were used to provide theoretical insight into the operations of leadership development, leader practices, leadership in the context of schooling, and leadership coaching. The theories presented were trait, behavioral, contingency, path-goal, servant, transactional, transformational, and instructional leadership.

Leadership Development

Contemporary school administrators are engaged in an array of roles, varying from educational visionaries and change agents to leaders of instruction, curriculum and assessment specialists, budget forecasters, facility supervisors, special programs directors, and community planners (Davis et al., 2005).

Table 11

Leadership Development

| Author | Research | Methods | Conclusion |
|--|----------|-----------------------------|---|
| Bloom et al. (2005) | Book | Document | Argued blended coaching strategies for principal development incorporates facilitative coaching, instructional coaching, consultative coaching, transformational coaching, and collaborative coaching. |
| Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, and Cohen (2007) | Study | Final Report/ Analysis | Reported case study analysis on exemplary preparation and in-service professional development programs for leaders within the context of their state and local policy. |
| Davis et al. (2005) | Study | Literature Review/ Analysis | Offered various leadership roles from educational visionaries and change agents to leader of instruction, curriculum and assessment specialist, budget forecaster, facility supervisor, special programs director, and community planner. |
| Jacobson and Bezzina (2008) | Article | Review/ Analysis | Offered effective principals worked to generate safe orderly environments for learning, have clear instructional objectives, project high |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|---|
| | | | performance with increased time on task, and build positive home-school relationships. |
| Murphy, McCarthy, and Moorman (2008) | Article | Review/Analysis | Presented the most essential element needed to attract and retain quality principals of high-need schools is providing the support principals need to do their jobs. |
| Orr, King, and LaPointe (2010) | Article | Literature Review/Analysis | Researchers concluded their meta-analysis of 35 years of research indicated school leadership does have an affect on student outcomes. |
| The Wallace Foundation (2008) | Brief | Report | The Wallace Foundation summarized reports on leadership academies in Georgia, Iowa and Louisiana, and in urban and sub-urban districts Chicago, Boston, New York City, and St. Louis, providing high-quality options to district leadership needs, and in some cases, collaborative university and district leadership training programs are available. |

Note. Effective principals worked persistently to generate safe and orderly environments for learning, establish clear instructional objectives, anticipate lofty performance through increased time on tasks commencing with teachers to students, and build positive home-school relationships (Jacobson & Bezzina, 2008).

In schools across this country many people within the organization assume responsibilities for leading instructional initiatives to ensure that vision becomes reality and learning is the top priority.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) wrote that a variety of reasons are offered when referencing the significance of effective leadership and the value of leadership on student outcomes. Reports on poor performing schools, increased demands of principals, and media coverage of national “principal shortages have brought issues of: (1) administrative recruitment;

(2) credentialing; (3) training; and (4) support” (p. 4). Three kinds of problems identified in the literature have impacted principal shortages:

- (a) Traditional college preparation programs for principals have been ineffective in recruiting adequate numbers of promising candidates who will commit to leadership roles in high needs areas (Knapp, Copland, & Talbert, 2003 cited in Darling Hammond et al., 2007);
- (b) Contributing factors to the shortage are the working conditions, particularly in high-poverty urban schools, and a lack of opportunities for advancement; and
- (c) Aspiring and practicing principals are frequently ill-prepared and lacking support to tackle the challenging job of instructional leadership and school improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Public Agenda established that the most essential element needed to attract and retain quality principals in high-need schools is providing them the support needed to do their jobs (Murphy et al., 2008). The Council of Chief State School Officers released in 1996 the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards (revised in 2008), and these standards have been used as guidance for leadership policy, planning, and decisions. As a result, many state and district leadership policies have been amended and accountability benchmarks established for principals leading to improvement in student learning. The Wallace Foundation (2008) stated that leadership academies are operational in a number of states, such as, Georgia, Iowa and Louisiana, as well as in urban and sub-urban districts to include Chicago, Boston, New York City, and St. Louis. These academies provide high-quality options to district leadership needs, and, in some cases, collaborative university and district leadership training programs are

available (p. 4). The New York City Leadership Academy’s implementation of a blended coaching model served as an exemplar for institutions.

Table 12

Bloom’s Five Blended Coaching Strategies

| | |
|--|--|
| Facilitative Coaching | Builds on coachee’s (i.e. client’s) existing skills, knowledge, interpretations and beliefs as the coachee constructs new skills, knowledge, interpretations, and beliefs as a platform for future actions (Bloom et al., 2005); |
| Instructional Coaching | Sharing personal experience, expertise, and craft wisdom with coachee (i.e. modeling, providing resources and direct instruction, (2005); |
| Consultative Coaching | Utilizing coach-as-consultant who possesses resources and expertise that will benefit the coachee and the organization (2005); |
| Collaborative Coaching | Incorporates instruction and facilitation to focus on concrete action with a larger goal to expand knowledge, skills, and internal capacity (Bloom et al., 2005); and |
| Transformational Coaching | Processing that moves people beyond improved performance, to developing new ways of thinking, and ultimately to changing their ways of being (Hargrove, 1995). |
| <i>Adapted: Bloom et al. (2005) Blended Coaching Skills and Strategies to Support Principal Development.</i> | |

Note. Bloom’s et al., (2005) blended coaching strategies for principal development incorporates facilitative coaching, instructional coaching, consultative coaching, transformational coaching and collaborative coaching.

The Arkansas statewide academy model designed a measurement system to evaluate the progress and performance of veteran principals participating in the Master Principal Program (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Analysis of principal preparation programs confirmed the influence of state policies regarding quality of principal preparation through program approval, certification and focused technical assistance.

Table 13

Exemplary Leadership Development Programs

| Pre-service programs sponsored by four universities | In-service program Sponsors |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank Street College • Delta State University | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hartford (CT) School District • Jefferson County (KY) Public Schools (includes a pre-service component) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Connecticut • University of San Diego working with San Diego Unified School District | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region 1 in New York City • San Diego Unified Schools (SDUSD) |

Note. “In several cases, pre- and in-service programs created a continuum of coherent learning opportunities” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 8).

The School Leadership Study conducted by Darling-Hammond et al., (2007), entitled *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World*, reported detailed case analyses “of exemplary preparation and development programs for principals, as well as policy initiatives in some states that have had a very substantial influence on leadership development in those states” (p. 7). The eight programs chosen for the study presented evidence “of innovative practices and strong effects on principal learning” (p. 12). Preliminary findings suggested when “innovative preparation program features are in place, programs yield better graduate perceptions of their training and stronger school leadership outcomes” (p. 12). The authors further explained processes used to identify with the local context, which were: “selecting a sample of both pre- and in-service programs with several cohorts of graduates who worked in nearby districts” (p. 17).

Delta State University revamped their Exemplary Leadership Development Program. Their program was centered on instructional leadership, highlighting a full-time internship and fiscal support for teachers. This Delta State approach allowed the primarily rural institution to deliver one year of principal preparation and provided transformational leadership in low socio-economic schools. Local districts and the state of Mississippi supported this program (Darling-

Hammond et al., 2007). A second exemplary leadership development program evolved from a closely-aligned joint venture between San Diego Unified School District and Educational Leadership Development Academy (ELDA). San Diego's continuum of leadership preparation and development includes pre-service and in-service support programs for instructional leadership. Additionally, internships and coaching arrangements are added components of the program, all of which support the development of leaders within the organizational context of instructional reform (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Region one of the New York City Public Schools, the third exemplary leadership development program, partnered with Bank Street College to offer pre-service, induction, and in-service support. The focus of this continuum is to produce leadership for improvement in teaching and learning that is aligned with instructional reform effort in the district (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). University of Connecticut's Administrator Preparation Program, the fourth exemplary leadership development program, involved the innovative transformation of a high-quality, traditional university-based program. The transformation included integrating graduate coursework and field experiences which prepared principals for organizing change through the use of data and evidence of classroom practice. For candidates interested in raising the bar and accelerating beyond the status quo, intensive professional development was made available at Hartford, CT (Orr, King, & LaPointe, 2010).

Two institutions have joined forces to create a partnership for creating standard language and practices from the five exemplary programs that focused on instructional leadership. These two institutions were the Hartford Public School District and the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Learning. In leveraging reform efforts, the LEAD grant funds from one exemplary site provided support for this initiative which offered leadership development training as a vital

component to moving beyond a state takeover (Orr, King, & LaPointe, 2010). Jefferson County Public Schools in collaboration with the University of Louisville developed a pathway from the classroom to the principalship that included an extensive range of support for practicing leaders. The Wallace Foundation’s research findings on state accountability systems reported emphasis on thorough principal evaluation, the role of the central office in supporting principals, and state data systems to project future leadership needs and evaluating preparation programs.

The Wallace Foundation also provided financial support and resources to 15 of their districts with leadership preparation efforts on-going for three or more years (Orr, King, & LaPointe, 2010). The foundation selected eight urban districts ranging from small to large (i.e. 34 schools to more than 650 schools). The results from state required testing indicated these urban districts were in need of comprehensive school reform. The primary areas for supporting leaders were enrollment trends, administrative vacancies due to retirement or relocation, and academic accountability requirements (Orr et al., 2010). Collaborative partnerships were developed between districts and universities, with the exception of one district, for grant-funded principal training programs with certification components (2010).

Table 14

Exemplary Leadership Development Programs 2010 Data Report

| School District | Students | Schools | AYP* | Primary University Affiliate |
|------------------|----------|---------|------|---|
| Boston | 56,168 | 143 | No | University of Massachusetts Boston |
| Chicago | 380,787 | 655 | No | University of Illinois at Chicago |
| Fort Wayne | 31,606 | 53 | No | — |
| Jefferson County | 92,000 | 157 | No | University of Louisville initially, and later added Bellarmine and Spalding universities and Indiana University Southeast |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Providence | 23,344 | 52 | No | University of Rhode Island |
| Springfield, Illinois | 28,000 | 34 | No | Illinois State University |
| Springfield, Mass. | 25,233 | 55 | No (for some schools) | University of Massachusetts Amherst |
| St. Louis | 30,000 | 84 | No | University of Missouri–Columbia |

*AYP status of all schools and districts is for 2007–08.

Adapted: Orr, King and LaPointe (2010, p. 2) Districts Developing Leaders – 8 Urban District.

Note. Orr et al. (2010) summarized findings from the study on urban districts’ leadership development initiatives.

The Wallace Foundation (2010) presents:

how states can promote better principal preparation:

- Hold universities accountable for building state standards into their programs in meaningful ways;
- Toughen standards for training-programs accreditation with requirements for such things as program administration prerequisites and minimum internship hours;
- Make sure requirements for principal certification are specific and encourage on-the-job training for new comers; and
- Explore how to ensure funding for more expensive but crucial aspects of principal preparation, notably full-time internships. (p. 2)

The reported findings from the study of eight urban districts landed on a three-tier consumer approach (The Wallace Foundation, 2010). The goal of this approach was to assist in the preparation of quality principals. The three-tiers consumer approach included: Districts (the consumers) decided that the end product for purchase included clear, rigorous standards for principals (2010). By creating clear standards, university preparation programs would know exactly what the districts were in the market to purchase. Tier two was collaborators, where schools and districts work with university officials to develop programs that match district standards (2010). Tier three was competitors, where school districts participate in the creation of

a pool of principal candidates. These pools can be created in collaboration with local universities or by providing leadership training opportunities at the district level (2010).

According to the study, the benefits included a higher quality principal preparation program for districts. Participating universities also received moderate enrollment increases from students seeking leadership training. Districts faced challenges, as well. The challenges were ability to financial support for leadership programs and being able to strike a balance between education theory and practice in leadership training. “The researchers concluded the combination of clarifying principal standards and collaborating with university-based-preparation-programs to change training had the greatest potential for broad-reaching, sustainable change in the quality of leadership preparation and graduates ready for school leadership” (The Wallace Foundation, 2010, p. 2).

Leadership in Organizational Context

Table 15

Leadership in Organizational Context

| Author | Research | Methods | Conclusions |
|--|----------|-----------------------------|--|
| Creemers and Reetizigt (1996) | Article | Document | Reported school variables, considered separately, have only small effects on student learning. |
| Latham and Locke (2006) | Book | Literature Review/ Analysis | Summarized which conditions, processes, and outcomes of goal setting are effective. |
| Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) | Article | Literature Review/ Analysis | Reported findings from in-depth case studies and extensive quantitative analysis that reinforced the empirical link between school leadership and student achievement. |
| Ogawa and Bossert (1995) | Article | Review/ Analysis | Argued effective leaders can influence teaching and learning through face-to-face relationships and by configuring how teachers do their work. |

| Author | Research | Methods | Conclusions |
|---|----------|----------------------------------|---|
| Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) | Article | Literature Review/ Analysis | Reported findings from in-depth case studies and extensive quantitative analysis that reinforced the empirical link between school leadership and student achievement. |
| Ogawa and Bossert (1995) | Article | Review/ Analysis | Argued effective leaders can influence teaching and learning through face-to-face relationships and by configuring how teachers do their work. |
| Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2007) | Article | Literature Review/ Meta-analysis | Examined direct or indirect link among leadership and student outcomes by completing a meta-analysis of published research; Robinson et al reports five inductively-derived leadership dimensions. |
| Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) | Article | Literature Review/ Analysis | Reported behaviors of principals as instructional leaders supporting professional learning in upholding standards-based cultures, and by taking precise steps to support each teacher, as well as planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. |
| Tschanne-Moran and Tschanne-Moran (2011) | Article | Review/ Analysis | Offered bureaucratic organizations hold evaluation as a key function, while professional organizations embrace development as a key function. |
| The Center for Public Education (2007) | Report | Document | Reports effective instructional leaders consistently provide constructive feedback to new and veteran teachers by reflecting on ways to improve instruction. |
| The Wallace Foundation (2012) | Report | Document | Reports principals must increase the time allocated in classrooms, and center classroom visits on curriculum and instruction, plus, disaggregating and utilizing data to improve student achievement. |

Note. The role of principal has changed considerably over the last two decades.

In this era of standards and accountability, the principal role changed from school manager to principal leading a learning organization.

The Wallace Foundation (2012) suggests that principals must increase the time allocated in classrooms versus time spent in the office, and center classroom focus visits on curriculum and instruction, and disaggregate and utilize data to improve student achievement. Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2011) contend bureaucratic organizations hold evaluation as a key function, while professional organizations embrace development as a key function.

Louis et al. (2010) conducted the largest in-depth study in the US to date on education leadership (p. 11). Reported findings from in depth case studies and extensive quantitative analysis reinforced the empirical link between school leadership and student achievement (Louis et al., 2010, p.57). The research included an examination of 180 diverse schools and 43 districts in nine states. An estimated 8,400 teachers and 470 school leaders were surveyed; an approximate count of 580 teachers and administrators, 304 school district employees and 124 state workers were interviewed. Observations were completed in 310 classrooms (p. 11). Student standardized tests results in language and math were assembled and analyzed by researchers. According to Creemers and Reetizigt (1996), most school variables, considered separately, have only small effects on student learning. Louis' et al. (2010) research confirmed variables, considered individually, showed small effects on learning; therefore, the principal's role is to create the environment in which individual variables combine to reach the masses for valid results. In addressing the combination of variables, Robinson (2007) examined the direct or indirect link among leadership and student outcomes by completing a metaanalysis of published research.

