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My research study explored how principals allocated their time, their perceptions of success, and whether their actions were consistent with their definition of success. Findings revealed participants spent time performing three primary behaviors including communicating with school stakeholders, completing managerial practices, and serving as instructional leaders. Additionally, participants conceptualized success as more than performance on state accountability assessments including components such as academic and behavioral growth, appreciation for education and lifelong learning, the belief in future school and societal success, maturing higher-level thinking skills, and an individualized view of success specific to children. Finally, the significant majority of principals carried out actions that were consistent with their opinions of success. Conversely, the participants who did not perform a majority of practices associated with their perceptions of success were influenced by moderating factors, which emphasized the relationship between contextual and individual characteristics and principals' time allotment.

HOW DO PRINCIPALS CONCEPTUALIZE SUCCESS:

ARE THEIR ACTIONS CONSISTENT

WITH THEIR DEFINITIONS?

by

Brian J. Patience

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APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

General Statement of the Problem

Legislators, community members, and educators have frequently attempted to define fundamental roles and responsibilities of principals. Beck and Murphy (1993) maintained primary principal roles included values broker in the 1920s, scientific manager in the 1930s, Democratic leader in the 1940s, theory-guided administrator in the 1950s, executive in the 1960s, facilitator in the 1970s, and instructional leader in the 1980s. Moreover, researchers also articulated the belief that principals' responsibilities must comprise spending time as moral stewards and cultivating effective internal and external communities (Keil, 2005; Quick & Normore, 2004; Reed, 2009). As educators, policymakers, and community members help conceptualize the roles of principals, there is an inextricable link between tasks and daily practices observed through behaviors and actions. In other words, as the role of principal continually shifts, how principals allocate their time on a daily basis undoubtedly changes. Principalship scholars contend that a crucial reason principal behaviors, actions, and practices are investigated is because they serve as the nexus between students, parents, teachers, and all stakeholders vested in public education (Drake & Roe, 2002; Matthews & Crow, 2003; Ubben, Hughes, & Norris, 2006). Similarly, principal leadership demarcated through daily actions, behaviors, and practices is emphasized among the essential variables of a school

organization (Bolman, Johnson, Murphy, & Weiss, 1990; Cheng, 1991a; Sergiovanni, 1984). Furthermore, principals are viewed as instrumental in school effectiveness and improvement, which facilitates school change. Likewise, research on school effectiveness (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schmitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Edmonds, 1979) proposed that schools which successfully promote students' achievement share identifiable characteristics including quality principal leadership.

Researchers also recognize that principals play fundamental roles in the development of superior schools through taking part in practices such as motivating teachers and students, distinguishing and conveying vision and goals, cultivating high expectations, distributing resources, and planning policies and procedures dedicated to curriculum and instruction (EdSource, 2008; Knapp, Copland, Plecki, & Portin, 2006; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Wallace Foundation, 2007). However, though a large body of research connects principals to the development of successful schools, researchers declared shockingly little is known about what principals do on a daily basis (Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010; Camburn, Spillane, & Sebastian, 2010). Moreover, researchers also maintain there is limited knowledge concerning principals' day to day practices because of researchers' almost exclusive use of inadequate methodologies specifically self-reporting and ethnographic studies. Researchers argue self-reporting methodologies often result in low response rates resulting in potentially invalid inferences negatively impacting accuracy and depth of analysis as participants may forget activities over time (Cycyota & Harrison, 2006; Groves et al., 2004; Martinko & Gardner, 1990). In a like manner, though ethnographies including structured

observations have produced valuable data centering on principals' time distribution, critics of observations insist they are typically inaccurate because researchers miss indispensable information or lack context (Camburn & Barnes, 2004; Camburn et al., 2010; Gronn, 2003).

After reviewing research associated with principals' roles and daily work, I learned the characterization of principals and their daily practices, actions, and behaviors has changed in conjunction with societal trends and educational reforms. However, there is little information concerning how principals spend their time on a daily basis. Furthermore, there is almost no information connected to defining school and student success. The empirical information that does exist with reference to principals' daily practices, actions, and behaviors is almost exclusively gathered through principal surveys and ethnographies in the form of observations, which sometimes lack depth, accuracy, and context (Bourdieu, 1977; Camburn & Barnes, 2004; Gronn, 2003). Therefore, the methodology for my study will include principals taking part in semi-structured interviews, responding through email to two question prompts, and using digital-voice recorders to document their daily work, which will serve as an alternative to existing methodologies including surveys and observations.

In our contemporary standards-based accountability era, school and student success is almost always characterized as meeting No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal mandates. Moreover, achieving AYP is portrayed by the media, legislators, and many educators as unquestionably equating to students' success. In other words, supporters of NCLB ardently believe if students attain necessary benchmark levels on their requisite

high-stakes tests, they are academically successful because they have demonstrated sufficient academic growth or adequate yearly progress. Numerous supporters of AYP including the U.S. Department of Education (2006) aver America's competitiveness and economic success are inextricably coupled to students achieving AYP levels. Likewise, countless legislators and educators believe fundamental components of NCLB including children meeting AYP benchmarks guarantees success as it unquestionably improves the academic performance, educational opportunities, and achievement gaps for low-income and disadvantaged learners (Bush, 2001; Thermstrom & Thermstrom, 2003). To summarize, proponents of NCLB maintain if students attain pre-determined levels on their high-stakes tests and subsequently meet AYP benchmark standards, they are academically successful.

Conversely, critics of AYP assert it perpetuates a current educational status quo that disproportionately benefits students belonging to dominant classes where power and privilege is entrenched within societal institutions including schools. Also, there is extensive research that claims there is little to no evidence AYP is furthering student achievement and diminishing achievement gaps (Elmore, 2003; Lee, 2006). Similarly, researchers such as (Chapman, 2005; Rothstein & Jacobsen, 2006) state AYP does not lead to student success because it discounts non-tested subjects including social studies, foreign language, physical education, and the arts while creating stringent time requirements for math and reading, which prevents children from learning core skills and virtues such as democratic values, cultural appreciation and awareness, physical fitness, well-being and creativity.

As I analyzed research connected with principals' viewpoints of AYP, I learned though there were a number of qualitative and quantitative studies focused on principals' reactions to AYP, the majority center on processes administrators created to assist their schools in attaining AYP or protocols composed to move schools from AYP failure to success. Likewise, there is vast research related to how AYP has impacted school reform (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Kim & Sunderman, 2005); however, there is inadequate research detailing whether principals leading schools meeting AYP believe they are educating students for success. In other words, there is simply not much empirical data discussing whether principals deem meeting AYP equates to school and students' success. Conversely, the scant research that exists about principals' perceptions of success typically likens students' success to standardized achievement scores; however, various researchers insist students' academic success is predicated on more than scores on multiple-choice assessments. The intersection of these circumstances intimates several questions and functions as the foundation of my dissertation.

Personal Connection

Personal interest in how principals allocate time and their perceptions of success was a driving force of my dissertation. As a current assistant principal striving to become a principal, I must observe contemporary principals' daily actions, behaviors, and practices because they will guide and prepare me as I aspire to become a principal. Furthermore, studying how principals spend their days will provide a foundation as I cultivate my future principal leadership practices. In addition to examining principals' daily actions, behaviors, and practices, it is equally important to participate in a discourse

with these leaders because discussion will enable me to conceptualize principals' daily

routines and develop a meaningful understanding of their time allocation. To mature an

effective leadership practice, it is necessary to communicate with successful principals as

opposed to school leaders deemed ineffective.

Therefore, the next logical step is to identify successful principals, who are almost

always defined as school administrators leading schools meeting Adequate Yearly

Progress (AYP) mandates. However, in my professional experience as an assistant

principal, I have dialogued with numerous *successful* principals guiding schools

achieving AYP requirements who created policies, procedures, or frameworks that I

fervently contend are antithetical to students' learning and high-quality leadership. For

example, successful principals have happily explained to me how they narrowed

curriculum, compelled months of test preparation, focused interventions on learners close

to benchmark levels classified as bubble students while limiting remediation for low-

achieving children, instructed teachers to communicate content using indistinguishable

pedagogical practices, and overlooked worthwhile subject matter not specifically

entrenched within specific courses of study. As I listened and took part in these

conversations, it helped me construct my definition of students' success, which appeared

adversative to previous principals' convictions that accomplishing AYP edicts delineated

student and school success. Similarly, progressing through a Doctorate of Education

(Ed.D.) program that concentrates on social justice and social change education ignited

my interest in how principals apportion their time and their perceptions of children's

success.