Robinson's Leadership Dimensions (2007)

| Leadership Dimensions | Effect Size Estimate |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. "Establishing Goals and Expectations; | Average ES = 0.35 |
| 2. Strategic Resourcing; | Average ES = 0.34 |
| 3. Planning, Coordinating and Evaluating Teaching and the Curriculum; | Average ES = 0.42 |
| 4. Promoting and Participating in Teacher Learning and Development; and | Average ES = 0.84 |
| 5. Ensuring an Orderly and Supportive Environment" (Robinson, 2007, p. 8). | Average ES = 0.27 |

Adapted Robinson V. (2007) School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why (p. 8).

Figure 3. These dimensions can serve as evidence-based data to prioritize school improvement planning, professional learning team agendas, and professional development support for teachers and administrators.

This chart represents Robinson's five inductively-derived leadership dimensions (2007). Robinson's finding present an effect size of 0.84 for the dimension of promoting and participating in teacher learning and development. The next leadership dimension with the second highest effective size was leaders targeting planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, and Fung (2007) suggested having knowledge of these dimensions or set of practices was critical in that current research on teacher and professional learning has revealed groups cannot internalize images of effective practice in their context unless they comprehend the theoretical principles of why they work and under what environment.

Latham and Locke (2006), two prominent theorists, summarized which conditions, processes, and outcomes of goal setting are effective: (1) non-negotiable conditions of having capacity and commitment to meet goals that are precise and explicit; (2) change processes to construct a divergence between existing and desired outcomes, inspire continual goal related

actions, focused concentration and effort; and (3) increase performance and outcomes, and sense of value, purpose, priority and satisfaction of task. According to Robinson et al., “In schools with higher achievement or higher achievement gains, academic goal focus is both a property of leadership and a quality of school organization” (2008, p. 659). Ogawa and Bossert (1995) argued that through face-to-face relationships and by configuring how teachers do their work, effective leaders could influence teaching and learning. Goals afford a clear purpose and priority in the organization where multiple tasks seem equally significant and overwhelming (Latham & Locke, 2006). Clear goals establish concentration and effort and provide an avenue for individuals, groups, and organizations to use feedback to regulate performance (2006).

Strategic resources of staffing and educational resources (Latham & Locke, 2006), are the second of five effective leader dimensions. Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) explained effective principals recruit and retain effective teachers and advance the effectiveness of teachers assigned to instructional positions. Effective instructional leaders consistently provide constructive feedback to new and veteran teachers by reflecting on ways to improve instruction (The Center for Public Education, 2012). Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) reported behaviors of principals as instructional leaders support professional learning by upholding standards-based cultures and by taking precise steps to support each teacher. Planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum were also embedded in standards-based teaching, as evidenced by classroom walk-through observations, professional learning community sessions, and formative and summative assessment results.

Leadership Practice

Table 16

Leadership Practices

| Author | Research | Methods | Conclusion |
|-------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|---|
| Darling-Hammond et al. 2007 | Study | Final Report/ Analysis | Reported leadership capacities of supporting teaching and building a learning organization as baseline requirements. |
| Leithwood, et al. (2008) | Article | Literature Review/ Analysis | Summarized main finding from empirical studies on leadership with schools identified in early or late stages of school turnaround: build vision and set directions, understand and develop people, and redesigning the organisation. |
| The Wallace Foundation (2010) | Study | Report | The Wallace Foundation reported the most instructionally helpful leadership practices agreed on by teachers and principals were: “Focusing the school on goals and expectations for student achievement; Keeping track of teachers’ professional development needs; and Creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate” (p. 66). |

Note. Leithwood et al.’s (2008) syntheses of evidence collected on school and non-school contexts offered core leadership practices captured in results from a large and robust body of evidence about what successful leaders do.

The practices identified by Leithwood and colleagues afforded leaders a source of guidance for leading their work to impact student academic and non-academic outcomes (2008). Those practices are “building vision and setting directions; understanding and developing people; redesigning the organisation; and managing the teaching and learning programme” (p. 29).

Leithwood et al.’s (2008) article

summarized main finding from...empirical studies undertaken in the leadership field with schools identified in early or late stages of school turnaround:

- (1) Building vision and setting directions for turnaround school leaders in early crisis stabilization stage should occur with a sense of urgency. In the late turnaround stage, staff involvement is essential in drafting and/or revising the school’s direction, to secure widespread ownership to the direction;
- (2) Understanding and developing people is important in all stages of school turnaround;
- (3) Redesigning the organisation is central to the work of turnaround leaders which may include organizational re-culturing, improving communication, developing new cultural norms, and adding more distributed forms of leadership; and
- (4) Managing the teaching and learning programme are associated with all phases of successful turnaround leadership. Recruiting personnel with the dispositions and capacities are required in the early stages, and later phases call for on-going staffing and a framework for established policies and regulations. (p. 27)

Whereas there is no list that can fully predict the effectiveness of a leader in a given setting, possessing the leadership capacities to support teaching, and building a learning organization appeared to be a baseline requirement for school leadership (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007).

The Wallace Foundation’s (2010) Learning from Leadership investigation reported the most instructionally helpful leadership practices agreed on by teachers and principals were: “Focusing the school on goals and expectations for student achievement; Keeping track of teachers’ professional development needs; and Creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate” (p. 66).

Core Leadership Practices reported in Learning from Leaders

| Core Leadership Practices and Practices Deemed Helpful by Teachers and Principals | |
|---|---|
| Core Leadership Practices | Practices Identified as Instructionally Helpful by Teachers and Principals |
| 1. Setting directions 1.1 Building a shared vision 1.2 Fostering the acceptance of group goals 1.3 Creating high performance expectations 1.4 Communicating the direction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing the school on goals for student achievement • Focusing teachers' attention on goals for student achievement • Focusing teachers' attention on expectations for student achievement • Staying current • |
| 2. Developing people 2.1 Providing individualized support and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping track of teachers’ |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Consideration</p> <p>2.2 Offering intellectual stimulation</p> <p>2.3 Modeling appropriate values and Practices</p> | <p>professional development needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing general support/open door • Being easily accessible • Providing backup for teachers for student discipline and with parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing mentoring opportunities for new teachers |
| <p>3. Redesigning the organization</p> <p>3.1 Building collaborative cultures</p> <p>3.2 Modifying organizational structures to nurture collaboration</p> <p>3.3 Building productive relations with families and communities</p> <p>3.4 Connecting the school to the wider Community</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate |
| <p>4. Managing the instructional program</p> <p>4.1 Staffing the instructional program</p> <p>4.2 Monitoring progress of students, teachers and the school</p> <p>4.3 Providing instructional support</p> <p>4.4 Aligning resources</p> <p>4.5 Buffering staff from distractions to their Work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring teachers' work in the classroom • Providing instructional resources and materials |

Figure 4. Adapted from: “Learning from leadership: Investigating the links to improved student learning” (The Wallace Foundation, 2010, p. 66). These data provide a comprehensive listing of core leadership practices reported in Learning from Leaders investigative report.

Coaching in the Education Setting

Leadership support and capacity building for impacting student and organizational outcomes can occur over time during coaching conversations. Kee, Anderson, Dearing, Harris, and Shuster (2010) write,

While coaching presence is ever present in coaching conversations, there are other competencies at work in the coaching zone...including the following:

- Coaching agreements;
- Committed listening;

- Intentional language;
- Powerful questions;
- Create awareness;
- Plan for action;
- Design action; and
- Manage progress. (p. 60)

Brock (2008) stated that over the past decade coaching had been defined as a learning process. According to Sherman and Freas (2004), executives of fast-moving learner organizations are recognizing the following understated set of competencies: the interpersonal skills and communication skills essential for influencing employees, the ability for rapid change, and respect for individuals from diverse cultures. Executive coaching is a practice ahead of theory. In articles written by Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001), these authors recognized executive coaching as an established practice; however, the authors also stated the practice is still imprecise. Due to executive coaching’s lack of empirical evidence for what happens, why it happens, and what makes it effective or ineffective, it remains unknown as to whether the intervention helps executives improve their individual performances and eventually the performance of their entire organizations (Bloom et al, 2005). Executive coaching areas of relatedness are performance, learning, development, leadership, behavioral change, career success, and organizational commitment.

Table 17

Coaching in the Education Setting

| Author | Research | Methods | Conclusions |
|---------------------|----------|------------------|--|
| Baek-Kyoo (2005) | Article | Document | Defined three terms, (coach, coachee, and client): (1) Coach refers to the one who provides one-on-one coaching; (2) Coachee is the person receiving the service; (3) Client refers to the stakeholder or district leader. |
| Bloom et al. (2005) | Article | Review/ Analysis | Bloom and colleagues assert, “All coaching is centered on increasing the coachee’s ability to |

| | | | |
|--|---------|----------------------|--|
| | | | set goals effectively, to act in pursuit of those goals, and to reflect upon those actions and their impacts” (p. 26). |
| Barsade (2002) | Article | Review/ Analysis | Offered sociologists acquired knowledge from group experiences that emotions ripple outward, from the strongest focus of emotion coming by way of the most dominant person present. |
| Brock (2008) | Article | Review/ Analysis | Presented coaching is in need of development for theoretical underpinning of practice or a theoretical evidence-based approach. |
| Goldhammer, Anderson, and Krajewski (1993) | Article | Review | Reported coaching models are significantly influenced by counseling, psychotherapy, and clinical supervision. |
| Goleman, Anderson, and Krajewski (2006) | Article | Literature Review | Reported the field of social neuroscience presents a personable leadership style shows promise. |
| Hallinger (2003) | Article | Literature Review | Reported attention shifted to leadership models of educational reform such as empowerment, shared leadership, and organizational learning. |
| Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) | Article | Review/ Analysis | Offered executive coaching is now recognized as an established practice, yet is imprecise. |
| Reiss (2007) | Book | Document | Reiss explains the rationale and need for coaches in the education setting. With greater demands for increased academic achievement, school coaches need embedded professional whereby they are better equipped to collaborate, plan and model teaching strategies for enhancing instructional delivery. |
| Reiss (2004) | Book | Document | Suggests with increased demands, decreasing budgets and fewer people entering leadership roles, an enormous need exist for providing improved support to advance success of current and new leaders. |
| Sherman and Freas (2004) | Article | Review/ Analysis | Reports executives are recognizing minimized competencies such as interpersonal skills and |

| | | | |
|--|---------|-----------------------------|--|
| | | | communication skills essential for influencing employees, adapting to rapid change, and respecting individuals from diverse cultures. |
| Speck and Knipe (2001) | Article | Document | Offered professional development in school coaching and adult learning. |
| Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2011) | Article | Literature Review/ Analysis | Suggests improving skill performance of teachers and school leaders, organizations are increasingly seeking professional development strategies such as coaching and other relationship based support. |
| Vygotsky (1978) | Book | Document | Presented the concept that thinking first occurs on the social plan prior to being internalized by the person as a mental or intuitive process. |

Note. Coaching models are significantly influenced by counseling, psychotherapy, and clinical supervision (Goldhammer et al., 1993).

Coaching also has evidence of Vygotsky’s (1978) ideas on the concept that thinking first occurs on the social plan prior to being internalized by the person as a mental or intuitive process.

Defining three terms, (coach, coachee, and client) will benefit the reader and offer clarity:

“coach” refers to the one who provides one-on-one coaching; “coachee” is the person receiving the service; and “client” refers to the stakeholder or district leader (Baek-Kyoo, 2005).

Adult Learning and Coaching

| <i>Who</i> | <i>Coaching Support</i> | <i>Adult Learning</i> |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| The Coach and Coachee | Constructs a relationship | Relationship based on trust and permission |
| The Coach and Coachee | Offers a different observer | Supports coachee by observing in the context of schooling |
| The Coach and Coachee | Valuable learning opportunities generated from problems and needs | Supports coachee by awareness of learning opportunities in problems and needs |
| The Coach and Coachee | Equipped to apply various coaching skills; Utilizes a variety of context specific coaching strategies | Coachee’s needs are met through context specific coaching |
| The Coach and Coachee | Fully present and a committed listener for the coachee | Coachee encounters a fully present committed coach |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The Coach and Coachee | Emotional support to coachee | Coachee encounters emotional support |
| The Coach and Coachee | Agreement is established for attaining organizational goals | Coachee's learning supported for goal attainment |
| The Coach and Coachee | Ethical behaviors exhibited in coaching relationships | Coachee's learning supported in an ethical manner |
| Adapted Source: Speck, M. and Knipe, C. (2001) <i>Why can't we get it right? Professional development in our schools.</i> | | |

Figure 5. This figure presents adult learning and coaching.

Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2011) offered that to improve the skill performance of teachers and school leaders, organizations are increasingly seeking professional development strategies such as coaching and other relationship based support.

According to Reiss (2004), a well-trained coach is accomplished in the change process, supporting a course of action while individuals create their desired changes for themselves and the organization. Hallinger (2003) wrote that advancement in leadership models have been explained with terms such as empowerment, distributed leadership, and systems learning. Leadership coaching has been referred to as a supportive model for systems learning with district administrators and principals.

Goleman (2006) argued that the innovative field of social neuroscience presents why a personable leadership style shows promise. Ashcroft and Kirk (2001) stated, emotions can either enhance or inhibit the brain's capability to learn based on the existence of neural wiring connecting the thinking and emotional centers of the brain. Goleman (2006) asserted, as students, teachers, and school leaders take steps to boost their emotional self-awareness and social intelligence, a dominant climate for learning will occur. The leader's most customary style of interacting can either rejuvenate or collapse people in their organization (Goleman, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky (1974), a prominent theorist of social interaction, explained, reaching an individual within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is critically important. ZPD is the area close to current practice and knowledge, and this is the place where an individual is most likely to learn (1974). According to Glick, “the first major presentation of Vygotsky’s thinking in English was the 1962 publication of *Thought and Language*, translated by Eugenia Hanfmann and Gertrude Vakar, and introduced by Jerome Bruner” (2004, p. 349). In 1978, *Mind in Society* was published. This manuscript was “carefully composed from many separate writings...edited by Cole, Scribner, John-Steiner, and Souberman” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 349).

“The zone of proximal development...is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Three diverse theoretical positions were reviewed by Vygotsky: (a) “processes of child development are independent of learning” (p. 79), (b) “learning is development” (p. 80), and (c) the final position, which “attempts to overcome the extremes of the other two by simply combining them” (p. 81). Vygotsky explained the ZPD as the relationship between learning and development. This viewpoint offers that learning precedes development, and it is dependent on social interaction. Learning stimulates various internal developmental processes, which only begin operating when the child interacts with those in his environment and cooperates with his peers. After the processes become internalized, they become part of the child’s independent developmental achievement (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90).

Hargrove (2000) suggested that the primary responsibility of a coach is to broaden the capacity of the individual’s and/or group’s capacity to achieve expected outcomes and to

facilitate development. The theoretical underpinnings for this study were based on Vygotsky's theory of social interaction, ZPD, and the utilization of coaching for developing leadership capacity.

Significance

Seashore Louis et al. (2010) suggested that there is no documented evidence to support that achieving schools can accomplish this status without a successful leader. Coaching offers an applied skill used to construct a functional path to innovative performance, enhanced skills, and transformation leadership. Reiss (2004) stated that during the forward-thinking and reframing process for individuals, coaches will acknowledge, question, empower, clarify, focus, validate, champion, and prioritize to skillfully support the leader for goal attainment. Since coaching is a relatively new and rapidly growing profession, there is the need to develop the theoretical underpinning of practice or a theoretical evidence-based approach (Brock, 2008). This study sought to identify leaders' perceptions of coaching for achieving desired outcomes.