General Information on the Significance of the Problem

I contend my dissertation was worth completing because it has the potential to significantly impact students, teachers, principals, central-office personnel, legislators, and all community members vested in education. Since understanding school and student success is fundamental to school reform, it is necessary to thoroughly scrutinize it. Also, previous research findings demonstrated that principals have a sizeable influence on children's learning and subsequently there is potential benefit in studying high-quality principals. In other words, investigating the practices of successful principals may provide all school administrators a toolbox of strategies necessary for school effectiveness. Continuing, my dissertation was worthwhile because it added to existing research on whether contextual or individual principal attributes affect principals' time allocation. Finally, student learning and success are the fundamental nature of education, which necessitates they are always inspected and critiqued.

I ardently believe my study was valuable because it has likely impact for individual schools and principals. First, it helped principals conceptualize or redefine their school's vision, mission, and beliefs. As a result, they had an opportunity to critically contemplate on their professional practice and determine whether or not it correlates to their deep-seated beliefs. Also, my research presumably helped principals understand and examine the actions of other principals, which undoubtedly benefits numerous students, teachers, and educational stakeholders. Likewise, seriously questioning internal thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions may assist specific principals in creating just practices and remedying unfair policies or procedures. As a result of this

hopeful principal reflection, students previously consumed in unfair educational practices may take part in a new educational experience where their needs and interests become a priority.

In addition to impacting education in general, principals, and individual schools, my research study shaped me. First, as I listened to contrasting viewpoints, it challenged my suppositions and subjectivities related to students' success. Consequently, I now possess a better understanding of what quantifies students' success. Similarly, studying the behaviors of principals helped me learn how principals distribute and prioritize their time, which are vitally important as I endeavor to become a principal. Also, I developed the skills necessary to successfully finish a research study specifically learning how subjectivities interact with an individual's mindsets or ways of thinking. Finally, my study allowed me the chance to learn about the practices of principals, which offered me knowledge I can integrate into future leadership positions.

The intended audience for my study was primarily principals, but also all educational stakeholders including students, teachers, parents, central-office personnel, policymakers, and community members with an interest in education. I hope principals find it valuable as they judiciously think about what justly constitutes students' learning and success. Moreover, all principals should find it helpful as they acquaint themselves with the actions, behaviors, and practices of successful leaders. Also, I am optimistic that teachers will read my research and begin to question whether their classrooms and instructional procedures are educating all children for success. If teachers or other educational stakeholders contend contemporary educational structures are not positively

impacting all learners, I wish my research will challenge them to question, assess critically, and make necessary changes.

Also, legislators should find this study constructive because it will hopefully challenge them to deliberate about what learning is important for children's education. As a result of reading this research, I anticipate intended audiences will begin a dialogue where current curriculum and instructional practices are analyzed, which has the potential to address systemic inequities within our contemporary educational configuration. Finally, I contend this dissertation was beneficial for parents because of the information it contained relating to students' success. In the present-day standards-based accountability era, I do not believe parents have access to the considerable negatives associated with it, which results in certain educators or policymakers using their power and authority to advance or justify specific components. Therefore, I maintain my study presented parents meaningful information linked to students' learning and success, which should facilitate deeper understanding and the ability to make an informed decision about what truly conceptualizes students' learning and success.

Introduction to the Dissertation

Therefore, my dissertation started with a problem statement including why it was necessary, the void in existing research I endeavored to examine, my personal connection to principals' time distribution and success, and the significance of the topic. The subsequent section of my dissertation included the review of related research where I dissected obtainable relevant research and strengthened the argument for the need of my study. Continuing, the following component of my dissertation was the methodology

where I gave details related to research design and methods. Furthermore, the design and methods components contained a description of the research sample, site, participants, sampling and selection procedures, data collection methodologies, analysis strategies, and problems encountered with solutions. Next, the ensuing portion of my dissertation highlighted description, analysis, and interpretation of findings where I strived to accurately represent participants' stories, develop patterns and themes within data, and deduce findings. Likewise, this segment discussed problems with my discoveries and offered a roadmap to future interrelated research. Finally, my dissertation concluded with a summary and conclusion concentrating on the impact of my study, lessons derived, new evolving ideas or questions, and limitations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Quantitative research related to how principals spend their time in schools has yielded negligible information. However, qualitative and mixed-methods studies offer interesting results (Camburn et al., 2010; Goldring, Huff, May, & Camburn, 2008; Horng et al., 2010; Neil, Carlisle, Knipe, & McEwan, 2001; Spillane, Camburn, & Pareja, 2007; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005). Researchers endeavor to determine how principals allocate their time in schools because principals' behaviors, routines, and actions present vital insight into school functioning and operations (St. Germain & Quinn, 2005; Camburn et al., 2010). As researchers explore how principals apportion their time, they normally differentiate their actions into leadership or management activities (Camburn et al., 2010; Horng et al., 2010, Goldring et al., 2008; Neil et al., 2001; Spillane et al., 2007). Although many researchers identify leadership and management in contrasting manners, the vast majority of studies conclude principals spend a disproportionate majority of their time performing management activities while leadership behaviors consume an appreciably smaller amount of time (Camburn et al., 2010; Goldring et al., 2008; Horng et al., 2010; Neil et al., 2001; Spillane et al., 2007). While numerous research studies attempt to find out whether principals should spend more time carrying out leadership or management responsibilities, several others report successful school leaders must spend time executing both sets of practices (Neil et al., 2001; Spillane et al., 2007).

Early Studies

Early studies of principals' time allotment found they spent a preponderance of their time completing short, fragmented activities that were unrelated to teaching and learning. Moreover, these beginning studies also found principals rarely participated in self-initiated tasks with the majority of their time focused on specific, immediate priorities (Martin & Willower, 1981; Peterson, 1977; Wolcott, 1973). However, as the context of schooling with contemporary trends centered on decentralization, distributive leadership, instructional leadership, standards-based assessments, privatization, and globalization became the foundation of educational reform, principals' roles and daily actions, behaviors, and tasks appear to have changed. Therefore, it seems logical to review several qualitative and mixed-methods studies, which should provide insight into how principals currently distribute their time.

Instructional and Management Activities

It is difficult to generalize from the bulk of contemporary research on how principals spend their time because the disproportionate majority of studies usually focus on one level of schooling either elementary or secondary, but typically do not use participants from both contexts (Anderson, 2008; Goddard, Neumerski, Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky, 2010; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996). However, one study Neil et al. (2001) from the early 2000s compared principals' time allocation between primary and post-secondary principals in Northern Ireland and concluded the majority of tasks completed by both groups were administrative in nature, but primary school leaders spent more time involved in activities associated with teaching and learning. Similarly,

findings also suggested post-primary principals spend half as much of their time performing teaching and learning activities, which they value much more than administrative tasks. In other words, results showed these principals spent most of their time carrying out daily administrative practices including phone calls, parent meetings, hallway duty, staff meetings, and department meetings, which they do not deem as important as leadership responsibilities.

In a more recent study, Camburn et al. (2010) reported principals devote their greatest amount of time to managerial issues including building operations and finance while student affairs demands their second most time. Furthermore, researchers asserted activities connected to instructional leadership and professional growth received 29% of principals' time, which was substantially less than management and personnel concerns. In order to gather data for this study, researchers used two specific instruments that are emerging in principals' time studies specifically daily logs and experience sampling, which are beginning to replace the formerly accepted standards of self-reporting surveys and observational data. Daily principal logs require that principals either summarize their activities on a daily basis or respond to a number of questions or behaviors that attempt to measure their time distribution on a daily basis. Similarly, experience sampling methods (ESM) generally ask principals, through completing numerous daily prompts, to describe their daily time allocation. Researchers including (Camburn et al., 2010; Goldring et al., 2008; Spillane et al., 2007) believe daily logs and ESM advance data collection accuracy because there is less time between principals' actions and subsequent recall. Similarly, these researchers also reported participants in various research environments aver ESM

and daily logs offered an accurate representation of their experiences, which provides educational researchers validity in using ESM and daily logs.

A similar study conducted by Walker (2009) sought to resolve whether principals' time allocation could be transformed from a concentration on managerial tasks to instructional practices or behaviors. In the study, the researcher reviewed the Alternative School Administrative Study that attempted to examine whether the role of principal, through the creation of a position termed the School Administrator Manager (SAM), could be restructured to focus more on instructional issues as opposed to managerial responsibilities, which often dictate principals' time. During the baseline year of the study, principals were working ten hour days with approximately 67% of their time spent on managerial tasks and 29% allocated to instructional practices. After the first three years of the project, principals were allocating close to 70% of their time to instructional actions and only 30% to managerial duties. Results of this study seem to imply that principals' time can be reorganized from a managerial to instructional focus.

Principal Attributes and Contextual Factors

Another issue related to how principals allot or spend their time includes whether individual principal attributes or contextual variables impact principals' daily actions (Goldring et al., 2008; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005; Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004). Goldring et al. reported that contextual and not individual attributes influence how principals distribute their time. For example, findings indicated principals spend drastically more time focusing on student affairs or instructional leadership activities while working in disadvantaged schools. Similarly, findings suggested eclectic principals

conceptualized as school leaders whose time is evenly dispersed across varying tasks work in schools where learners are typically less disadvantaged, teachers establish and hold high expectations for children, school size is classified average, and categorized as primary or elementary. Likewise, these same researchers suggested principals classified as student leaders defined as principals spending a majority of their time engaged in student affairs generally worked in small schools.

Heck (1992) conducted a mixed-methods study exploring differences in principals' time allocation between elementary and high-school principals. Also, the investigator endeavored to determine whether high or low student performance, in both elementary and high schools, could be predicted from how principals spend their time. Researchers concluded secondary principals do not spend the same amount of time as elementary principals focused on instructional leadership tasks, practices, or behaviors, which was explained by a number of factors including more discipline issues with secondary schools and competing demands such as athletics and clubs, which are not as common place in primary schools.

Furthermore, results suggested principals leading high-achieving schools spend more time directly observing classroom practices and offering feedback, facilitating discussion centering on instructional issues, and stressing the use of test results for program improvement, which seems to include components of Sheppard's (1996) conception of narrow and broad principal instructional leadership and Reitzug, West, and Angel's (2008) description of linear instructional leadership. In addition, findings also showed principals who spent time developing and clarifying school goals,

communicating specified goals to staff, and converting these goals into effective instructional strategies correlated with high-achieving or successful schools, which is similar to the data of Goldring and Pasternack (1994) who maintained school effectiveness is positively connected to framing school goals.

In a similar study, Spillane et al. (2007) reported that principals' time allocation centering on leadership and management activities varied from school to school and activity to activity. Furthermore, results showed that principals spent more time engaged in management tasks they were comfortable facilitating compared to teaching and learning practices, which were generally completed by teachers. As a result, researchers speculated individual characteristics including tacit knowledge affect how principals spend their time. St. Germain and Quinn (2005) maintained principals with extensive tacit knowledge delineated as on-the-job knowledge developed through experience or application tended to handle or solve problems more quickly than principals with inadequate tacit knowledge. Furthermore, results denoted principals with in-depth tacit knowledge spread their time differently than principals with limited on-the-job knowledge specifically spending more time communicating with staff members, establishing policies and procedures that strive to empower staff, cultivating a shared, collaborative vision, assisting professional growth and trust, and creating effective relationships with faculty.

Horng et al. (2010) completed a study centering on the relationship between principal time distribution and contextual or environmental factors. Findings of this mixed-method analysis revealed there were few statistically significant differences

between principals' time allocation and contextual factors; however, one exception was principals working in high-minority and high-poverty schools seemed to spend more time on managerial duties than colleagues serving in low-minority or low-poverty schools, which differed from Goldring et al. (2008), who reported principals running disadvantaged schools identified through percentage of poverty and minority learners spent an unequal amount of their time focused on instructional leadership and student affairs.

Also, Horng et al. (2010) found that principals who spend time developing internal relationships are positively associated with teachers' satisfaction at their current school, which may appear to support findings of St. Germain and Quinn (2005) who declared principals with a depth of tacit knowledge or on-the-job experience use a large amount of time progressing effectual relationships that build trust and empower staff members.

Another issue correlated to how principals apportion their time is the relationship between principals' behaviors, actions, practices, responsibilities, and emerging societal trends. Leone, Warnimont, and Zimmerman (2009) stated emerging structural developments including increasingly diverse learners, mounting societal poverty, swift changes in technology, and continual governmental accountability influence how principals distribute their time. For example, findings suggested these and other emerging structural trends demand that principals challenge the status quo and act as change agents, build strong outreach partnerships, institute a clear school vision, empower teachers to collaborate with each other, and encourage teacher professionalism, growth, and

collegiality. Researchers reinforce the conviction that emerging societal or educational developments affect principals' time allocation arguing beginning studies investigating principals' actions, behaviors, and practices were carried out prior to the proliferation of state and federal standards and accountability policies, which unquestionably impact how principals prioritize their time (Camburn et al., 2010; Goldring et al., 2008).

Instructional Leadership

Another important issue connected to how principals distribute their time is the relationship between time and instructional leadership. O'Donnell and White (2005) conducted a qualitative study of randomly selected middle-level schools consisting of grades 5-8 and examined the association between principals' instructional leadership behaviors and students' success. Similar to the majority of research studies, students' success was conceptualized as achievement on state accountability assessments (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Goldring & Pasternack, 1994; Heck, 1992; Supovitz, Sirindes, & May, 2010). Likewise, teachers' perceptions of principals' actions served as a measureable variable. Researchers reported principals' actions, behaviors, and practices focused on improving school learning climate were recognized as positive predictors of student achievement. Moreover, specific principal behaviors connected to advancing school learning climate were constructing policies that protected instructional time, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives and recognizing teachers for success, promoting and coordinating professional development opportunities, and offering incentives for students' learning. Findings also suggested that principals who demonstrate behaviors associated with defining their school's mission are related to higher student

achievement. For example, principals' behaviors and actions including framing school

goals, referencing students' achievement data, developing a shared mission, effectively

communicating goals, referring to goals with teachers, stressing progress toward goals,

and making decisions based on goals conceptualized defining a school's mission and

were positively linked to students' achievement. After reviewing the findings of this

study, they appear similar to Hallinger and Heck (1998) who maintained principals'

direct actions have minimal impact on students' achievement; however, their indirect

effects have significantly more of an influence on children's learning.

Hallinger et al. (1996) studied the relationship between principal instructional

leadership, through actions, behaviors, and practices, and students' reading achievement.

Similar to numerous other studies, researchers asserted principals' instructional

leadership behaviors have little to no direct effect on students' achievement; however,

have a substantial indirect effect on school effectiveness and improvement specifically

through actions, behaviors, and routines that sculpt a school's learning climate

(O'Donnell & White, 2005; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003).

Another fascinating finding of this study focused on researchers' assertions that

principals' behaviors are influenced by both personal and contextual variables. Moreover,

investigators stated contextual factors including school level, school size, socioeconomic

status (SES), and parental involvement have an effect on how principals allocate their

time, which is comparable to the findings of (Goldring et al., 2008; Horng et al., 2010).

For example, results showed principals in high SES schools spend more time

participating in instructional leadership activities than do principals leading lower SES

schools. Also, researchers reported personal characteristics of principals impacted how they distributed their time, which is analogous to several other studies (Boyan, 1988; Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1990; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005). For example, conclusions revealed female principals spent more time actively involved in curriculum and instruction activities than their male counterparts.