Summary

Fullan (2007) asserted that past expectations of the school leader were to ensure efficient operations of school and be timely in responding to students, parents, and community partners. The school leader today is challenged to improve student test results to reach the exemplary and achieving school status under NCLB. Pepper (2010) stated that to meet the demands of educational accountability, transformational and transactional leadership styles, working within a balanced approach is promising for leaders in K-12 schools.

Badawi (2009) spoke to the unique needs in urban schools. He suggested mobilizing efforts to influence and redesign urban school cultures; attaining renewed belief within staff, students and the community; and promoting the belief that all students can learn and achieve at

proficient and advance levels are the ever-present calls (2009). These multifaceted settings of schools and their impact on leaders should compel educators to employ research-based leadership practices. Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential (International Coach Federation, 2009, cited in Kee et al., 2010). This case study investigated principals' perception of the value of coaching in building leadership capacity in urban schools. Chapter Three will address the methods employed, data collection, and analysis of data.

Chapter Three:

Research Design

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to explore principals' perceptions of one-on-one coaching and the value of coaching in building leadership capacity in urban schools. The philosophical underpinning for this study was based on the constructivist paradigm. Constructivist researchers, according to Creswell (2007), "focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants" (p. 21). The propositions guiding the purpose, focus, data collection/analysis, scope of the study, and framework (Stake, 1995) were derived from the literature review with specific attention to effective leadership dimensions and practices.

This chapter describes the qualitative research methods used to complete the case study. Miles and Huberman (1994) defined the case study as some sort of phenomenon occurring in a bonded context as a researcher's unit of analysis. Specifically, this study examined the professional practice of three urban school principals in the school context as a result of them having been coached by an executive leader coach. This chapter presents background and justification for selecting the qualitative design used for the study. The procedures employed for data analysis and actions taken to ensure reliability of results were presented in this chapter. A process for instituting and evaluating the trustworthiness of the study based on standards for conducting research was included in this section to provide the readers a framework to critique the research quality. Creswell (1998) stated:

Qualitative researchers should be those who: (1) commit to extensive time in the field; (2) engage in the complex, time-consuming process of data analysis—the ambitious task of sorting through large amounts of data and reducing them to a few themes and categories; (3) write long passages, because the evidence must substantiate

claims and the writer needs to show multiple perspectives; and (4) participate in a form of social and human science research that does not have firm guidelines or specific procedures and is evolving and changing constantly. (pp. 16-17)

Focus of the Study

The focus of this qualitative study sought to explore the perceptions of three principals on the value of coaching for building leadership capacity through improved leader practices. In addition, the study collected data on this urban district's coaching intervention to facilitate robust principals' leadership development in an effort to provide all students a high quality education. The goal is for students to be college- and career-ready upon completing K-12 schooling.

The researcher investigated the principals' perceptions of the coaching intervention through an in-depth case analysis including standardized open-ended interviews, observations, and the collection of documents. Patton (2002) identified four types of interviews: informal conversational interview, interview guide approach, standardized open-ended interview, and closed, fixed-response interview. The *informal conversational interview* takes place during observations when the researcher does not know what has just happened; consequently, he or she asks questions about what happened. This type of interview helps one to clarify something that was not understood. For example, one could ask, "explain why you did what you did?" The *interview guide approach* consists of a list of topics. An interview guide is a good tool for staying on track during an interview. The third type of interview, the *standardized open-ended interview*, is a carefully-worded interview. Standardized open-ended interviews allow the respondents freedom to say what they want to say and allow the researcher to compare the responses to similar questions among different interviewees. Questions are all worded in the same way and asked in the same order, which helps establish similar categories for data analysis. Finally, the *closed fixed-response interview* helps establish similar categories for data analysis.

This district's leadership development training is entitled Leadership Coaching for High Performance. In efforts to support and build capacity of district leaders, cadres of selected administrators receive training to become a District Leader Coach.

According to Kee et al. (2010),

the new mindset concerning how people change...is learning a set of essential skills for the coach leader to follow:

- Creates the environment and scaffolding for thinking in new ways;
- Creates environments where deep thinking is sought and valued;
- Facilitates processes of dialogue for deep thinking and expanding one's insights and experience from different points of view;
- Presumes the best in thinking and doing in others;
- Amplifies the strengths and success in others;
- Communicates clarity of visions and goals and supports the success of all who take up the call;
- Holds up the standards and expectations of the profession to guide solutions and decisions;
- Respects others values, models, and assumptions as effects of experience and knowledge;
- Believes in the best self that is with each of us;
- Uses language of appreciation, respect, possibility, and clear expectations and outcomes. (p. 21)

The district's goal for implementing this training is to establish a cadre of leaders who can serve as executive coaches for principals to support capacity building and effective leadership practices. Interested participants must submit an application and essay describing their professional experiences, education, and background that would qualify them as a candidate for this training. The training consists of a three year program: (1) Levels 1, 2, and 3 require 24 hours of training each year, across four days with six hours per day; (2) the application process is required for each level of training; and (3) the content for the training is correlated to the International Coaching Federation competencies.

After successfully completing the three tiers of training, leader coaches can be assigned to principals in the district requesting a leader coach to support capacity building efforts to meet

school reform goals. In studying this urban district's leadership coaching approach, other schools and districts can use these findings as it relates to policy revisions, strategic plans, and funding decisions made in the area of leadership development.

Research Question

What are principals' perceptions of coaching engagements in supporting and sustaining leadership practices?

Subquestion

- (1) What was the impact of leader practices on promoting professional teacher practices?
- (2) What factors influence principals' decisions to participate in leadership coaching?

Research Design and Timeline

According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), "qualitative research is a complex field of inquiry that draws on many diverse assumptions but embraces a few common characteristics and perspectives" (p. 12). The approach is largely inductive. The research design for this study covered collection of data from two critical sources: (1) the literature review; and (2) interviews with principals and executive coach leaders using an explicit interview protocol (See Appendix). By design, this study will use data gathered from the review of literature in order to identify leadership dimensions (Robinson, 2007), necessary to lead a learning organization, as well as identified practices (Bottoms & Fry, 2009) for guiding leadership in urban schools. The leadership dimensions identified by Robinson (2007) examined the direct or indirect link among leadership and student outcomes by completing a meta-analysis of published research. The five inductively-derived leadership dimensions were: "(1) establishing goals and expectations; (2) strategic resourcing; (3) planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; (4) promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; and (5) ensuring an orderly

and supportive environment” (p. 8). Bottoms and Fry (2009) offered, significant gains in student achievement can occur as principals work collectively with teachers to: (a) create a conducive learning environment; (b) complete fully aligned standards-based curriculum documents; (c) organize learning materials to support instructional delivery and enhance student learning; and (d) set high expectations for employment of personnel, professional growth opportunities; and focus on teaching and learning (2009).

To seek out the principals’ perceptions of coaching engagements in supporting and sustaining leadership practices the following questions were asked:

1. Explain the goals of leadership coaching.
2. Please tell me what the expectations are for those engaged in leadership coaching.
3. Tell me about what resources are available for leadership coaching.
4. Describe how leadership coaching is used in planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum.
5. Discuss how leadership coaching is used to promote teaching and development.
6. How do you ensure an orderly and supportive environment?

Using identified practices (Bottoms & Fry, 2009) for guiding leadership in urban schools, the following interview questions were developed:

1. Discuss how leadership coaching is used in creating a conducive learning environment.
2. How would you ensure a complete and fully aligned standards-based curriculum document?
3. Explain how leadership coaching goals would influence organizing learning materials to support instructional delivery and enhance student learning.

4. Describe how leadership coaching is used in setting high expectations for employment of personnel, professional growth opportunities and a focus on teaching and learning.

The University of Arkansas’ Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted requesting permission to conduct the study. The IRB approved the study in early September (IRB Protocol # 06-11-170.09-08-2013) (See Appendix). Collection of the documents occurred with the IRB’s approval until completion of the study.

To make certain the study contained prolonged engagement and persistent observation, I implemented the following design and timeline. In July 2013, the researcher began a new research journey in an urban district in central Arkansas. The researcher is employed as a coordinator in the district of three principals who had received the executive coaching support. The researcher is a licensed Arkansas administrator with more than 20 years of experience in various leadership capacities. The researcher has successfully completed the District’s Leadership Coaching for High Performance training for Level I and Level II. For applicants to fully complete the executive coaching training and be eligible to serve as an Executive Leadership Coach for principals in the District, the Level I, II, and III training sessions must be completed.

Table 18

Case Study Phases

| Phase | Date | Activities |
|-----------|-----------------------|--|
| Phase I | August 2013 | Meeting with Superintendent to seek approval to conduct study; Initial interviews with principals using standardized open-ended questions; Document collection |
| Phase II | Sept. - Nov. 2013 | Standardized open-ended interview questions with principals and assigned executive coach leaders; Observing principals in the school context for leadership at work; Document collection |
| Phase III | Dec. - Feb. 2013/2014 | Principal observations in the school context of leadership at work; Document collection and data analysis |

Note. Review of related literature was a continuous cycle throughout this study.

Phase I of the study included a meeting with the superintendent seeking approval to conduct the study. The superintendent's consent letter granting approval for the researcher to conduct the study is located in the Appendix. This phase also consisted of initial introductions and interviews with each participant using open-ended questions, as the researcher intently worked to establish a professional, confidential, and trusting environment. During this time, the researcher realized the dissertation topic would continue to emerge as part of the investigative journey. Therefore, journal notes were collected to reduce biases and capture pertinent environmental and reflective notes. Observations of principals in the context of school life were completed throughout the study. Related documents were also collected to include school improvement plans, assessment data, poverty data, and student enrollment. Phase II consisted of principal interviews, executive coach leader interviews, and principal observations. The researcher continued collecting scholastic audit data, classroom walk through data, and professional learning community agendas and correlated documents. Table 18 provides a timeline of the phases, interviews and activities used to establish the influence affecting the perceptions of principals on the value of coaching on building leadership capacity.

The primary phases of this qualitative case study were: (a) standardized open-ended individual interviews with three urban principals, (b) principal observations of leadership at work in the context of school, (c) standardized open-ended interviews with the executive leader coach for each principal, and (d) document collection to confirm the school's success and to inform interview and observation data.

The researcher was engaged with the schools throughout the three phases of data collection. The researcher also employed the grounded theory model in a case study approach to

generate theories aided by the interpretive inquiry. Martin and Turner (1986) stated grounded theory “is an inductive, theory discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data” (p. 141). Strauss and Corbin (1990) offered theories developed or generated during the research process are referred to as grounded theory. Employing the grounded theory method to research the intervention of leadership coaching was beneficial in:

- (a) social issues accommodation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), (b) complex phenomena interpretation with capacity methods (Charmaz, 2003), (c) its appropriateness for socially constructed experiences (Charmaz, 2003), (d) and it is imperative for emergence (Glaser, 1978).

Site and Sample Selection

The site selected for this case study was an urban district in central Arkansas. The district’s strategic plan included goals for 85 – 90% of all students scoring at the proficiency level at minimum on state tests in math and reading. Student instruction expenses represent 70.5% of the district’s budget.

Summary of Revenue and Expenses 2011-12

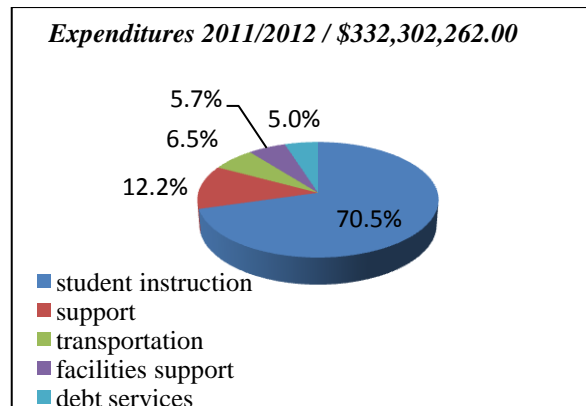
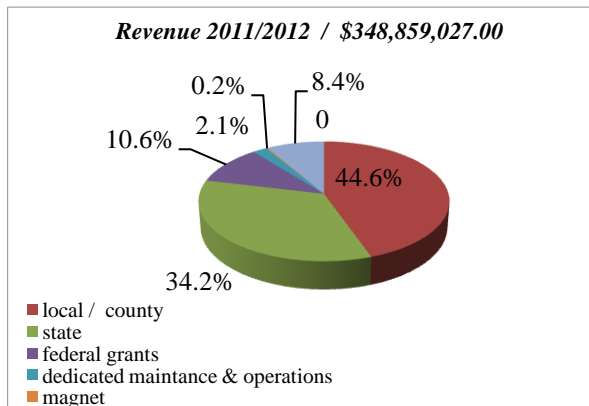


Figure 6. The revenue received by the district includes state, local, county, federal grants, dedicated maintenance and operations, magnet and other fund sources. The expense categories were student instruction, support, transportation, facilities support and debt series.

The city in which the district resides is a metropolitan area with a large economic base. The district is financially sound with committed parents, patrons and community partners who exhibited their confidence by passing a recent bond issue.

The district’s five year strategic plan endorsed the motto “Creating Excellence for Tomorrow.” The district student enrollment exceeds 25,000 pupils. The district has 30 elementary schools (of which six are magnet schools), 7 middle schools (of which 4 are magnet schools), 5 high schools (of which 3 serve as magnet schools), 4 early childhood centers and 5 non-traditional sites.

Enrollment by Ethnicity and Grade Level

| Mid-south Urban District’s Student enrollment data by Ethnicity - 2011/2012 | |
|---|--------|
| Total Enrollment | 25,594 |
| Black | 67% |
| White | 20% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 10% |
| Asian | 1% |
| Native American/Pacific Islander | 1% |
| 2 or more races | 1% |
| Mid-south Urban District’s Student enrollment data by grade-span / 2011-2012 | |
| Elementary | 13,518 |
| Middle | 5,171 |
| High | 6,905 |

Figure 7. The data provides district-wide and grade-span enrollment from 2011-12.

This urban district is implementing a leadership-coaching model to support K-12 principals leading learning organizations. The sampling method was “purposeful sampling” (Patton, 1990, p. 169). The logic and strength of purposeful sampling in qualitative research rest in selecting cases abounding in data for comprehensive investigation (Heppner & Heppner,

2004). Subsequently, the researcher followed with theoretical sampling where additional sampling was guided by the analysis and emerging theory. The selection process included two criteria:

- (1) Participants selected were employed as a full-time contracted principal in the district,
- and (2) the principals received coaching from a district assigned executive coach for one or more years.

Demographic Data by School

| Participants | A | B | C |
|------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| School | Elementary | Elementary | Middle |
| Race | Black | Black | Black |
| Gender | Female | Male | Female |
| | | | |
| School Grade Span | K-5 | K-5 | 6 th -8 th |
| Total Enrollment | 336 | 422 | 791 |
| Black | 309 | 293 | 663 |
| White | 14 | 29 | 62 |
| Hispanic | 10 | 85 | 46 |
| Asian | 0 | 3 | 7 |
| Other | 1 | 391.5 | 13 |
| Free and Reduced Lunch | 97.8% | 91.5% | 81.4% |

Figure 8. The data provided information on case study participants and a demographic snapshot of each school site. Demographics and characteristics of participants in the study were included for dependability in replication purposes. The demographics included years of experience as principal, ethnicity, gender, grade span of school, and years of service as principal in the current school.