Another study that has important implications for my study was completed by Goldring and Pasternack (1994) who sought to determine whether there were differences between principals in more and less effective schools in the way they synchronized instructional programs through allocating their time to tasks and structuring school goals to reach consensus. Researchers listed principals' actions including curriculum planning, implementing innovations, involving parents in school activities, assisting in selection of teaching methodologies, and student evaluation procedures as behaviors that principals stressed by allotting their time. Careful review of data showed that elementary school principals' time distribution in framing school goals was more influential in promoting school effectiveness than practices directly related to teaching and learning. Also, findings suggested that elementary principals who spent time creating staff consensus related to educational goals lead successful schools and principals who did not distribute their time to developing consensus connected to school goals guided less successful schools.

In addition to measuring how principals allocate their time, this study utilized the prevailing assumption that students' success is evaluated through standardized achievement scores, which directly associates to my future study. To summarize, this

study strengthens the notion that principals' actions, behaviors, and time distribution positively impact students' achievement through the mediated or indirect effects of other staff members.

Another study related to principals' instructional time allocation and students' achievement was performed by Bamburg and Andrews (1991) who studied whether principals' instructional leadership behaviors differed in schools that were successful in promoting students' learning and those that were not flourishing. Again, similar to a considerable number of research studies, students' success was measured as scores on standardized achievement tests (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009; Goldring & Pasternack, 1994; Supovitz et al., 2010; O'Donnell & White, 2005). Moreover, researchers discovered principals in high-achieving schools spent appreciably more time engaged in actions, behaviors, and practices connected to instructional leadership than peers in low-achieving schools. Also, results of *t*-tests suggested there were statistically significant differences between principal actions and time allocation in high and low-achieving schools specifically principals guiding successful schools allotted more time to providing staff development for faculty, serving as an instructional resource, assisting staff in disaggregating achievement data, offering feedback regarding instructional presentation, putting forward a clear vision of school goals, making classroom visits, and serving as a visible presence within the school.

Whether one subscribes to a narrow, clinical definition of principal instructional leadership (Murphy, 1988) or a broader perspective (Donmoyer & Wagstaff, 1990), findings associated with this study support Murphy (1990) who stated principals in

successful schools take part in actions, behaviors, and practices both directly and indirectly connected to instructional leadership. However, as with numerous mixed-methods studies, one must decide whether students' success is solely predicated on standardized achievement scores or possibly something more.

Leadership and Student Achievement

Another significant issue related to principals' time allocation is the relationship between principals' overall leadership and students' achievement. Blasé and Blasé (2000) conducted a study that has substantial implication for my study because it analyzed teachers' perceptions of principals' behaviors that positively impacted their classroom instruction, which I believe is the foundation of principal leadership. Conclusions of the study indicated two principal actions specifically taking time to promote staff reflection and supporting professional growth were positively associated with instructor's assessments of enhancing their classroom instruction. Researchers stated principals' behaviors connected to talking with teachers included spending time giving instructional feedback, making suggestions, giving praise, modeling, and requesting staff advice and opinions while actions linked to furthering professional growth included encouraging and supporting redesign of school programs, affording time and opportunities for teacher collaboration, and cultivating coaching relationships with staff members. As a result of these principal leadership practices, results illustrated teachers reported strong, positive effects on their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral well-being, which appeared to improve their instructional presentation.

Another study that looked into the relationship between principals' leadership and students' achievement was performed by Supovitz et al. (2010). They reported principal leadership conceptualized through actions, behaviors, and practices is significantly related to teachers' instructional procedures and students' success in language arts and math.

Similar to several other mixed-methods studies (Goldring & Pasternack, 1994; Hallinger et al., 1996; Heck, 1993; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000) findings argued principals' behaviors and time allocation impact students' learning through their indirect influence on teachers' professional practice. For example, Supovitz et al. (2010) stated principals who develop shared mission and goals, an environment of partnership and trust, and focus on instructional improvement foster an atmosphere where teachers work together, collaborate, and engage with one another in areas of teaching, which indirectly and positively benefits students' achievement. Likewise, investigators further declared principals who distributed their time to these actions encouraged and pushed teachers to make considerable changes to their instructional pedagogies, which again assisted students' achievement.

Hallinger and Heck (1998) conducted a review of research using 43 studies conducted between 1980 and 1995 that explored the relationship between principal leadership and student success. As they performed the review, they divided studies into three main categories explicitly direct-effect models where the principal's actions influenced school outcomes, mediated or indirect-effect models where principal actions affected outcomes indirectly through other variables, and reciprocal or contextual-effect

studies in which the principal impacted teachers and teachers influenced the principal and resulting interactions shaped outcomes. The findings indicated principals' time spent through direct-effects had little to no bearing on students' learning while time allocated to mediated or indirect effects of principal leadership had extensive impact on school effectiveness or improvement measured through students' achievement, which reinforced findings of other researchers (Heck, 1993; Goldring & Pasternack, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Hallinger et al., 1996; Leithwood, 1994). Also, results of this review of research concluded reciprocal-effect or models using contextual factors as their primary area of study were the least scrutinized and demand intense investigation if researchers endeavor to determine how contextual or environmental indicators affect principal time allocation and student achievement. Finally, a noteworthy finding from this study centered on the necessity of researchers building valid and reliable methodological tools, which has great importance as I begin constructing these necessary instruments.

Similar to Hallinger and Heck (1998), Witziers et al. (2003) conducted a quantitative meta-analysis of 37 studies investigating the possible impact of principal leadership on student achievement. They reported small, but direct effects of principal leadership in elementary schools; however, no overall statistically significant relationship between secondary principals' behaviors and students' learning. Furthermore, specific principal actions, behaviors, and practices including defining and communicating school vision, visibility, supervision and evaluation, and monitoring had positive and significant associations to students' success quantified using standardized achievement scores, which

again lends itself to the question whether these evaluations define students' success and school effectiveness.

Leithwood et al. (2004) performed a review of research analyzing the relationship between leadership and students' learning. Findings revealed that leadership from a variety of school stakeholders including superintendents, principals, and teachers impacts students' learning. Also, results of the review suggested leadership is only behind quality teaching in its influence on students' success. Furthermore, similar to numerous research studies (Goldring & Pasternack, 1994; Heck, 1993; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000), researchers concluded progressing superior teachers positively affects students' learning. Similarly, findings reinforced research studies including Supovitz et al. (2010) who maintained facilitating a shared mission and goals, an environment of partnership and trust, and a collegial climate dedicated to instruction promotes students' learning. Researchers also reported the effect of leadership tends to be the strongest where the learning needs of students are most critical, which connected to several research studies that attempt to ascertain the relationship between principals' time and contextual variables (Goldring et al., 2008; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990).

Findings from Heck (1993) add to the sparse body of research on secondary school principals' time distribution and students' learning outcomes. The researchers cautioned educators not to generalize results from elementary school settings to the secondary level because there are distinct differences in the context of secondary schools. In this mixed-methods study, the researcher scrutinized principal leadership in managing

secondary school governance, work structure and achievement outcomes. Results

suggested principals' actions and behaviors were independent of school contextual

variables including school level, size, and type, which seems to contrast the findings of

numerous studies including (Goldring et al., 2008; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Heck et al.,

1990). Moreover, conclusions indicated principal in-school interactions, behaviors, and

actions were significantly connected to students' success. For example, principals who

spent time establishing effective communication patterns, creating a clear vision, and

encouraging and motivating staff indirectly and positively impact students' achievement,

which again supports the conviction that principal leadership and time allocation, affect

students' achievement through indirect or mediated variables (Hallinger & Heck, 1998;

Leithwood, 1994; Supovitz et al., 2010).

Leithwood and Montgomery (1982) performed a review of research that has

considerable implications for my study because it inspects the relationship between

principals' time and behaviors and school effectiveness. Results of the review deduced

principals who spend time fostering and preserving interpersonal relationships, advancing

staff participation in decision-making, engaging in activities with faculty, and nurturing

faculty reflective skills and goals positively influence school improvement and

effectiveness. Likewise, findings also indicated principals who spend their time providing

faculty with knowledge and skills through individual training, whole-staff professional

development, or peer support and collegiality positively impact school effectiveness.

In addition, researchers reported successful principals facilitating school

improvement established effectual communication between the school and external

stakeholders. For example, these principals spent time convening meetings and conferences with school stakeholders, maturing successful parent-teacher organizations, and becoming visible in the community (Berman & McLaughlin, 1979; Wilson, 1981). Finally, findings showed successful principals allocated a significant amount of time implementing program improvements based on collected and analyzed school information. As an example, these principals dissected students' test data and planned decision-making based on reviewed data, completed numerous observations and held subsequent follow-up meetings, and utilized information gathered in hallways, classrooms, and school functions to structure programs and facilitate students' learning (Venezky & Winfield, 1979).

Another study with major implications for my research was conducted by Cheng (1994) who collected data from a large-scale ongoing research project to examine how principals' time allocation and leadership are linked to school performance in terms of multi-level indicators such as school organizational characteristics, teachers' group-level and individual-level functioning, and students' learning. Researchers reported principals who demonstrated strong leadership behaviors or actions defined as promoting participation experiences for teachers, constructing lucid goals and procedures, creating alliances and resolving conflict, fostering professional development with growth opportunities, and holding staff accountable resulted in perceived organizational effectiveness. Similarly, findings suggested principals who spent time participating in these leadership behaviors cultivated positive teacher-group and individual-level performance including engagement, professionalism, job commitment, intrinsic

satisfaction, and esprit, which researchers maintained all have an indirect and positive effect on students' achievement.

Also, researchers conveyed the relationship between principal leadership and students' performance resulted in a moderate correlational association, which was much less significant than the connection between organizational and teacher effectiveness. After analyzing results of this study, it seems to sustain the conviction that while principals' actions and time allocation have a substantial impact on student performance the effect is typically moderated by other school or classroom factors (Cheng, 1991b; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hallinger et al., 1996; Heck, 1993; Leithwood, 1994).

An attention-grabbing aspect of Cheng's (1994) study was the researcher used measures other than students' scores on standardized achievement tests specifically students' self-concept, attitude toward peers, attitude regarding teachers, attitude with respect to school and learning, feelings of overload, and intent to dropout to evaluate students' performance or success, which again leads to the question whether students' achievement on accountability measures should be the sole determinant of students' success. Put another way, if students learn values, virtues, behaviors, mindsets, and learn the importance of communication, diversity, and social consciousness, but do not perform to a specified level on standardized tests does that constitute success? The forthcoming section of my review of related research examines research connected to our contemporary accountability era specifically focusing on AYP and whether it equates to children's success.

AYP and Success

Quantitative and qualitative research studies related to AYP and whether meeting it represents students' success are almost nonexistent. Therefore, the entire section of this component of my review of related research will focus on advocacy pieces or articles written by principals, teachers, social change educators, educational researchers, educators working for educational organizations or consortiums, and professors of education with the significant majority of the research derived from peer-referred journals and books.

One fascinating finding connected to AYP and students' success is the mindset that meeting AYP comprises success because it guarantees children learn and master high-level skills and knowledge, which are necessary for achievement in our newly formed globalized society and economy (Wiener & Hall, 2004a, 2004b). Carey (2004) supports this assertion stating high-paying jobs that necessitate a four-year degree will need millions of new employees in the coming decade. However, Carey (2004) also reported educational preparation prior to AYP focusing on high-level knowledge and skills for all children resulted in an environment where only 54% of low-income students graduated college in six years, 46% of African-American learners matriculated in six years, and 47% of Hispanic children completed higher-education in six years. Similarly, the National High School Center (2007) maintained work-ready jobs or those often conceptualized as blue-collar currently entail understanding of math including algebra, geometry, statistics, and trigonometry, which students typically lack entering the work force. Therefore, a primary reason AYP is often defined as students' success is because it

supposedly provides all students, regardless of economic, racial, or ethnic background, a rigorous educational environment centering on skills necessary for success in the twenty-first century with high expectations that undoubtedly improve the educational opportunities and outcomes for all children.

A second main reason meeting AYP mandates is equated to students' success is because it endeavors to make sure all students and schools are held to the same high standards and expectations, which replaced the previous paradigm that Title I schools and students should use different accountability systems often deemed less demanding than structures used by schools not designated Title I (Goertz & Duffy, 2001; Shaul & Ganson, 2005). Previous research showed that different accountability schemes often masked significant achievement gaps between children and also prevented certain learners typically those classified economically disadvantaged or minority from receiving access to educational services that promoted learning, graduation, higher-education, and employment opportunities (Wiener & Hall, 2004a; Shaul & Ganson, 2005). For example, research is filled with stories similar to Banyan Creek Elementary School located in Delray Beach Florida, which earned an A rating under Florida's average-based accountability configuration; however, disaggregating their data illustrated 83% of their white children were proficient in math compared to 29% of its African-American learners and 29% of its low-income learners (Bush, 2001; Thermstrom & Thermstrom, 2003; Wiener & Hall, 2004a). Therefore, a major theme permeating research connected to AYP and students' success is a single, uniform accountability system that compels disaggregating students' achievement through racial, ethnic, and economic delineations

ensures the achievement of particular children is not hidden within an overall

achievement composite or in a less than arduous structure.

Furthermore, findings from research indicated that rigorous curriculum, high

expectations, and a focus on all children can produce success stories similar to Laburnum

Elementary School in Richmond, Virginia that is 96% African American and 65% low-

income, but exceeds AYP goals by over 20% in both math and reading, Turtle Hook

Junior High School in Uniondale, New York who used the AYP environment to almost

eliminate the achievement gap between students classified economically disadvantaged in

both math and reading, and Seattle's TT Elementary School a high-poverty,

predominately minority school who utilized the AYP culture to significantly increase its

proficiency percentage and meet AYP requirements in consecutive years (Wiener & Hall,

2004a, 2004b). As a result, there is a considerable body of research that suggested AYP

results in students' success because all children are challenged and educated in a

demanding setting, held to the same high expectations, and given the possibility of

success.

Another important finding related to AYP and students' success is that meeting

AYP represents success because it calls for teachers to use data and evaluate children's

progress in a meaningful manner subsequently customizing instruction specifically to a

student's individual learning strengths and weaknesses (Gamble-Risley, 2006; McLester,

2006; O'Brien, 2010). For example, Success Adams 12 Five Schools in Colorado

employed diagnostic data assessments to help its students make more gains on AYP than

any district in the Denver area, Minneapolis Public Schools used a data-driven approach

to increase the percentage of schools achieving AYP from 38% to 71%, and Elk Grove Valley High School in California integrated disaggregated students' data to meet AYP for the first time in its history (Gamble-Risley, 2006; McLester, 2006; O'Brien, 2010). Consequently, research findings seemed to indicate that using data-based decision making allowed teachers to individualize students' instruction and subsequently improve achievement, which proponents argue unquestionably equates to children's academic success.

Although there is sizeable research specifying that working toward meeting AYP positively impacts students and leads to children's success, a more considerable body of research suggested it does not adequately measure students' success. Researchers including (Elmore, 2003; Lewis, 2006) corroborated this belief stating AYP is a subjective mathematical formula based on no defendable knowledge of school improvement. McLester (2006) provided evidence of the arbitrary nature connected to AYP by citing an example in Oklahoma where in one year the percentage of failing schools decreased from 25% to 3%, which opponents argued coincided with proficiency cutoff modifications. The findings of Prah (2002) and other educators maintained AYP is not meant to facilitate *all* students' learning, but create an educational culture of fear and crisis through unfeasible benchmarks inexorably leading to student failure. Similarly, wide-ranging findings suggested meeting AYP mandates does not equate to students' success because children are deemed successful if they simply surpass a proficiency baseline or benchmark regardless of individual growth, which countless educators argue

is a better and more true representation of students' success (Choi, Seltzer, Herman, & Yamashiro, 2007; Lewis, 2006; Viadero, 2006).

Another noteworthy conclusion connected to AYP and students' success is that AYP does not represent success because it persuades educators to narrow curriculum almost exclusively to tested subject matter. Chapman (2005) termed classes including social studies, foreign languages, physical education, and the arts the lost or neglected curriculum. Furthermore, research indicated that numerous schools reduced instructional time for these abandoned subjects to focus on math and reading (Coile, 2007; McLester, 2006; McMurrer, 2007). Moreover, researchers such as Rothstein and Jacobsen (2006) further reported high-poverty districts and schools constructed minimum time requirements at a much higher percentage than low-poverty districts.