In this case study, I included three urban principals “to provide ample opportunity to identify themes of the case as well as conduct cross-case theme analysis” (Creswell, 2007, p. 128). The participants’ experience as a building principal ranged from eighteen to thirty-three years of administrative experience.

Coaching Data by Participants

| Name | Number of years coached | Sessions completed | Position | Time-span of the coaching intervention |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------|--|
| Participant A Elementary School One | 2009-10 2010-11 | 6.25 6.25 | Principal | 1 school year 1 school year |
| Participant B Elementary School Two | 2011-12 2012-13 | 6.25 9.75 | Principal | 1 school year 1 school year |
| Participant C Middle School Three | 2011-12 2012-13 | 16 14 | Principal | 1 school year 1 school year |

Figure 9. This study included three principal participants who were assigned a district leader coach for a minimum of one school year as a support in building leadership capacities to impact student outcomes.

The three principals in this study were required by the district to participate in the executive coaching program due to the school improvement designations. One of the three principals requested that the executive coach to remain two consecutive years. Figure 3.4 represents data on the participants, the number of years having an assigned coach, the number of coaching sessions and the length of time each principal received support from an executive leadership coach.

This study infused constant, comparative analysis of data as a process to continually link data to the literature review. The findings from this investigation on leadership coaching for principals could drive policy and funding decisions in the area of professional development support for urban principals. This urban district lifted data driven decision making as an essential component to school reform turn-around models and support for leadership development.

Role Management

The most widespread tools used to collect data in qualitative research are the interview and participant observation. The researcher's role in this case study was to ensure that participants responses would be kept confidential and information would be stored properly, kept under lock and key. Participants were informed of their rights to give consent regarding participation in the study, the purpose of the study, details on what the study was investigating, and implications for participants to contribute to research. The researcher also informed the participant that they could remove themselves for the study at any time. The researcher's investigative characteristics included being adaptive and responsive to circumstantial change, holistic viewing, professional immediacy, ability to clarify, sensitivity, and ability to summarize and clarify (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

I used a set of interpretative practices to make sense of cultural context. Morse (1991) stated, "when obtaining a purposeful (or theoretical) sample, the researcher selects a participant according to the needs of the study" (p. 129). Morse provided additional description on this type of sampling since the researcher originally chose to "interview informants with a broad general knowledge of the topic or those who have undergone the experience and whose experience is considered typical" (p. 129). As the study proceeds, the description expands with additional information, and participants are deliberately sought due to their particular knowledge. To conclude, "informants with atypical experiences are sought so that the entire range of experiences and the breadth of the concept or phenomena may be understood" (Morse, p. 129).

I created an environment where participants felt trusted connections with the interviewer, which fostered open, honest, and rich conversations on the phenomenon being studied. Polit and Beck (2006) offered the process consent tool, which involved the interviewer repeatedly

negotiating with the participant to ascertain if they were comfortable continuing the interview or if they would prefer to terminate participation. With regard to ethical issues that may arise throughout the study, it is the researcher's decision to discuss it when it occurs or generally occurs to me.

According to Heppner and Heppner (2004), qualitative researchers are devoted to understanding details of identified cases and embedding their research findings in a constantly changing world. Creswell (2007) stated the progression of designing a qualitative case study starts not with methods but with broad assumptions essential to qualitative inquiry, a world view consistent with it, and a theoretical lens, in many cases, for shaping the study. Additionally, the researcher identified a topic or substantive area of investigation, as well as an issue presented in reviewed literature that needed to be studied (Creswell, 2007). In this case study, the researcher identified the following topic: the value of coaching in building leadership capacities of principals in urban schools.

Managing and Recording Data

Creswell (2007) asserted, qualitative data were examined inductively operating from particulars to more general perspectives, and these perspectives are referred to as themes, dimensions, codes, or categories. "Qualitative research begins through:

- assumptions;
- a worldview;
- possible use of theoretical lens;
- study a research problem; and
- inquiry of meaning with individuals or groups ascribing to a human or social problem" (2007, p. 37).

Qualitative researchers utilize an emerging approach to inquiry to study the problem:

- “collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to people and the place under study; and
- data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes” (Creswell, 2007, p. 37).

Data analysis in qualitative research generally consists of the preparation and organization for analysis of data, and thereafter data reduction into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes. As a final point, data is represented in figures, tables, or discussions (p. 37).

The researcher’s design for the study centered on collected data from five critical sources: (1) review of the literature, (2) interviews with principals, (3) document collection, (4) observation, and (5) research journal. Principals with one or more years of experience supported by an assigned executive coach were valuable sources of insight as to the phenomenon being investigated. The participants received and signed the informed consent document to acknowledge their volunteer participation and confidentiality requirements (See Appendix). Additionally, the researcher utilized data collected from the literature review to identify effective leadership skills and essential practices necessary to lead an urban school.

Trustworthiness

Rossmann and Rallis (2003) suggested, “All research...should respond to legitimate questions that readers pose. Does the study conform to standards of acceptable and competent practice? Is the study credible? Does it ring true? Is it systematic and rigorous? Is the study potentially useful” (p. 65)? In essence, an unethical study lacks trustworthiness.

According to Lincoln and Guba, it is critical that the researcher be credible. These authors argued, credibility will aid in establishing trustworthiness between the researcher and the

participant (p. 213). I made the following provisions to promote confidence in the accuracy of recording the phenomena under investigation through: (a) triangulation with various methods, such as, observations, individual interviews, and collection of archived documents; (b) frequent debriefing sessions between the researcher and the project director; and (c) my reflective commentary through journal writing on initial impressions of data collection sessions, emerging patterns from data, and themes generated.

Prolonged Engagement

Creswell (2007) stated that through prolonged engagement “in the field, the researcher makes decisions about what is salient to the study, relevant to the purpose of the study, and of interest to the focus” (p. 207). Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated that being present for a long period of time in the setting and spending a substantial amount of time with participants also helps ensure that you have more than a snapshot view of the phenomenon. The researcher documented long periods of time in the context of school life, conducting interviews and observations as evidenced by data collection and journal notes.

Persistent Engagement

Several strategies for conducting credible analyses are directly linked to interview practices. Persistent engagement is complementary to prolonged engagement. Persistent engagement provides scope, whereas, prolonged engagement offers depth. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) “while prolonged engagement involves being aware of the ‘multiple influences and mutual shapers and contextual factors’, persistent engagement involves focusing on the ‘things that count’ in terms of the research questions being asked” (p. 304). I was mindful throughout the investigative journey to link responses to questions back to the literature review, and to use the literature review to funnel responses to questions.

Triangulation

Creswell (2007) stated that in triangulation, researchers use multiple and varied sources, methods, and theories to provide supporting evidence (p. 208). In general, this process involves the researcher corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective. Rossman & Rallis argued, triangulation... “helps ensure that you have not studied only a fraction of the complexity that you seek to understand” (2003, p. 69). Knafl and Breitmayer (1989) stated, the compilation and assessment of data augment the data quality in relationship to the principles of idea convergence and the confirmation of findings. Patton (2002) described triangulation or comparison. Much as the surveyor compares different readings to identify the boundaries of a property, the qualitative researcher uses triangulation or different data types to understand the components of and boundaries of a study. Four kinds of triangulation are possible: methodical triangulation, data triangulation, researcher triangulation, and theoretical triangulation. In this study, the qualitative researcher’s data triangulation included collection of observational data, interview data, and documents. Observation and interview phases of data collection were described above. The documents collected were Classroom Walkthrough Reports, a Self Study School Report, Scholastic Audit Summary Report, Coaching For Results Global Coaching Frame, Coaching Circle Reference Cards, School Leadership Indicators form, and the district’s final proposal on Executive Coaching Program for School Leaders. The researcher chose not to triangulate by method and theoretical because they were either not useful with this particular case study or were not appropriate to use in a case-study dissertation format.

Peer Debriefing

Peer review or debriefing provides an external check of the research process (Ely et al., 1991). Another category also identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985) was peer debriefing which is as the name suggests, subjecting data to the scrutiny of one's peers. In the case of this study, peer debriefing took place with a few other graduate students. Sharing research with people who understand research is an important way to ensure trustworthiness. Submitting my data and interpretation of data to the scrutiny of other researchers helped to get others opinions and double-checked my interpretation. This was a type of formative evaluation conducted with other graduate student researchers. Committee members will provide summative judgments.

Member Checks

In member checking, the researcher solicits participants' views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations (Ely et al., 1991). This technique is considered by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to be "the most critical technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). These researchers describe member checks as a continuous process of data analysis for the purpose of interpretation and verification of participant results from the entire study (p. 314). This approach is common to most qualitative studies and involves taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account. According to Stake (1995), it is imperative for participants to be actively involved in the case study.

Audit Trail

Accountability was achieved through ongoing consultations with participants and colleagues and by maintaining an audit trail that outlines the research process and the evolution of codes, categories, and theory (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The audit trail consisted of sequential narrative entries based on research activities and evolution of the theoretical model.

As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), the researcher:

- (1) In analyzing the interview, using techniques such as the unit looks right, as well as, the unit feels right;
- (2) These units are placed on a colored card representing each participant;
- (3) The units were identified by codes to designate which participant (P1, P2, P3), which interview (A1, B1, or C1), and which page from the interview form was the question drawn (IF1, IF2).

The coding process was helpful with the expansion of the audit trail. The units were compared to others in the same category and this process of constant comparison led on to theories about the characteristics of each grouping. The researcher followed this process with: (a) interviews from each participant and continual coding and categorization led to common classification; and (b) existing categories were refined and redefined as new information was added. These processes led to the formation of the explanatory theory. The categories were organized into themes and the themes were used to formulate the grounded theory for the study. At this point, data collections were concluded and the final stage of writing theory began (Schaefer, 1997).

Evidentiary Inadequacies

The researcher recognized that evidentiary inadequacies can exist. Erickson (1986) asserted that “a central concern for rigor in qualitative research is evidentiary adequacy—that is, sufficient time in the field and extensiveness of the body of evidence used as data” (cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 289). I addressed these inadequacies by using the following: the researcher conducted observations, recorded interviews, and collected documents to capture what a participant’s thought (interviews) versus what a person did (observation) and even what they

intended (document collection). Peer debriefing was utilized to curb biases regarding interpretation of data. Member-check interviews were completed at the end of the study so that participants from this urban district could comment on interpretations of the data collected. Finally, persistent engagement was used to prevent, as much as possible, discounting of data that did not seem to fit my interpretative schema.

Data Analysis

The data in Chapter Four were analyzed and emerging themes were recorded. There were three levels of coding: open, axial, and selective. Open coding was the process through which “concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101). Open coding was used in this case study to develop categories that defined the central concept of what seemed important. Open coding helped systematically develop ideas that made sense of all the data. Open coding was the start of my theory development. Charmaz (2006) defined open coding as a “means for categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data. Codes show how data were selected, separated and sorted to begin an analytic accounting” (p. 43).

Axial coding is the “process of relating categories to their subcategories along the line of their properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123). Axial coding helps to link open codes. Axial coding’s subcategories help to answer questions about what occurred during the research by helping to answer the questions: when, where, why, who, and how. In the process of axial coding, relationships are uncovered that helped to answer the main research question and subquestions (p. 123). Charmaz (2006) said “axial coding relates categories to

subcategories, specifies the properties and dimensions of a category, and reassembles the data you have fractured during initial coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis” (p. 60).

Selective coding is the “process of integrating and redefining the theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143). In the process of selective coding, “categories are organized around a central explanatory concept” (p. 161). The explanation of the selective codes will be further developed in Chapter Five.

Harry F. Wolcott (2001) explained “ethnography is the study of culture, culture change and adaptation, political economy, social structure, and worldview” (p. 40). Additionally, Wolcott stated “ethnographic intent is purpose rather than method” (p. 40). To look at a place in an ethnographic way is to “go to have a look around” (p. 40). Wolcott further explained “performance texts have narrators, drama and action” (p. 161).

Summary

Emerging themes from case studies are the basis of influential studies. This case study was more than merely conducting research on a phenomenon. It permitted the researcher to answer how and why questions. The case study also allowed the researcher to collect data from a combination of sources to illuminate the case.

Chapter Four:

Analysis of Data and Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to explore principals' perceptions of one-on-one coaching and the impact of coaching on building leadership capacity for school effectiveness and improved student achievement. This qualitative study also sought to understand how coaching support structures enabled and sustained leadership practices. The goal for this research study was to report effective leadership support provided to principals in an urban school district, which in turn would make a contribution to the field of education. The findings also provide data on support or lack of support to building principals.

Audience

The key audience for this case study was principals, professional development directors, school district administrators, superintendents, state educational leadership programs, and coaching associations. The researcher conducted this case study to understand the tenets of coaching support structures for enabling and sustaining leadership practices of urban principals. The use of executive coaches to help principals achieve their goals could be beneficial. Everyone needs support, especially principals with huge school reform goals.

Transcribed Interviews

The researcher recorded and transcribed the interviews. The researcher's journal was used to capture data, perceived emotions, thoughts and insights, places, and activities. The journal was also used to capture critical moments with details while in the school setting. Descriptions of participants, our conversations, events, and activities were included in the journal. Notes were used to speculate on the researcher's learning and determine options for

moving forward in collection of concurrent data and analyses. The journal established an audit trail to verify the rigor of fieldwork and confirm data collected (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

During the informal interviews, I reminded each participant that the interview was informal in the sense of having a relaxed setting for responding to questions; however, the interview was formal from the aspect that each participant responded to standardized questions approved for the case study. Each participant in this case study received an informed consent document before interviews were conducted. All participants read, signed and dated the document, which was then collected by the researcher.

Throughout the recorded interviews, participants often responded in casual conversational language when answering questions. As a result, during the transcribing of interviews, the researcher was very conscious of confidentiality commitments and non-identification agreements made with research participants, schools, and the district. In addition, the researchers used brackets [] to protect the identity of the participants, executive coaches, schools, and school districts. The parenthesis () symbol was used and generic wording was substituted for language clarification or insertion of words to make clearer the participant's perspective. The researcher was mindful at all times not to change the message presented by participants.

Audit Trail Notation

The audit trail consisted of narrative entries based on research activities. Table 4.1 presents audit trail notations used with interviews; and Table 4.2 presents audit trail notations used for identifying documents and information collected and referenced. The letters BP represent building principal, the letters EC represent executive coach, and the letters DOC

represent document. The numbers following the capital letters represent each participant in the study.

Table 19

Audit Trail Notations: Interviews

| Notation | Participant |
|----------|--------------------|
| BP1 | Building Principal |
| BP2 | Building Principal |
| BP3 | Building Principal |
| EC1 | Executive Coach |
| EC2 | Executive Coach |
| EC3 | Executive Coach |

Table 20

Audit Trail Notations: Documents

| Notation | Type of document |
|----------|--|
| DOC/1 | Augmented Criterion Referenced Achievement by Grade and Subgroup |
| DOC/2 | Administrative Council Monthly Meeting Agenda |
| DOC/3 | Classroom Walkthrough Report |
| DOC/4 | Self Study Report |
| DOC/5 | Scholastic Audit Summary Report |
| DOC/6 | Coaching For Results Global Coaching Frame |
| DOC/7 | Coaching Circles Reference Cards |
| DOC/8 | School Leadership Indicators District Form |
| DOC/9 | Executive Coaching Program for School Leaders – Final Proposal |

The researcher analyzed the interviews as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985): (a) the interviews were analyzed using techniques to identify axial codes and sample open codes; (b) color-coded index cards represented each participant; and (c) the building principals were identified by codes to designate the participant (BP1, BP2, and BP3), as well as, the executive coach participants (EC1, EC2, and EC3). Each participant is identified by letters, a number, and a slash followed by the corresponding page number to the transcribed quote; building principal (BP1/#, BP2/#, and BP3/#), as well as, the executive coach participants (EC1/#, EC2/#, and EC3/#).