As a result of narrowing or thinning curriculum, research showed students lose an appreciation for the arts while having their creativity stifled, opportunities to study and develop foundational globalization concepts including foreign language proficiency and cultural understanding, and the ability to internalize core democratic virtues needed to understand the dynamic nature of freedom and revitalize democracy (Bauman, 2001; Grey, 2010; Zhao, 2008). Therefore, results illustrated a significant number of educators believe meeting basic proficiency requirements at the expense of learning the democratic process, social awareness, critical consciousness, core globalization concepts, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, and an appreciation for the arts may not truly conceptualize students' success.

An additional body of research stated meeting AYP mandates does not characterize students' success because it prevents educating the whole child. Furthermore, there is considerable evidence that educators and the general public believe students' learning should embrace not only academic, but also social and emotional intelligences (Goodwin, 2003; Zhao, 2008); however, information suggested accountability, standards, and AYP tend to almost completely focus on academic or cognitive intelligence. For example, Noddings (2005) asserted numerous educators and researchers have associated pleasure or happiness with such qualities as a full intellectual life, rewarding relationships, sound character, spirituality, and quality parenting, which would imply that schools and classrooms should be pleasant environments cultivating the whole child, but students working toward AYP do not focus on happiness or learn its necessity as they are busy learning math, reading, and occasionally science content.

Similarly, Pink (2005) asserted AYP with its absolute use of standardized testing only expands students' left-brain directed skills including sequential, literal, functional, and analytical; however, employment involving these specific skills is frequently being outsourced for significantly less to developing countries. For that reason, data results suggested AYP may not symbolize students' success because it does not nurture students' right-brain directed skills necessary for numerous employment opportunities within our contemporary society. As a result, many educators and researchers argued this assertion calls into question the conviction that AYP represents students' success as it requires children learn skills and knowledge needed for continued American success in the twenty-first century (Pink, 2005; Zhao, 2008).

Another substantial quantity of research reported meeting AYP may not exemplify students' success because it potentially acts as an impediment to multiple ways of learning, encourages teachers to expect only basic performance from learners, standardizes curriculum, fragments knowledge, and commodifies children by treating them as numbers and not individuals (Au, 2007; Choules, 2007; Haney, 2002; Wolk, 2007). Kovacs (2009) asserted meeting AYP authorizations demands teaching children the exact same content standards typically in a direct-instruction manner, which the educator argued is antithetical to educating diverse children whose differences, may dictate teaching and learning that are not precisely uniform. Similarly, a significant group of educators maintained meeting AYP might not constitute students' success because it ignores social change or critical pedagogy that cultivates students' social consciousness, how to critique democracy, the needs' discourse paradigm, deconstructing hegemonic societal injustices, and an ethic of caring because it almost solely centers on meeting AYP benchmark proficiencies (Bauman, 2001; Choules, 2007).

Also, numerous researchers reported that striving to attain AYP requirements might not distinguish students' success as it treated children like numbers or commodities and not unique individuals. For instance, though some students may receive additional support and guidance in an attempt to accomplish AYP mandates, there is ample evidence that showed school administrators instructed teachers to focus their efforts on raising test scores of children who were closest to cutoff proficiency levels, suggested learners who were not near benchmark levels receive minimal instruction, and retained students not successful on accountability measures associated with AYP in hopes of

meeting directives in particular grade levels or subgroups (Haney, 2002; Neal &

Schanzenbach, 2007). Accordingly, information showed that endeavoring to meet AYP

resulted in classrooms where students were not given the opportunity to engage their

subject matter, explore curricular interests, participate in rigorous, comprehensive depth

of study, ignored because of their perceived ability, taught in the exact same pedagogical

manner, and retained in an effort to meet certain AYP guidelines, which innumerable

educators argued is adversative to all students' success (Au, 2007; Bauman, 2001;

Choules, 2007; Haney, 2002; Kovacs, 2009; Neal & Schanzenbach, 2007; Wolk, 2007).

After carefully analyzing the review of literature, there were a number of

unanswered questions that guided me through data collection. First, I desired to explore

how contextual factors and individual principal attributes impacted principals' time

allocation and opinions of success. As an example, did elementary and secondary

principals apportion their time differently? Furthermore, did principals running schools

classified high needs generally through socioeconomic status organize their time

differently than ones leading schools identified as having affluent demographics?

Likewise, I wanted to further investigate whether principals' experience and depth of

tacit knowledge affected how they spend their time. Continuing, I was curious to the

relationship between principals' time distribution and emerging educational trends

including globalization, common core implementation, twenty-first century technologies,

professional learning communities, and the potential elimination of AYP.

Similarly, I thought it meaningful and thought-provoking to examine how

principals in successful schools commonly categorized through success on state or

federal accountability measures conceptualized success opposed to principals leading

schools not branded successful on the same accountability instruments. As a result of

probing this concept, I believed it would enable me to gather insight coupled to

principals' convictions of success. In other words, I was fascinated to see whether any

participants would define success using measures other than standardized test scores such

as students' engagement, school or individual growth, helping children understand their

lives are meaningful, developing civic-minded students able to fully participate in our

democracy, cultivating children's critical social conscious, ability to think, critique, and

question, or developing interest or proclivities in subjects other than math or reading.

Next, I was eager to analyze the association between principals' actions and students'

achievement. As I scrutinized information within the review of research, findings seemed

to indicate principals had little to no direct outcome on students' achievement; however,

have a significant influence through indirect or mediated effects. Therefore, I would like

to study what indirect actions positively sway students' achievement within my

participants' schools.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Restatement of the General Research Topic

After completing my review of literature, there was considerable evidence suggesting principals' actions, behaviors, and practices influenced students' achievement through intervening variables typically other faculty members. Research findings established that principals may allocate their time differently depending on contextual factors including school size, level, type, student demographics, or staff experience. Similarly, results also indicated how principals distribute their time may be affected by individual characteristics such as gender, level of experience, or development of tacit knowledge. Also, a large body of knowledge demonstrated a contemporary mindset is principals should spend time as instructional leaders working collaboratively with staff members to ensure students' academic success essentially conceptualized as meeting AYP accountability measures. However, there was little to no information concerning how principals actually allocate their time on a daily basis.

Similarly, though there was extensive data discussing principals' reactions to AYP, the majority focused on how principals lead their schools to meet these federal mandated benchmarks. Likewise, there was also widespread information associated with how the high-stakes testing environment has impacted school reform (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Fuller, Wright, Gesicki, & Kang, 2007; Kim & Sunderman, 2005); however, we

have limited information detailing how principals leading schools view student success and what they believe are the educational goals of schools. For these reasons, my research questions will be:

1. How do principals define student success?

2. How do these principals spend their time?

3. Are the actions of principals consistent with their definitions of success?

Research Strategy

In order to study how principals spend their time and investigate their perceptions of students' success, I conducted a qualitative research study. For example, I collected data through a number of semi-structured interviews, which Briggs (1986) argued is fundamental to qualitative research. Interviews allowed participants and me to co-construct knowledge considered another hallmark of qualitative research. Similarly, I constantly scrutinized my subjectivity, which Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) declared is fundamental to qualitative research. Due to the complex nature of schooling, principals' time distribution, and students' success, my study primarily focused on the qualitative research paradigm with its emphasis on co-constructing knowledge, dissecting subjectivity, and understanding the experiences of participants.

Research Sample/Setting

For my research study, I was interested in learning how principals allocated their time in schools and how they viewed students' success. In order to investigate principals' time distribution and assessments of students' success, I utilized a convenience sample of 7 total elementary and secondary-school principals, from Happiness Public Schools,

located in Happiness County, which is a school district in the southeastern region of the

United States that consists of between 25,000 and 50,000 students. Also, my convenience

sample consisted of a diverse cross-section of schools. For example, I carried out

research in elementary and secondary schools because I ardently believed studying both

primary and secondary schools would offer comprehensive information. Likewise, I

investigated schools identified as affluent and disadvantaged as well as schools deemed

successful in attaining AYP and those categorized as not successful because of their

failure to meet AYP mandates. Although I utilized a convenience sample, I adhered to

Glesne's (2005) assertion that researchers learn more about qualitative research and a

certain phenomenon by working with individuals or participants they do not know or

know well. For that reason, I collected data in research settings where I did not personally

know the principal.