Data Analysis

The data in Chapter Four were analyzed through the grounded theory process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researcher utilized three levels of coding: open, axial, and selective. The open coding process was used to recognize concepts and their properties during data analysis (1998). Open coding helped systematically develop ideas that made sense of data, as well as started the researcher's theory development. Axial coding helped to link open codes into themes and was followed by selective coding, which is referred to as the "process of integrating and redefining the theory" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143).

Findings and Major Themes

This qualitative study centered on perceptions of building principals and executive coach leaders in a mid-south urban district on the value of coaching for building leadership capacity. The findings are separated into two sections: building principals and executive coaches. The researcher triangulated data through interviews, observation, and collection of documents, which generated major themes in two categories.

Open coding included reading and re-reading the data several times to form tentative groups of data to organize and label what the researcher was seeing. Words were charted using color coded index cards, large posters, and spreadsheets created in Microsoft Excel.

Axial coding presented the process of linking relationships in open coding. The subcategories of axial coding helped to answer questions on what occurred during the research by answering the questions when, where, why, who and how. The following axial codes or major themes from building principals were: (a) Supportive Environment, (b) Relationship Built on Trust, (c) Confidential Conversations, (d) Leadership Support, and (e) Significance of Reflection.

Presentation of Axial Codes

Axial Codes and Sample of Open Codes of Building Principals

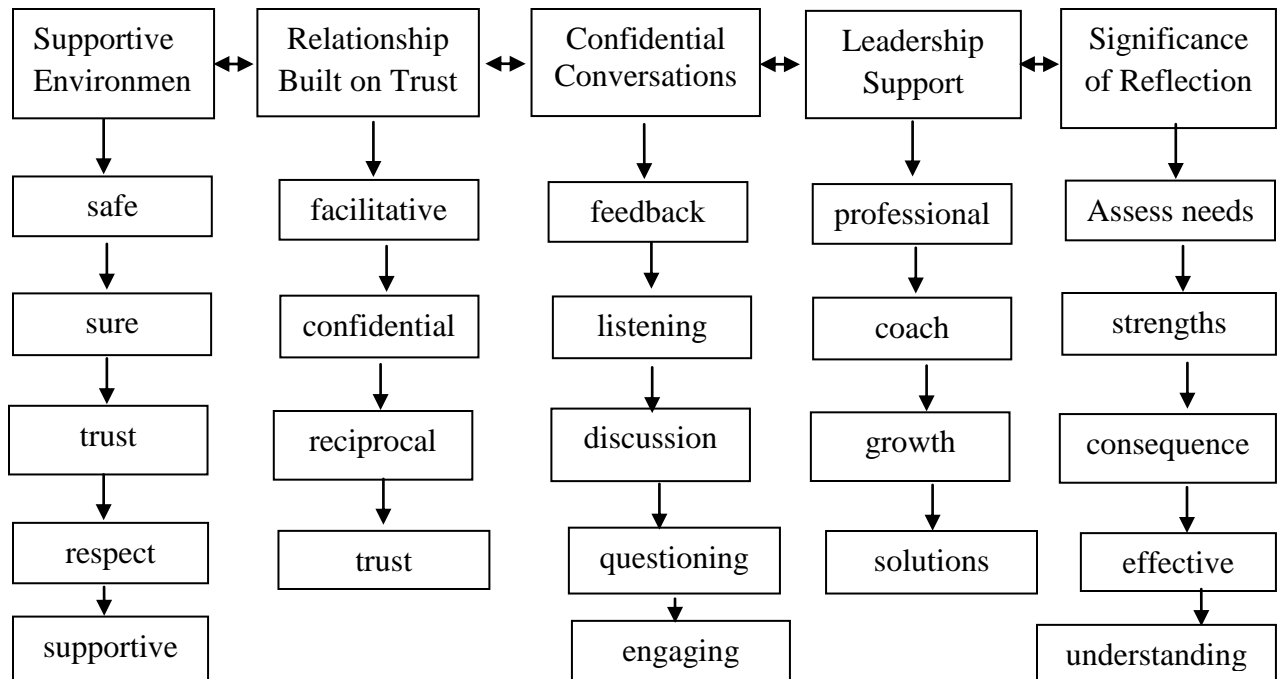


Figure 10. This figure presents a sample of open codes and five axial codes from the building principals. The axial coding process for building principals included identifying categories that

extend across all data sets. At the conclusion of this coding process, themes were classified after developing across the preponderance of data.

Descriptive Matrix

The conceptually clustered matrix in Table 21 organized in rows and columns presents by participant axial codes or major themes. Standardized open-ended interview data are displayed in the matrix. Additional data from interviews and observations follow the matrix.

Table 21

Descriptive Matrix: Axial Codes (Major Themes) of Building Principals

| Participants | Supportive environment | Relationship built on trust | Confidential conversations | Leadership support | Significance of reflection |
|--------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| BP1 | Leadership Coaching is a safe place to discuss your likenesses and concerns that are pretty serious. | Teachers realize that coaching is a process; it continues to evolve as the relationship deepens. | In personal relationships and positive interactions, teachers don't always come looking for answers, but to have conversation for answers. | Coaching helped me become a better listener and observer of staff. | The coach and the client become more reflective and they drill down through questioning as the client assesses needs and finds their own answer. |
| BP2 | Principals (have few) opportunities for common dialog to bounce off ideas without the fear of something getting out. Coaching was a benefit. | Leadership Coaching provided that person to talk through issues, a thinking partner and that was a benefit for becoming a better administrator. | Principals need someone they can talk to because we can't necessarily always talk to our colleagues because we are in competition. | Leadership Coaching a support mechanism that is job embedded opportunities to apply research based strategies on a daily basis. | I am more reflective with questioning and not being subjective or putting my opinion in it; really just trying to get [teachers] to think and see different angles and aspects. |

Descriptive Matrix: Axial Codes (Major Themes) of Building Principals continued

| Participants | Supportive environment | Relationship built on trust | Confidential conversations | Leadership support | Significance of reflection |
|--------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| BP3 | A [principal] knows that what you say stays in that (environment) and that someone is actually going to be there to give support. | Coaching supports the school the administrator in working through the problem without providing the solution or being judged. | The coach allowed me to share and voice my concerns without feeling intimidated or that he would share the discussion. | Coaching allows the administrator to look at their (leadership) practices to assess your weaknesses, strengths. | Helping the administrator to be reflective, by asking questions, such as, what could you have done differently? |

Supportive Environment

The researcher completed data analysis that included preparation and organization for data, and thereafter data reduction into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes. Principals offered significant commentary on the first theme, Supportive Environment, during their recorded interviews. The researcher was interested in the when, where, and how the data showed coaching as providing a supportive environment for principals. The “where” of coaching for this theme was that the coaching environment offered a safe place for the client (principal) and the executive coach to discuss leadership issues influencing effective teaching, as well as improving leadership practices in a non-evaluative space. The “how” of coaching was principals valued the executive coach being fully present and a committed listener by paraphrasing and providing feedback during coaching conversations. The trust connection developed over time for principals as they continued their confidential coaching conversations to support leadership performance goals (DOC4; DOC5).

One building principal stated,

Executive coaching is a benefit for administrators in our district. Often time administrators become frustrated and confused because when you talk to your supervisor it's most often in an evaluative mode, and you feel as if you're being evaluated. Talking to your executive coach allows you to share those concerns without being evaluated. You know that what you say is going to stay in that room, and you know that those concerns you have are not going to go anyplace else. Also, you know someone is actually going to be there to give you the support. My coach has called me just to say hello, how was your day? How are things going with getting your plan completed? (Tell me about your timeline for completing this plan.) If you have gotten behind in some of the work because you were in school, my coach will ask, what can I do to help? How can I assist you? So, even though you may not ask for it, it's nice to know that you have someone there who's really rooting for you. I think an executive coach is more of a cheerleader for administrators. They're cheering us on and giving us that boost that we need to be effective leaders. (BP3/3-4)

Another principal commented,

Executive coaching gave me the opportunity to sit down and talk things over with someone. It gave me the opportunity to reflect with someone about practices. (The process includes the executive coach asking guiding questions.) Questions are asked that drill down deep and cause the [principal] to really get in touch with the true issue. Coaching is a safe place to do that, discuss your likenesses and concerns that are pretty serious. (BP1/1)

The school district placed emphasis on selecting a support intervention for principals, which provided parameters for a safe and confidential learning environment. Two of the principals commented that the mere size and complex issues that arose daily in this urban district caused central office administrators to be stretched thin in providing leadership support on a campus-by-campus basis. The district currently conducts monthly administrative meetings to communicate education updates as related to district-wide initiatives to improve student achievement, technology integration, curriculum, assessment, and fiscal management (DOC/1; DOC/2; DOC/8).

The integration of executive coaching into the district's overall system of support offered continuous and on-going professional development for principals (DOC/9). During the interview process one principal commented, "With the professional growth, (executive coaching) helps you tremendously in the sense that it is job embedded" (BP2/2). The executive coaching support relates to point-in-time authentic leadership situations. As a result, the time set aside for the coaching conversation is well spent because at the end of the 30 minute or 60 minute session the principal has had time to think, reflect, answer questions, receive feedback, and set a timeline for more planning or summarize the solution.

The researcher observed BP2 interact with students, parents, and kindergarten teachers during the school's Thanksgiving celebration. The parents were very comfortable approaching the principal about the holiday dismissal schedule as well as complimentary on the students' behavior during the assembly. The teachers actively engaged with BP2 and received responses to their questions regarding the early dismissal schedule. The researcher observed this campus to be a safe and orderly environment for students, parents, faculty, and staff.

Relationship Built on Trust

The second theme to emerge from data analysis was Relationship Built on Trust. The researcher sought to answer the questions of how, when, and why from data on Relationship Built on Trust. "Facilitative" was a term used to describe executive coaching and how the client (principal) engaged in conversations with the coach. The executive coach begins each coaching conversation by asking the client to share a two minute check-in. From the researcher's observation (BP1), the executive coach exhibited a genuine interest in the client as a person by setting aside time for check-in as the entry to the conversation, which set the tone for the coaching session. The executive coach continues facilitating the conversation by informing the

client of the allotted time, and then asks the client what you would like to discuss during our coaching conversation. The client narrows the topic to one (maybe two, pending available time), and then the conversation begins. The executive coach moves the conversation forward by asking questions that may be solution-focused, goal-focused, planning-focused, or reflection-focused (DOC/6).

The initial question of interest for this theme, Relationship Built on Trust, was to identify the “how” from the data, and the answer was trust; the “where” is during coaching conversations; and the answer to the “why” from the data was confidentiality. All coaching conversations are based on trust and confidentiality, which are developed over time through supportive conversations between the coach and the client. Through confidential trusting conversations, clients have facilitative conversations with the coach in an effort to achieve goals. The executive coach enters the conversation by establishing an agreement with the client. Upon clarifying this agreement, the coach will begin to ask questions that may be solution-focused, planning-focused, goal-focused, and/or reflection-focused to ensure the agreement is fulfilled by the end of the conversation. At the close of the conversation, the coach and client summarize the discussion, next steps, and timelines for strategies, conversations, observations, plans, or other actions to be implemented by principals to enhance leadership practices.

One building principal stated,

Executive Coaching allows the administrator to look at their educational practices. It gives the administrator an opportunity to reflect on where you want to go personally, as well as professionally. Working with an executive coach helps you to really assess am I being an effective leader; without the coach asking you if you are an effective leader. The executive coach asks critical questions, and in asking those critical questions you make your own determination as to whether you are an effective leader, or not. I think that as you continue to work with the coach on a regular basis you want to say things to let them know those ah ha moments...well, I could have done this if I had made a different decision, or I could have done that. The coach will ask you these questions, prodding you

to give the answers, not necessarily the one that he/she wants but one that's going to help you grow professionally, as well as personally. (Therefore, the coaching intervention for an administrator supports you as a leader to identify both educational practices and proven strategies that work, which is very important.) BP3/2.

Another principal offered,

One of the things to come out of my coaching conversation was trying to stick to my schedule. How do I go about addressing parents who may or may not have scheduled to visit with the principal? So, we came up with a parent form where if a parent needed to have a conference the form was filled out over the phone. For example, I would receive the form and decide who needed to address it, and then we would get back to the parent. Whereas, instead of inefficient time management on the front end with you having a conversation with the parent, and then having to go back to do research, secure the answer, and then return call to parent. (BP2/2)

In interviewing the building principals, the conversations indicated they felt as if they were in competition with their co-workers, verses having collaborative and mutually respectful relationships. The principals involved in executive coaching welcomed the coaching support for various reasons, but most importantly they valued the opportunity to communicate in a trusting and non-threatening environment. The executive coach could ask questions causing the principal to think deeply about practices, processes, and procedures that may or may not be in place, and the principal could honestly respond without the feeling of being judged or evaluated. For example, the executive coach may say to the principal: You have summarized the data from your Classroom Walkthrough data (DOC/3) in a very user friendly format. So, discuss what currently supports the focus on curriculum and the focus on instruction reported in this data. The comment from the executive coach validates for the principal a job well done on summarizing the Classroom Walkthrough data (DOC/3), as well as presumes positive intent on behalf of the principal to lift up through conversation the support available for curriculum and instruction. The principal is in a safe and trusting relationship with the executive coach and can freely discuss the curriculum and support provided, then move on to the next question; or the principal

will say, without reservation, that he or she needs to think about what supports curriculum and instruction most effectively based on current data. The significance of establishing and sustaining a trusting relationship is to allow the client (principal) to release the apprehensions of judgment and appraisal and lift up their best thinking and planning to achieve professional and personal goals.

Confidential Conversations

The third theme was Confidential Conversations. Executive coaching for building principals in this urban district afforded support opportunities that were job-embedded, individual, timely, and confidential. Confidential Conversations for the building principals seemed to be most valuable in serving as a springboard to target research-based strategies for achieving the vision and goals of their school.

One of the standards in the district's training program for executive coaches is confidentiality. Confidentiality is held in utmost regard, and it is lifted as a requirement to the coaching support process. All three principals in the study commented as to how at ease they felt in discussing any leadership issue with their executive coaches because they felt certain of the confidential environment that was established in the onset of coaching. In contrast, all three principals also said that conversations with some administrators and colleagues were at times not held in confidence.

The Self-Study Report (DOC/4) completed in 2013 by the district and an external services provider offered the school favorable key findings on school leadership, the leadership team, instructional leadership, and managing and monitoring change for one of the principals in this case study. This report replaced the school's Scholastic Audit Summary Report, which did not meet the specified timeline for current school data. This principal (BP1) infused tenets of

coaching to develop and sustain trusting relationships, which promotes an environment for Confidential Conversations.

Additional recommendations from the report (DOC/4) included improving mathematics instruction in upper grades to achieve school assessment goals, and implementing the identified instructional model with fidelity. The recommendations from the Self-Study Report (DOC/4) are topics the executive coach and principal can discuss during confidential coaching conversations for immediate impact on planning for success, supporting curriculum and instruction, enhancing leadership, and improving student achievement.

One building principal stated,

As you begin to (internalize and implement a process) the teachers begin to mimic you and begin to see (the impact) that wow. They began to mimic coaching conversations to (implement effective practices and improve student achievement). Instead of when a colleague comes to you with a question about something, rather than answering the question, ask them to describe what have you already tried. It's seeking information rather than giving information. (BP1/3)

Another principal offered,

Executive coaching is a support mechanism rather than a remediation mechanism. I do not think that there are negative consequences with executive coaching. If the standards are upheld on both ends [executive coach and building principal] there are not any consequences because all conversations are confidential. (BP2/2)

To conclude, the principal commented,

(Executive coaching allowed me to voice my concerns, share the issues of concern, and assisted me by being reflective rather than allowing the coach to give me the answers). An executive coach provides leadership support without the individual being intimidated. It's important that they listen and coaches have to be committed listeners. So, I think executive coaching would be ideal as an avenue for administrators to improve and become a better leader. (BP3/1)

Building a trusting relationship with the client has a key tenet for success in executive coaching. The data from this study shows at the on-set of coaching conversations the client was

somewhat reluctant to engage fully in the coaching conversation. Over time, the client internalized the confidentiality component and realized conversations were truly confidential. The data also indicated trust builds relationships and relationships are strengthened by upholding the standard that all coaching conversations are confidential.

Leadership Support

The fourth theme identified through data analysis was Leadership Support. Principals offered noteworthy remarks on this theme during their recorded interview. The researcher was interested in the how/where and/or when the data offered executive coaching as Leadership Support for principals. The interview and observation data for “how” executive coaching supported the principals was through committed listening, reflection, questioning, feedback, paraphrasing, and reflection. The when and where for leadership support occurred during the executive coaching conversation.

During the scheduled interview session with BP1, the researcher observed BP1 interact with the newly-elected school board representative who came to tour the school. BP1 invited the researcher to participate in the tour. BP1 was very facilitative during the conversation with the board member. BP1 clarified very early in the conversation with the board member what a successful tour would look like. BP1 pinpointed the goal and set the plan in place to accomplish the goal for the tour. The board member stated that time was limited and explained what was to be seen. BP1 paraphrased what the board member wanted to see and the tour began. BP1 took time to reflect before responding to the questions posed by the board member. At the end of the tour, BP1 thanked the board member for visiting and invited the board member back at any time. BP1 ending the conversation by asking if their goal was met and the response was yes. BP1 used several coaching techniques to accomplish the goal: (1) BP1 was facilitative in the conversation

by asking questions to identify the goal for the tour; (2) BP1 demonstrated committed listening by paraphrasing language and repeating it back for to the board member for confirmation; and (3) BPI established the goal for the tour early in the conversation, as well as, the timeline for the tour. The coaching techniques used by BP1 were valuable tools for accomplishing the goal of a successful tour.

One building principal stated,

[The concept of executive coaching is ideal in that it is not punitive, it's one in which you work with someone to assist you in looking at your situation through different lenses, and it helps to assess what you are doing as leader, and how to do it better.] Coaching does not give a person the solutions, but he or she can work with you and provide coaching support to the principal, through reflection, conversations, committed listening, and feedback to accomplish the goal effective leadership. I think that executive coaching can be most beneficial for new administrators in their early years, as well as, support experienced principals. (BP3/5)

Remarks from another principal included,

An Executive Coach is someone who listens, someone who will ask good questions, someone who helps you with the reflection process, and someone who helps you solve your problems. Professional growth is a goal of coaching. (BP1/1)

To conclude, the principal commented,

The ultimate goal is to become a better administrator and with the support of a leadership coach. It gives you an opportunity to have a moment to really reflect on what you're doing and not just going through the motions, but really analyzing how the goal will be accomplished. The coach asks critical questions on what steps will you take to achieve that goal. The questions posed by the coach causes the principal to reflect and plan strategically. (BP2/2)

Each executive coach assigned to each principal in the study received his or her coaching training through the District. The executive coaches were contracted by the district to provide these services. The executive coaches successfully completed levels 1, 2, and 3 of coaching training, which included use of the Coaching School Results – Guided Pathways for Success (GPS) visual (Kee, et al., 2010, p. 193). Coaching School Results GPS (DOC/6) illustrates

coaching conversation paths for solution focused, goal focused, planning focused, and reflective focused conversations (p. 193). One should begin the coaching conversation with: (1) trust connections; (2) agreements; and (3) goal, purpose, outcome; and exit the conversation with: (1) goal achieved, (2) agreements; and (3) next steps (193).

The three principals in this study all said the executive coaches were good listeners and asked questions that caused them to think deeply, reflect, establish or refine goals, and uncover solutions. Two of the principals said they are better listeners because of their coaches. All three principals valued coaching as a professional growth opportunity in becoming a committed listener, reflective leader, trustworthy and supportive professional, confidential colleague, and an improved administrator. In response to the “what” of coaching for the theme, leadership support was professional growth opportunities for the client (principal). The “how” of coaching was answered by the research-based strategies utilized by executive coaches, such as goal-focused, planning-focused, reflection-focused or solution-focused coaching conversations. The final response to the “where” of coaching was in confidential conversations.

Significance of Reflection

The fifth theme was the Significance of Reflection. During an interview for this study, one principal discussed the reluctance to approach a teacher regarding an issue directly related to instruction for students. After the coaching session, through reflection on what was most important in this issue, the rational, competent, and creative instructional leader was effective in her intervention with the teacher to employ ways for meaningful engagement with the students. The solution for this principal included taking a picture of the class and posting it in her office; when she saw the picture it was a reminder for her to visit the classroom to observe student engagement. The reflection process during the coaching conversation truly allowed the principal

to identify the issue, develop a plan to address the issue with the teacher, and monitor the plan for implementation and effectiveness. The researcher's journal was used to capture descriptors, key terms, and body language of the principal as she discussed her innate desire to support the teacher on improving student engagement to advance student achievement. The principal was passionate about the urgency of implementing and monitoring the plan for impacting student engagement.

One building principal stated,

[Coaching] seems to help the [client] become better at their job with the goal of helping them become better by being more reflective about what they do. This helps them to become better and better by being more reflective about the "what" that they do. (BP1/1)

Another building principal commented,

As principal, I really try to be reflective before I make a decision, especially bigger decisions. I try to be reflective and look at what will happen, or what are the possibilities of things that can happen good or bad, and try to mitigate the big issues and to be more successful. (BP2/3)

Additionally, one principal stated,

Helping the administrator to be reflective by asking what could you have done differently? Where is it you want to go with plans that you have in mind? How can you get teachers to move in the direction you want them to go? What aspect of your school do you want to improve and how can you do that? (BP3/2)

Two of the three principals in this study explained how reflection supported capacity building for the principal. Primarily, in the coaching conversations, the executive coach would ask questions that caused the client (principal) to think below the surface by peeling away the numerous layers to get to the main issue. Thinking below the surface is one phase of reflection. The next phase of reflection is to think and identify what success will look like once this issue is resolved and/or completed. Last, reflection can include how to keep the issue resolved without a repeat of the same issue. The opportunity to reflect was frequently practiced during coaching

conversations. This practice for principals shaped their confidence to implement this strategy with teachers, staff, parents, and students and to sharpen their thinking skills by being reflective.

Summary of Building Principals

The data indicated that building principals accept executive coaching as valuable support for achieving effective leadership. The three principals are committed to providing instructional leadership necessary to reach achievement goals in literacy and mathematics as measured by state-required assessments. The building principals participating in this study believe one of their most important responsibilities is to provide instructional leadership for improving student achievement, as well as reach the overall school status of an achieving school at minimum, with the primary goal of reaching exemplary status as reported on the annual school report cards issued by the Arkansas Department of Education. Elmore (2003) explained, schools with “...norms of instructional practice, strong internal assessments of student learning, and sturdy processes for monitoring instructional practice and for providing feedback back to students, teachers, and administrators about the quality of work” can accomplish school accountability requirements for student achievement (p. 9). From the interviews and data analysis, the building principals believed their most important leadership role was to provide instructional leadership for improving student achievement. This urban district implemented executive coaching as a capacity-building support for their building principals to foster leadership development for goal attainment.

Presentation of Axial Codes for Executive Coaches

The axial coding for executive coaches is the researcher’s second presentation of data. This data analysis process involved identifying categories that extend across all data sets. The coding process concluded by classifying themes that surfaced across the preponderance of data.

Presentation of Axial Codes

Axial Codes and Sample of Open Codes of Executive Coaches

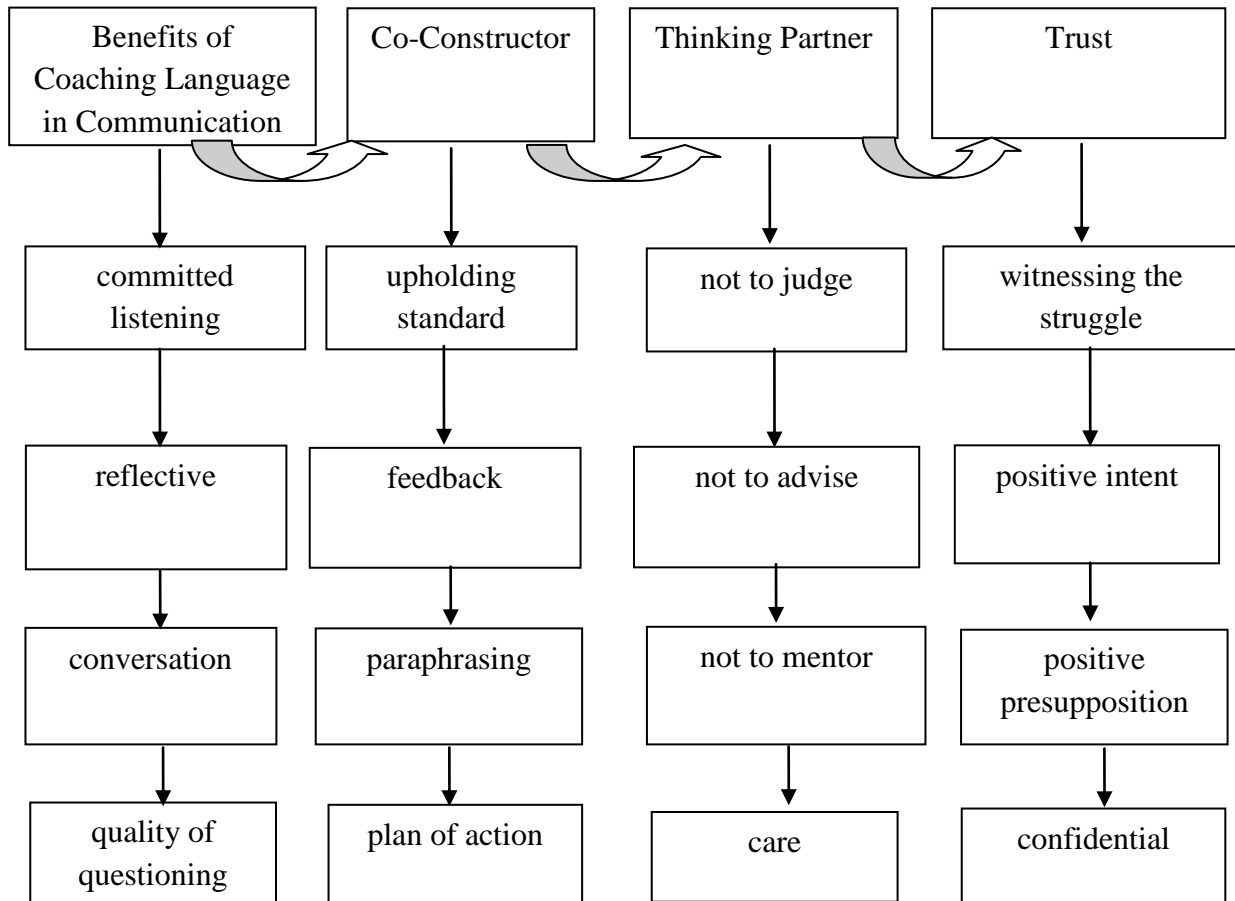


Figure 11. The four axial codes or major themes for executive coaches are: (a) Benefits of Coaching Language in Communication; (b) Co-Constructor; (c) Thinking Partner; and (d) Trust.

Descriptive Matrix

Table 22 displays axial codes or major themes by participant in a conceptually ordered matrix. The matrix presents standardized open-ended interview data by participant. The matrix also provides data from interviews and documents collected for executive coaches.

Table 22

Descriptive Matrix: Axial Codes (Major Themes) of Executive Coaches

| Participant | Benefits of Coaching Language in Communication | Co-Constructor | Thinking Partner | Trust |
|-------------|---|---|--|--|
| EC1 | One of the most important components of being an executive coach is to be a (committed) listener and a good communicator. | Leadership Coaching includes asking critical questions in order to assist the administrator in making some important decisions. | Working with an executive coach helps you to really assess (your leadership and its impact on improving instructional practices and student achievement). | An executive coach provides the [principal] with (support), without the individual being intimidated or feeling that they're being evaluated. |
| EC2 | Rather than dictating to their faculties, principals are giving (their teachers) the gift of committed listening and full presence. | The messages conveyed by the executive coach are to challenge the client's thinking; the co-structor (supports) the principal in helping them achieve vision, as well as, witness their struggle. | An executive coach is to show up, fully present, as a committed listener. The coach is to listen for what is below the surface; listen at multiple levels for what is said and not said. | [The executive coach] will be there (with the principal) in a safe, trusting, and confidential relationship. |
| EC3 | Coaching develops the principal's confidence and (they begin to communicate using coaching methods). | Executive Coaching is about building capacity with a group of thinkers. | The coach looks at the principal's gifts/talents and uses those to their maximum potential. | Coaching gives me someone I can trust and have confidence in that hears what I say, and then gives me open-ended and reflective questions (to think on). |

Benefits of Coaching Language in Communication

The researcher completed data analysis by preparing and organizing data, and thereafter through a process of coding and condensing the codes data were reduced into themes. The first

of four themes to emerge from the data was Benefits of Coaching Language in Communication. Three executive coaches were interviewed and data were transcribed. Executive coaches provided insight on themes during the recorded interview. The researcher was interested in knowing how, when, and/or where coaching language benefited communication.