<div align="center">**Research Participants**</div>

To explore how principals spent their time in schools, I researched elementary or

secondary-school principals currently leading schools. Therefore, my research

participants were principals from a large school-district with close to 40,000 students

located in a suburban area approximately 30 minutes to one hour from a sizeable urban

center. Although the local educational agency (LEA) is located in a suburban area, it

comprises several schools identified as high needs, through socioeconomic statistics,

located in small urban centers, which ensured my research focused on diverse

populations of learners.

Furthermore, to gain access to my research participants, I scheduled a meeting with the district superintendent where I explained my dissertation focus, the necessity of electing principals who meet the designated criteria, and received permission to communicate with needed principals. After research permission was granted, I individually spoke with seven principals who met my necessary criteria, explained my dissertation purpose, and obtained their consent to take part in my research study. Also, at these private get-togethers, principals agreeing to take part completed necessary documentation specifically the Consent to Act as a Human Participant Long Form, which clearly described the purpose of my study, potential risks and benefits, who to contact with concerns, information associated with confidentiality, and other pertinent information including the statement that members' participation is voluntary and they may leave at any time. Finally, I gathered data from 3 elementary and 4 secondary level principals because this collection process yielded in-depth information. Similarly, I accumulated information from principals leading diverse schools not only based on school level, but also size, demographics, location, and principal experience. As a result of marshaling data from a diverse cross-section of schools, I contend data collection was all-inclusive, which is fundamental to qualitative research.

Key Concepts

In order to successfully analyze and interpret data, it was necessary to operationalize strategic concepts and variables within my research study that were potentially open to multiple interpretations. Therefore, I will begin this section by defining concepts vital and relevant to AYP.

Adequate Yearly Progress

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) consistently evokes a significant emotional response from educators, policymakers, and the general public. Moreover, it constantly serves as the focal point for heated discussions between varied educational stakeholders. Also, it can be argued that AYP is currently the leading force in educational reform. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a conceptual understanding, which should assist stakeholders in understanding its breadth.

Elmore and Rothman (1999) assert the Improving America's School Act (IASA) defined AYP as continuous and substantial yearly improvement at each school and local educational agency (LEA) with the goal of all children meeting the state's determined proficient level of achievement in both Math and Reading. Continuing, HR1 known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 expanded the conception of AYP. First, it required that states beginning no later than the 2005-2006 school year measure students in both reading and math in all grades 3-8 and once in 10-12. Similarly, the policy mandated that beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, states must assess learners in science once in each grade span 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12. Furthermore, it held school, districts, and states accountable for the adequate yearly progress of subgroups of children including all major racial categories, students with disabilities, children designated economically disadvantaged, and students who were Limited English proficient (LEP).

In addition, it specified that states measure the progress of all schools, districts, and states using the same definition of AYP. Also, policymakers established a target date by which all students must score proficiency on their reading and math assessments.

Similarly, the legislation delineated a progression of corrective action steps that must be undertaken if schools do not meet AYP and are subsequently classified as needing improvement. In other words, as The ABCs (2004) maintained, AYP endeavors to determine whether schools and districts are making expected progress in teaching children what they need to know in reading, math, and science.

If schools desire to receive federal Title I funds that are inextricably linked to AYP, they agree to commit themselves to the goal of ensuring all students score proficiency in reading and math by 2014. In order to achieve the goal of bringing all learners to proficiency, states started the process by creating academic content standards in both reading and math. As Lin (2005) and Goertz (2001) articulated, NCLB demanded these content standards were challenging and rigorous. Continuing, challenging academic content standards fundamentally ask what should all students know and be able to do. After states crafted demanding content standards, the next step was to develop accountability measures or tests to evaluate whether students were making progress toward mastery of specific content standards. Subsequently, states set a certain score on their assessments to judge whether children were proficient or deemed grade level related to their peers. Similar to the belief that content standards must be substantially thorough, (Goertz, 2001; Lin, 2005) declare another intent of AYP was ensuring student achievement standards were equally challenging.

After states constructed detailed academic content standards, valid assessments that measure students' progress against these standards and a subsequent accountability score that was classified proficient or grade level, the next logical step was for states to

create a starting point for the percentage of children required to meet AYP. The

Education Trust (2004) stated in order to provide schools, districts, and states a beginning

point, NCLB suggested the first target could be the percent proficient in the lowest

performing group of students in the state or the percent proficient or grade level at the

20th percentile of students within the state. Finally, states established specific percentage

target dates that increase over time culminating with all learners meeting the ambitious

goal of 100% student proficiency by 2014.

To ensure the accuracy of AYP results specifically that test scores were

representative of a total school, district, or state population, 95% of all children and also

learners within each subgroup must be measured. However, there were conditions built

into the AYP process to assist schools and districts if they did not meet proficiency or

percent tested requirements for subgroups of children. First, if a school did not meet the

statewide proficiency goal for a subgroup of children; however, reduced the proportion of

learners within that subgroup not meeting proficiency by 10%, it was granted safe harbor

meaning that subgroup is meeting AYP requirements. Second, to account for children

with severe cognitive disabilities, school districts and states can exempt up to 1% of all

children. Third, (Lin, 2005; The Education Trust, 2004) maintained states can average

scores for the current year with scores from the previous year or prior two years while

schools can average all tested grades within a school when comparing their score against

the AYP performance target. Fourth, schools were only accountable for subgroups of

children, which produced substantially reliable data. Fifth, several states were allowed to

utilize a statistical technique termed confidence interval with the goal of guaranteeing the

reliability of student scores. In order to understand confidence interval, a simple way of thinking is any given result or score is what one would expect typically 95% of the time; however, there is a slight and statistically insignificant possibility the scores are not truly accurate.

State Accountability Testing

In addition to understanding concepts associated with AYP, it is necessary to describe the state's accountability designations. The state's accountability program includes several building-level categories, which must be adequately explained to understand a school's classification. The categories are a two-part system with the first component detailing the percentage of students attaining grade-level proficiency on summative assessments and the second part concentrated on school and students' growth. The first designation that must be operationalized for the study is a Low-Performing School, which has less than 50% of its students earning at or above Level III and did not meet its specified school growth goal. Next, Level III is defined as grade-level achievement on an end-of-grade or end-of-course state test. Continuing, Education First (n.d.) labels Expected Growth as the level of academic growth that can realistically be expected from a school over a year's time, which is calculated using previous school assessment scores, statewide average growth on the tests, and statistical formulas. Furthermore, Education First (n.d.) terms High Growth as a school meeting overall expected growth with 60% or more of its children achieving individual growth benchmarks. Next, a Priority School is one with less than 60% of its children scoring at or above a Level III whether or not the school meets its expected growth goal. The next

school ordering is a School of Progress, which is conceptualized as 60-79% of children scoring at or above Level III and the school meeting or exceeding its overall growth goal. The next school classification is a School of Distinction, which is detailed as 80 to 89 percent of students' scores at or above Level III with the school reaching or surpassing its whole growth goal. Next, a School of Excellence is conceptualized as a minimum of 90 percent of learners attaining a Level III with the school making or bettering its expected growth score. Finally, an Honor School of Excellence is defined as at least 90 percent of children performing at Level III, the school meeting or surpassing its expected growth goal, and satisfying AYP mandates.

Common Core State Standards and the North Carolina Essential Standards

In addition to understanding concepts associated with AYP and state accountability testing, it is necessary to explain the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the North Carolina Essential Standards (NCES). The Common Core State Standards Initiative is an endeavor organized by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to uniform state content standards, for all students within the United States, in math and language arts. Common Core State Standards (n.d.) stated the CCSS received feedback from numerous individuals including teachers, school administrators, parents, national organizations, and other community members and were developed with a focus on college and work expectations, higher-order thinking skills, real-world relevance, and capabilities necessary for participation in our global society. Furthermore, the CCSS will replace differing content standards previously specific to individual states.