One executive coach explained,

The [coaching] role for me is a facilitator, it is a thinking partner, and it's one who helps others be self reflective to be able to reach the vision and mission of you their school. The executive coaching experiences show that as you help the leader, this support begins to build confidence within their own thinking, planning, and problem solving. Staying and being more proactive in issues and opportunities for finding a path around a problems rather than a barrier to success. Coaching develops confidence and assurances as a leader. It builds self-esteem. Actually, where they become more confident, more outgoing, and they begin to interact with others in a coaching format. What we've already seen is that because they're being coached and they have experienced it, they infer and begin to use those same skills, the same communication methods, which prepare faculty and staff, students and parents. It's about building capacity with a group of thinkers. The more people become confident the more people feel that I can... rather than I can't attitude. Then they began to be more open-minded. They look for solutions they can give to actually become more focused on each other's personal growth and then that plays right over into looking at students and influencing them to grow and be better. (EC3/1)

Another executive coach explained

In coaching the administrator to look at educational practices, the (executive coach) will ask the principal critical questions in order to (support) the administrator in making important decisions. (EC2/1-2)

To conclude, the executive coach (EC2) commented,

Communication is (fundamental) to success. My concern has always been in education that we deal with programs and not people. We can have all the programs in the world, but it takes people to fuel their part of the process and that they are true partners in the process to make it happen. If we want to succeed in education, we have to learn people skills, we have to engage others, we have to make other people feel valuable, we have to make other people feel worthy, and we do that with how we respond to them. We do that by listening, making it about someone else, not about us, hearing what other people say, engaging them in discussions, and valuing their opinion. We can change what we do. (EC3/8)

Interview data provided the following information as a response for “why” coaching language is beneficial in communication. The data suggests using coaching language in communication builds confidence in your thinking, planning, listening, and problem solving. The response to the “where” question is once coaching language is internalized these skills and communication methods become a way of being, which means it can be used everywhere. Lastly, the response for the “how” question: the focus is building capacity of thinkers. Thinkers, who use reflection, committed listening, and questions in daily conversation to solve problems and achieve goals.

Co-Constructor

The second of four themes to emerge from interview data was Co-Constructor. The researcher sought to answer the questions of how and/or why from the data regarding Co-Constructor. The Co-Constructor has been described by executive coaches as a thinking partner. The co-creator also has been described as support for the principal during coaching conversations.

One executive coach offered the following description,

The executive coach is a person who will support principals in choosing their future and help them think through what the future would be and plan it. Also, help them determine their goals that they need to meet, the problem and solve the problem that they are going to be encountering at school. So we, executive coaches, look at it as if you want to build your organization; then your organization must continue to support the leaders with thinking partners; with those that they can brainstorm with; and with those who are not wanting to tell them what to do to help them be a stronger leader. The goal here is that you will not need me as an executive coach forever. That you’re only going to need me long enough to help build upon the leadership strengths of your staff so that they become more competent leaders and problem solvers. And then we can develop a mode of communication, and they are on their own, coaching skills that enable them to begin to work with their own faculty and staff to build capacity in their school. (EC3/2-3)

Another executive coach commented:

One who is willing to not be judgmental but to actually come in and assist the school administrator as a (co-constructor) in working through the problems without providing the solution. (EC1/1)

The theme Co-Constructor and the role of thinking-partner were significant aspects in the roles of the executive coaches. Executive coaches assist principals in developing a mode of communication for building staff capacity by committed listening, questioning, reflection, paraphrasing, and providing feedback in a trusting environment. Building principals participating in executive coaching believed they could achieve the goals of improving student achievement because their planning was more reflection-focused, goal-focused, and solution-focused; and they are engaging their leadership teams, teachers, students, and parents as meaningful partners (co-constructors) for goal attainment.

Thinking Partner

A Thinking Partner identifies gifts and talents of leaders to assist them in developing effective plans, identifying the best people, and engaging people in meaningful and trusting relationships. Trust works. Once modes of communication are internalized, confidence is established, and an organization of thinkers is in place, problems will have solutions, goals will be accomplished and a community of thinking-partners will create the foundation for standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment across all grades.

The third of four themes to emerge from data was Thinking Partner.

One executive coach responded,

I can reflect on a coaching session I had recently. I can say that this is the kind of coaching feedback I've gotten over the years from different clients. This client said at the end of the session, gosh, wow, I never would have thought about this had we not had this conversation. Oh my gosh, when you gave me feedback and reflected what I said and the words I used; I've never heard those words like that before. When I heard what I said to you it became so clear to me what I needed to do. Other clients have said, we have no one

to talk with. We are in lonely territory. We have to be careful with whom we share with. You have to be cautious, and to have someone I can trust that I can share with who never tells me what to do, but helps me think through possibilities and helps me solve my own problems. Executive coaching takes away the feeling of living in isolation on an island as a leader. This gives me someone I can trust and have confidence in that hears what I say, and then gives me a reflective question and open-ended questions that makes me think about what I said. Other clients have said, I just appreciate someone who listens to me. The committed listening is one of the traits that we've been taught in coaching that I find is the hardest thing to do as a coach, but it is the most beneficial thing we can do as a coach. (EC/3)

Another executive coach commented:

Those administrators who need additional support, someone to listen (thinking partner), and someone to share their concerns with can find that in executive coaching. (EC1/1)

One principal shared being a principal is lonely territory and it is difficult to find a person you can trust. Executive coaching eliminates the feeling of loneliness in the leadership role. Executive coaches are committed listeners. Clients (principals) want their voices to be heard and they want validation their voices are heard. Executive coaches provide that reinforcement through feedback paraphrasing, committed listening, and a relationship built on trust.

Trust

The fourth and final theme to emerge from data on executive coaches was trust. One executive coach summarized that, district leaders and others in various positions need relationships with: (1) someone they can trust and feel confident; (2) someone they feel they can share with and not breach confidentiality in sharing things; and (3) strong communication. All three principals shared the same sentiments of this executive coach.

Remarks from an executive coach included,

In many cases, in most cases, they really are not asking for you to solve their problem. They are listening for you to listen to the problem and to give them feedback on what they said, and when they hear their own words repeated back to them they have so many awe-ha moments when they say oh-my-gosh. I just realized what the problem is when you repeated back some of the things I shared with you. I did not even realize that was

one of my concerns. So it's like opening a window for them. And probably as much as anything, they always begin with a little bit of reluctance when they first begin the coaching relationship because they don't know the coach. You are having to prove this is a trustworthy confidential setting. You are not going to report to their supervisor. The notes you are taking will be destroyed, and that they will never hear this coming from one of their staff members or something. So, they finally begin to realize that the coaching is really a partnership of equals. The coach is not someone who is superior to them; it's a partnership of equals. (EC3/9)

Another executive coach commented,

The aim is to help them become more effective and to help them in every aspect of their life in whatever they need to become a more effective leader. Many have identified coaching as having made them become more self-aware and more reflective. Many times at the end of the coaching session the client is asked how this has been beneficial to you. And it's been, oh my goodness, I've had someone to fully listen to me, committed listening, and has asked guiding questions, open ended questions that have allowed me to explore opportunities and then using the opportunities and options for the best plan for me. (EC3/4)

This executive coach added,

I think we have to build integrity and honesty, to get trust, because that's the formula for trust. Integrity and honesty equals trust. Coaching helps build the trust factor. If we could get everyone to respond to each other and begin to talk in terms of I'm interested in what you believe, I'm interested in your ideas and I'm fully listening. I'm setting aside my opinions. Think, we are freeing people to begin to become true partners in their learning. That is what coaching is helping people become true partners in their learning and growing. (EC3/8)

The principals want someone they can trust, someone who is not going to tell them how to perform their tasks, and someone who holds confidentiality as a non-negotiable professional standard. A trusting relationship takes time, but what is most important is that the requirement for confidentiality is communicated at the on-set of the relationship and both parties work hard to fulfill the agreement. Building and sustaining trusting relationships between the principal and teacher works the same way. The tenet of confidentiality is no less important between teacher and principal as it is with principal and executive coach.

One phase of the documentation process included the researcher's participation, observation, and document collection during executive coaching training in this urban district. The executive coaching training sessions supported the data from the interviews. The director of professional development and the external consultants provided a clearly organized roadmap for implementation of executive coaching. Additional support was provided through coaching circles in which executive coach trainees had monthly opportunities to attend practice coaching sessions under the direction and supervision of the professional development director. The most recent coaching circle topics included effective questions and how to interrupt (DOC/7).

The areas of concentration for coaching conversations were planning, reflection, goals, and solutions. The building principals acknowledged the benefits of having a partner of equals to discuss the leadership topic at hand. Principals also referenced relationship, trust, and reflection as keys to coaching in building leadership capacity.

Summary of Executive Coaches

The data indicate that executive coaching provides support for building leadership capacity of building principals. The three executive coaches implemented the coaching model with fidelity. It was apparent from the interviews and data analysis the executive coaches hold firm to providing leadership support through trusting relationships. The three executive coaches were partners of equals for supporting the principals in this study. Through questioning, reflection, confidential conversations, and a trusting relationship, plans were designed and implemented, engagement with staff improved, leadership was monitored for instructional accountability, and leadership support was confidential and timely. All three principals commented on the importance of having a committed listening partner. As the executive coach listened to the principal and paraphrased the conversation back to the principal, many times

solutions were generated just from hearing the paraphrasing. Principals were able to own their solutions because they generated the ideas from the coaching conversation. Coaching is about relationships and relationships are about trust.

Summary of Chapter Four

The researcher met triangulation with interviews, observation, and document collection. Open coding and data analysis was completed to identify axial codes, which are also referred to as major themes, which evolved from the data analysis process. Standardized open-ended interviews were conducted with three building principals and three executive coaches. I observed two of the district-level monthly administrative council meetings. Documents were collected throughout the study.

The axial coding process identified categories that extended across all data sets. At the conclusion of this coding process, themes were classified when they surfaced across the preponderance of data. There were five major themes to evolve from data on building principals, and four major themes developed from executive coaches. The nine themes presented in two separate axial cluster matrixes were: (1) Supportive Environment, (2) Relationship Built on Trust, (3) Confidential Conversations, (4) Leadership Support, (5) Significance of Reflection, (6) Benefits of Coaching Language in Communication, (7) Co-Constructor, (8) Thinking Partner, and (9) Trust.

Axial coding helped to link open codes during data analysis. Selective coding was expanded by using the nine axial codes. In efforts to demonstrate grounded theory and answer my research question and sub-question, the selective codes were aligned to literature from the field. Chapter Five will include the introduction, grounded theory, theory one, theory two, theory three, significance of executive coaching, summary of findings, interpretation of data,

question one, sub-question one, recommendations to the field, recommendation for further research, and the conclusion.

Chapter Five:

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This qualitative case study examined the professional practice of three urban school principals in the school context as a result of them having been coached by an executive leader coach. Chapter Five summarizes conclusions and recommendations of synthesized data to address the purpose of the study and research questions. From the summaries, importance of leadership coaching is addressed and implications and recommendations for future research are presented.

The purpose of this case study was to explore principals' perceptions of one-on-one coaching and the impact of coaching on building leadership capacity for school effectiveness and improved student achievement. The researcher for this qualitative case study interviewed two elementary school principals, one middle school principal, and three executive coaches participating in an urban district's coaching program. Philosophical underpinning for this study was based on the constructivist paradigm. Constructivist researchers, according to Creswell, "focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants" (2007, p. 21). The propositions guiding the purpose, focus, data collection/analysis, scope of the study, and framework (Stake, 1995) were derived from the literature review with specific attention to effective leadership dimensions and practices.

Case Study

Case study research includes inquiry into a question or subject of a study through one or

more cases in a bounded system (Creswell, 2007). I employed a set of interpretive practices to make sense of cultural context. Creswell (2007) asserts,

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes (p. 73).

Data were collected through five face-to-face recorded interviews and one recorded telephone interview. Data were also collected from documents and observations. Through analysis of data, the following nine major themes or axial codes were confirmed: (1) Supportive Environment, (2) Relationship Built on Trust, (3) Confidential Conversations, (4) Leadership Support, (5) Significance of Reflection, (6) Benefits of Coaching Language in Communication, (7) Co-Constructor, (8) Thinking Partner, and (9) Trust. These nine themes steadily emerged from the data into three selective codes: (a) Leadership Support; (b) Relationship Built on Trust; and (c) Confidential Conversations. The selected codes emerged through in-depth interviews and through the transcription process completed by the researcher with the aid of Dragon Dictation software. Selective codes were increasingly pronounced, identifiable, and consistent after the researcher identified and charted participants' recurring concepts and responses in a Microsoft excel document. The three selective codes from the data offer insight and clarity into understanding the perceptions of building principals on the value coaching for impacting leadership practices. The preceding section offers discussions on the how, when, where, and why of coaching.

Theme: Leadership Support

This discussion includes themes that emerged from the data. Research Question: What are principals' perceptions of coaching engagements in supporting and sustaining leadership practices?

The first selective code to emerge in the study was Leadership Support. Leadership was supported by four open codes: (a) professional, (b) coach, (c) growth, and (d) solutions. The analyzed data indicated all three principals had positive experiences with their executive coach. Data also offered participants were afforded professional growth opportunities which changed the way communication and interactions occurred with teachers, staff, parents, and colleagues. Leithwood, et al. summarized findings from empirical studies concerning “four core leadership qualities and practices...building vision and setting directions, understanding and developing people, redesigning the organisation, and managing the teaching and learning programme” (2008, p. 6). These core leadership qualities and practices were supported during the executive coaching process.

One principal in the study described a coaching conversation that concerned student safety. The leadership practice used in this conversation was “understanding and developing people” and “setting directions” (BP3/4). The teachers had an issue with the number of minutes they were to supervise students in the halls. The client (principal) took time to reflect on the goal focused questions asked by the executive coach. The client voiced steps and solutions around the issue. The executive coach paraphrased several of the suggestions and ideas, and the principal’s thought was to review the union handbook regarding student safety and teacher responsibility. The issue was resolved through conversations with teachers on putting students first, placing student safety as a top priority, in addition to, remaining in compliance with duty time for teachers. Achieving the goal of student safety demonstrated growth in leadership practices to focus on “understanding and developing people” and “setting direction” (BP3/4). Morel and Cushman (2012) offered,

the sociocultural learning theory formulated by Vygotsky (1978) and others is as applicable to the professional learning of teachers as to the educational learning of

children. The way to maximize the capacity of teachers to meet student needs is to embed professional learning in the cultural and social life of the school. (p. 2)

According to the participants in this study, coaching facilitated professional and personal growth. The support of an assigned executive coach was beneficial in having a thinking partner available for goal-planning, action-planning, or solution-focused planning. Coaching provided avenues for the principal to support teachers. According to The Wallace Foundation, the agreed upon instructional leadership practices by teachers and principals included, “Focusing the school on goals and expectations for student achievement; Keeping track of teachers’ professional development needs; and Creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate” (2010, p. 66).

Solution focused coaching conversations were beneficial for the instructional leaders, so much so, these same strategies supported teachers in finding solutions to their problems, rather than the principal providing the solution to the teacher. Once teachers infer coaching language and skills their conversations, questioning, feedback, committed listening, and reflection are improved in the areas of planning, teaching, and commitment to student achievement. After experiencing leadership coaching, principals understood that the best solution for teachers was for them to determine the answer with a co-thinking partner, in doing so, teachers would own the answer and they would be committed and dedicated to the solution. Through this commitment and dedication, teachers are better able to carry out their plan and get the desired results of improving student achievement.

In the Learning Forward Report (2011), professional learning is defined as:

a comprehensive, sustained, intensive and collaborative approach to improving teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in raising student achievement (p. i). The definition...“to ensure that effective teaching spreads, districts and schools must create learning systems in which teams of teachers, principals, and other professional staff members meet several times a week to engage in a continuous cycle of improvement. (p. i.)

As related to professional growth, participants in this study described leadership coaching as helping tremendously because it is job embedded work. The principal is not doing extra work. The principal applies research-based strategies to job duties on a daily basis. Executive coaching enabled principals to assess situations through different lenses, as well as, assess what they are doing, and how to do it better. The ultimate goal is to become a better administrator with the support of an executive coach.

In supporting principals, executive coaches examine the leaders' gifts and abilities, then attempts to motivate principals to maximum potential. Using those skill sets, principals have more confidence in thinking, planning, and problem solving. The leadership strategy now is to be more proactive in issues and opportunities for finding a path around a problems rather than a barrier to success. Coaching develops confidence and assurances as a leader and it builds self-esteem. The three principals are more confident, more sociable, and coaching is a way of being.

Executive coaching fosters better communication, such as, committed listening, paraphrasing, and feedback. The goal is to have the entire school community having the same expectations. When there is clear communications from the top-down and from the bottom up, plans of action are more concise and effective. Therefore, when the school community implements the plan there is a clear goal for all stakeholders, and then as a result, students perform and the school has achieved greater student success.

Theme: Relationship Built on Trust

The second theme to emerge in the study was relationship built on trust. Relationship Built on Trust was supported by four open codes: (a) facilitative, (b) confidential, (c) reciprocal, and (d) trust.

Building principals said school leadership is lonely territory. Principals also voiced that they are cautious with whom we share and discuss information. Executive coaching offered

principals a supportive and confidential thinking partner. The coach is a facilitator on a journey of helping another person to develop to their maximum potential both as a leader and as an individual.

Principals have commented, I have someone to share with, who is confidential, who is facilitative and helps me think through possibilities, and helps me solve my own problems. Two of the three principals revealed executive coaching has taken away the feeling of living in isolation as a leader. All three principals agreed that leadership coaching provides someone we can trust, a confidential thinking partner, and someone who listens and ask reflective and open-ended questions.

The data revealed an executive coach is that active, trusted, and reciprocal thinking partner supporting leaders to become problem solvers, as well as supporters of leaders in thinking through possibilities for solutions. The executive coach is a person who is a confidential, trustworthy colleague with the school leader. Thus, allowing the leader to present their ideas, their concerns, and plans of action knowing that all judgment is being reserved. Executive Coaching (2002) reported, “Executive coaching is growing by about 40% a year” (p. 51). Coaching afforded principals a trusted space and support for leaders who many times were very isolated in lonely positions. Two of the three principals commented that they were reluctant to share with colleagues because there was a feeling of competition verses collaboration (BP1/1; BP2/1).

“The nature of relationship among the adults with a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else” (Barth, 2006, p.8). These adult relationships are formed across the school community with the principal, teachers, instructional coaches, parents, support staff, bus drivers, crossing guards, and

collaborative partners. The relationships foster a sense of commitment to the mission and vision of the school. There is a common thread of commitment to goal attainment. Gladwell (2002) explained to achieve the goal of fundamental change in employee's beliefs and behavior, you must build an organization in which those beliefs are "practiced and expressed and natured" (p. 173). The building principals in this study have incorporated coaching language, such as, committed listening, paraphrasing, and feedback in daily staff conversations, leadership team meetings, parent conferences, administrative meetings, community forums, and personal conversations. Relationship is trust and trust ignites beliefs and behavior for impacting school performance and student achievement.

Committed listening is one of the traits exhibited by executive coaches. This trait fosters trust in the coach-client relationship. All three principals said their executive coach was a confidential committed listener. The coach would paraphrase the principal's response before commenting or asking a clarifying question. This technique confirms that the coach was a fully present committed listener for the client. At the beginning of each coaching conversation, the coach and client establish the agreement on the topic for the coaching conversation. The agreement informs the type of questions asked by the coach, which could include planning-focused, goal-focused, solution-focused, or reflection-focused or a combination. The executive coach has received extensive training in how to proceed with the conversation after confirming the agreement with the client. Throughout the conversation the executive coach provides value statements to the client to acknowledge their shift in thinking. Value statements are also offered to the client for their actions and efforts to meet organizational goals.

Theme: Confidential Conversations

The third theme to emerge in the study was confidential conversations. Confidential Conversations were supported by five open codes: (a) feedback, (b) listening, (c) discussion, (d) questioning, and (e) engaging. Sherman and Freas explained executives are recognizing minimized competencies such as interpersonal skills and communication skills essential for influencing employees, adapting to rapid change, and respecting individuals from diverse cultures (2004).

Leadership coaching is really a partnership of equals. The aim is to support the principal's development, both professionally and personally, so principals will become more effective leaders. The data revealed all three principals indicated coaching caused them to be more self-aware and more reflective. Many times at the end of the coaching session the client is asked how this has been beneficial to you. The responses included: (1) I had someone to fully listen to me, a committed listener, and the coach asked reflective questions; (2) the open ended questions allowed me to explore opportunities, and then use those opportunities and options for better planning; and (3) in having a thinking partner, it opened my mind to a new way of thinking, which flowed into identifying approaches to achieve success.

The coach is not the most important person; the client is the most important person. The coach serves as a guide on a journey to discovery. Executive coaches provide unbiased committed listening and must be comfortable with silence while allowing principals to reflect and think. The coaching goal for an executive coach is to coach the client through to become self-sufficient strong leaders and strong communicators. Executive coaches spend a great deal of time perfecting the skills of committed listening, paraphrasing, and providing feedback. The

skill of paraphrases requires the coach to repeat what is had heard in non-threatening, non-judgmental terms.

The executive coach asks open-ended question that require the client to think deeper and those are important words, think deeper. Think in ways you have never thought before. Use higher level thinking skills. Think introspectively in ways you have never thought before. Coaches ask clients questions and help them discover the treasures that lie within them.

Significance of Executive Coaching

Executive coaching provides targeted support that meets the daily and practical needs of an urban principal. Urban principals are saturated each day with an abundance of instructional and managerial responsibilities. Through coaching, principals developed schemas to better support teacher development and enhanced leadership skills. Principals valued the coaching support for improving and sustaining leadership practices. Executive coaching for this urban district offered an additional support to the district's leadership development system for principals. The executive coach serves as a thinking partner in a confidential trusting environment ready to utilize coaching skills and traits in addressing real point-in-time issues.

Research Question

The researcher's inquiry references question one focused on principals' perceptions of coaching engagements in supporting and sustaining leadership practices; and the sub-question centered on how leader practices promoted professional teachers practices. Executive coaching was perceived by principals in this study as a valued leadership support as related to point-in-time authentic leadership situations. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) asserts leader's individual values, paths, and priorities are authentically articulated from a confident emotional course, whereby effective leaders shift people in constructive emotional paths because they are aware of their feelings and in turn create resonance (p. 38). Coaching engagements helped

leaders to tap into the emotional intelligence paths within the cultural context to promote “relationship- management, self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness” (p. 38).

The building principals (BP1, BP2, and BP3) were better equipped to empower teachers and leadership teams to accomplish the school’s vision, mission, and goals because the leader clarified expectations, nurtured social awareness, and managed relationships.

Robinson (2007) offered “planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum” as one of the... “leadership dimensions derived from 11 studies of effects of leadership on student outcomes” (p. 8). Executive coaching for leaders afforded time to discuss topics, such as, teacher observations, professional learning communities, classroom walk-through, and school improvement goals. Formative and summative feedback on teacher planning and instructional strategies were enhanced by the coaching competency committed listening. The principals in this study agreed that committed listening was a valuable coaching strategy for providing authentic feedback. Through committed listening the principals (BP1, BP2, and BP3) were able to paraphrase and offer feedback, which in many cases the feedback, included the language spoken by teachers. Committed listening created awareness for teachers that the principal really heard what was said and specific feedback was provided. Reported findings by Robinson (2007) suggested leaders effect students outcomes as they “promote and participate in teacher learning and development” in their quest for reaching school improvement goals (p. 8). Judge and Piccolo (2004) offered the transformational leadership factor “individual consideration” where the leader attends to each follower’s needs, works as a mentor or coach, and commits to listening to the follower’s needs (p. 755), thus providing authentic leadership support.

Through confidential trusting conversations, principals in this study had facilitative conversations with the executive coach for support of leadership effectiveness. At a time when federal and state accountability mandates have made data analysis a fact of school life, effective principals know how to make the best use of data, learning to ask useful questions of it, and taking advantage of it for collaborative inquiry among teachers and helpful feedback to students (Portin et al., 2009). The significance of establishing and sustaining a trusting relationship allowed the client (principal) to release apprehensions of judgment and appraisal, and lift up their best thinking and planning for effective leadership. Principals (BP1, BP2, and BP3) welcomed the coaching support and valued the opportunity to communicate in a trusting and non-threatening environment.

Kee et al. (2010) explained the new mindset as to how people change and essential skills the Coach leader shall possess:

Creates the environment and scaffolding for thinking in new ways; Creates environments where deep thinking is sought and valued; Facilitates processes of dialogue for deep thinking and expanding one's insights and experience from different points of view; Presumes the best in thinking and doing in others; Amplifies the strengths and success in others; Communicates clarity of visions and goals and supports the success of all who take up the call; ...Uses language of appreciation, respect, possibility, and clear expectations and outcomes. (p. 21)

Tschannen-Moran (2011) suggested, "Trust matters most in situations of interdependence where people must depend on one another to achieve desired outcomes" (p. 438). According to Morel and Cushman (2012) trust is a significant component in collaborative conversations.

Research Sub-question

The researcher's inquiry for sub-question one was the impact of leader practices on promoting professional teacher practices. Executive coaching facilitated better communication for principals and teachers that lead to: (a) improved planning and implementation of plans, (b)

providing professional development for teachers, and (c) infusion of data driven decision making.

Lambert (2003) explained,

As principals and teachers, we must attend not only to our students' learning but also to our own and to that of the adults around us. When we do this, we are on the road to achieving collective responsibility for the school and becoming a community of learners. (p. 3)

The Wallace Foundation (2010) from their investigation of the links to improved student learning offered a core list of leadership and teacher practices: (1) setting directions, (2) developing people, (3) redesigning the organization, and (4) managing the instructional program (p. 66).

The researcher also inquired as to the factors influencing principals' decisions to participate in leadership coaching. Principals in the district were required to participate in executive coaching base on the school improvement designation for each school. New principals promoted in the district were invited to participate in executive coaching, as well as, new principals to coming to the district. This urban district elected to implement leadership coaching as an additional component to the current system of professional development support for building leaders. Executive coaching incorporated coaching competencies to provide one-on-one job embedded professional development on leadership practices for moving the organization forward in meeting academic achievement goals.

Summary of Findings

This study explored urban principals' perceptions of coaching engagements in supporting and sustaining leadership practices. The goal was to understand the value of executive coaching for building leadership capacities. The propositions guiding the purpose, focus, data

collection/analysis, scope of the study, and framework (Stake, 1995) were derived from the literature review with specific attention to effective leadership dimensions and practices.

Three themes emerged from data as influencing the perceptions of building principals as it relates to executive coaching: (a) Leadership Support, (b) Trusting Relationships, and (c) Confidential Conversations. These themes were supported by axial codes or major themes, and open codes. Triangulation of data included open-ended interviews, observations, and collection of documents.

Interpretation of Data

The integration of executive coaching into the district's overall system of support offered on-going professional development for principals. This targeted support meets the day-to-day needs of urban principals who wear multiple hats while attempting to put children first, support teachers and instruction, engage parents and community, and promote improved student achievement for all.

Recommendation to the Field

This study sought to understand perceptions of building principals on the value of coaching in building leadership capacity. Recommendations to the field include a study on the efficacy of coaching as related to implementation of research-based leadership practices and improved performance appraisal for building principals. Conducting research with teachers whose principals have participated in executive coaching for more than one year may provide data that leads to ascertaining teacher perceptions on the value of coaching for informing leadership practices, leadership effectiveness, and school reform.

Recommendation for Further Research

Pepper (2010) states to meet the demands of educational accountability, transformational and transactional leadership styles, working within a balanced approach, is promising for leaders leading learning organizations. Instructional leadership employs research based practices such as, goal setting, managing people, and redesigning the organization. Executive coaching employs various strategies to stimulate change for transforming the organization, teachers, and the leader. The recommendation for further research is to begin from a transformational leadership premise to understand which tenets of executive coaching has the most impact to change leader practices for improved student achievement.

Conclusion

The purpose of this case study was to explore principals' perceptions of one-on-one coaching and the impact of coaching on building leadership capacity for school effectiveness and improved student achievement. Specifically, the researcher wanted to know what value did coaching have on reframing leadership practices. The study included two elementary principals and one secondary principal participating in an urban district's coaching program. The principal coaching program included both novice and experienced principals. Recent research indicates improving school performance through the development of effective school leaders is a critical element in the reform agenda (Murphy, 2002/2006).

Through data analysis, three themes evolved: (a) Leadership Support, (b) Trusting Relationships, and (c) Confidential Conversations. The three urban principals in this study valued executive coaching for improving leadership. Leadership support was most valued, followed by confidential conversations, and relationships built on trust. Leadership support was the major theme which continued to stretch across themes and emerge from the data. Further

study is warranted to understand which tenets of coaching facilitate changes toward effective leadership.

Executive coaching is in the early stages of implementation in school districts. Valid and reliable instruments are needed to measure efficacy of coaching. Also, cost analysis projections are suggested due to the one-to-one ratio of leader-to-executive coach. Consideration should also be given to the human resources needed for districts to train executive coaches from within the district.

Also, credit for professional development hours may be given to participants based on the length of time the executive coach works with the principal. A confidential annual evaluation of services provided by executive coaches should be completed by building principals on the coaching competencies and evidenced-based leadership practices. Annual reports to the superintendent and school board should be provided.

Contribution to the Field of Leadership

Job-embedded professional development for system-leaders is a valuable tool. While districts and policy makers identify effective strategies and allocate resources to support short-term and long-term goals, executive coaching can serve as targeted support for district leaders, principals, directors, content specialist, and central office administrators. The value of executive coaching is unveiled through the individualized support of effective leadership practices such as: (1) establishing vision and mission; (2) building trusting relationships; and (3) goal attainment. As leaders participate in executive coaching valuable skills are developed or enhanced. These skills include, enhanced listening, improved problem solving, productive goal planning, and promotion of solution focused leadership.

Executive coaches in this study offered urban leaders a unique opportunity to engage in confidential conversations, solution focused planning with a thinking partner, facilitative conversations using effective questioning, and leadership support for accomplishing predetermined organizational goals. Findings from this qualitative case study suggest that leadership is a lonely place and in many cases there is no one for the leader to confide in on issues that impact the overall success of the organization. Executive coaching helps fill this void. Additionally, executive coaches establish trusting relationships that fosters open dialogue and genuine conversations to get at the heart of the matter. Leaders are better equipped to accomplish goals and model effective strategies for others to learn from and put into practice. Trusting relationships are paramount to the success of executive coaching.

The principals in this study spoke their truths regarding the conditions and support necessary to lead effective schools. Principals valued leadership coaching in building leadership capacity and supporting leader practices. Leadership coaching for principals served as targeted support in a safe, trusting, and confidential environment. These findings from the voices of principals are contributing to a relatively new area of research.

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APPENDIX:



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

November 5, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Anita Renee Farver
Carleton Holt

FROM: Ro Windwalker
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 13-10-208

Protocol Title: *Value of Coaching in Building Leadership Capacity of Principals in Urban Schools: A Case Study*

Review Type: EXEMPT EXPEDITED FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 11/05/2013 Expiration Date: 11/04/2014

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<http://vpred.uark.edu/210.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 6 participants. If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior* to implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 210 Administration Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

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