The North Carolina Essential Standards (NCES) are content standards similar to the CCSS; however, apply to all subject areas other than math and language arts. Common Core State (n.d.) says the NCES were created by individuals within North Carolina and characterized both the knowledge dimension and cognitive process of the standard. In other words, the NCES focus on the type of knowledge children will learn such as factual or conceptual and the knowledge dimension or thinking process utilized to understand the standards.

Data Collection

I utilized three primary strategies to gather data. First, I emailed principals two questions and asked them to return email me their written responses. The emailed questions focused on principals' current daily time division and how they would prefer to apportion their time.

Second, I conducted one semi-structured interview with each of the seven participants. The semi-structured interviews consisted of pre-constructed questions; however, I also queried with follow-up and clarification questions to make sure empirical information was accurate. Furthermore, all semi-structured interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder and subsequently transcribed. Also, the interviews were held at principals' schools because I believed that would be the most convenient setting for participants and yield the most authentic information.

Third, I employed principals' daily logs. In order to complete the daily logs, principals utilized a digital voice recorder to document their daily actions, practices, and behaviors. Principals carried the digital recorder with them and documented how they

spent their time. The daily logs quantified how principals leading schools allocated their

time and I stipulated principals only keep their logs when their day began and ended. To

gather sufficient empirical information, I collected one daily recorded log from each of

the seven participant principals. When providing principals directions for the logs, I

requested they detailed practices, actions, and behaviors that comprised their day. After

completing extensive reading about data collection, I learned all collection stratagems

have alleged weaknesses. However, I concurred with researchers (Camburn et al., 2010;

Goldring et al., 2008; Spillane et al., 2007) who articulated the belief that daily logs offer

an accurate representation of participants' experiences, which gives researchers validity

using them. Participants informed me their recorded logs were typical days and were fair

representations of their daily practices, actions, and behaviors.

Data Analysis

Once I gathered a significant amount of empirical data, the next logical step was

analyzing collected information. The first approach I utilized was transcribing interviews

and principals' recorded logs and subsequently coding all collected data. Moreover, I

used the font highlighter in Microsoft Word 2010 to color code important themes. Since I

am a beginning coder, I started with the assumption that all main subjects must initially

be coded and subsequently increased or decreased codes based on continual data analysis.

During the coding process, I examined interview transcriptions, recorded logs, and

responses to emailed questions searching for relationships, themes, and connections

within the accumulated data. Furthermore, the coding process allowed me to discern

themes and determine which ones were prevalent within interview transcripts. As a result,

I was able to identify patterns that facilitated accurate data analysis and interpretation.

Problems that Emerged

During the course of my research, several problems materialized, which

demanded immediate attention and resolution. First, in order to receive participants'

emailed responses in a timely manner, I established a two-week timeline; however, one

principal did not return his data within the time standard. Therefore, I sent the participant

an email reminder and subsequently received his data in two days. Moreover, emails

were typically transmitted using the delayed delivery option of Microsoft Outlook 2010,

which enabled me to send participants emails at strategically placed times specifically

thirty minutes before their school's days started, which I believed would improve the

ability to complete required questions in a judicious manner.

Second, to ensure participants' participation did not adversely affect their school's

operations or remove school leaders from their buildings, I scheduled a meeting either

before or after school to provide each principal the digital voice recorder necessary for

their daily recorded log. Furthermore, during my initial meeting, the school leader was

not sure how to use the recorder, which compelled making a brief tutorial part of all

participants daily recorded log get-togethers. Again, to make sure principals' involvement

did not negatively impact school operations, gatherings to pick up the completed

recorded logs were either before or after normal school hours. Similar to the created

emailed response timeline, I made a time standard for the recorded log, which all

principals adhered to except one. To guarantee I received the indispensable data, I called the participant and formed a new timeline, which the principal subsequently met.

Third, scheduling interviews was initially challenging, as I attempted to organize them to work with my schedule, which resulted in a limited number of potential times. For that reason, I increased the number of possible interview times providing each participant ten prospective times either prior, during, or after the school day, which allowed principals to select a time that best fit their school's specific needs. Accordingly, arranging interviews became seamless and yielded valuable and meaningful information essential for my study.

Fourth, transcribing principals' daily recorded logs and interviews was challenging and extremely time consuming. Therefore, I purchased Dragon Naturally Speaking speech recognition software, which I believed would expedite the transcription process. However, the software was not functional with the interview transcriptions because it only recognizes one individual's voice. Conversely, though the daily recorded log only contained one person's voice, because there was not a created profile for the specific individual the results comprised numerous mistakes, which lengthened the process and produced data with a significant number of mistakes. Consequently, I simply utilized my computer's audio player and Microsoft Word 2010 to listen to each recording and subsequently transcribe, which was time intense; however, offered the accuracy required for effective data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Fifth, once all the recorded research data were collected, it was time to begin my foray into coding. Since I previously had limited experience with coding, I wanted to

make certain I accurately discerned patterns, connections, and themes. Therefore, I scrutinized all collected data including emailed responses, recorded logs, and interviews and generated a code for every sentence. Also, I coded each phrase with a unique font, color, size, outline, or shadow to make it distinctive and easier to view. After coding emailed responses, recorded logs, and participants' interviews, there were over 85 separate codes. Next, I analyzed all codes and began the process of combining similar ones and producing resulting themes. For example, I combined problem solving and critical thinking codes into a higher-level thinking theme. Once major themes were formed, I explored connections within participants' data, which permitted me to accurately analyze and interpret data. Although the process was time prohibitive, I fervently maintain it helped me thoroughly and precisely dissect my research data, which was compulsory for effective data analysis, interpretation, and conclusions.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

Description

In order to understand how principals allocated their time on a daily basis, I reviewed all participants' emailed responses and recorded daily logs.

Mr. A

Mr. A is the principal of a traditional middle-school (grades 6-8), located in a rural area of a large urban center in the Southeastern part of the United States. The school has approximately 810 students. The school's demographics include 50% Caucasian, 30% African-American, and 20% Hispanic students with 72% of the children receiving Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL). The principal has worked for 15 years in education with 5 of those as a principal, and the remaining as a teacher and assistant principal. This is the participant's first year as principal in his current placement, as he was transferred at the end of the prior school year. He has an administrative team comprised of three assistant principals. The principal's daily log occurred on a Monday between 7:45 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. and the school day was free of any special event or activity. Mr. A's school is designated a School of Progress with Expected Growth under the state's accountability system and did not make AYP the previous school year.

Mr. A indicated that he spends most of his time engaged in discipline and administrivia [*sic*]. He maintained that administrivia [*sic*] is focused on activities,

practices, or actions dedicated to management. He asserted, "I think what I'm talking mostly about is the managerial pieces, the making sure that coverage is covered for teachers . . . just making sure that the details and things are taken care of so that things can go off smoothly." Mr. A wished he could devote more time in classrooms, coaching teachers and mentoring all students and especially developing rapport and relationships with children recognized as having behavioral problems.

Mr. A's daily logs showed that he allocated a considerable amount of time conducting informal observations and a subsequent debriefing session with district personnel focused on his teachers' math instruction. Mr. A said, ". . . going to begin classroom visits with Math Curriculum Coordinator trying to assess the level of preparation that is occurring, what models of instruction are being used." He also made supervisory duty a priority, earmarking time for morning, lunch, and hallway duty. As an example, he stated, ". . . I am going to report to the cafeteria at this time for my morning duties, help supervise the cafeteria area of the building."

In addition to informal observations and supervisory duty, Mr. A used daily time to interact with students for discipline concerns and have conversations concentrated on positive reinforcement. For instance, he stated, ". . . pulling a student from the cafeteria to my office to talk about some discipline that a teacher had brought to my attention during lunch block." Similarly, he indicated, ". . . called to an EC classroom to discuss positive behaviors that were observed with a child and give him a pat on the back and encourage him to keep up the great choices he's making."

Likewise, Mr. A took part in two parent meetings with one being scheduled and the other an unannounced conference. Also, he participated in several conversations with school staff members including teachers, a coach, and assistant principals. Mr. A asserted,". . . gonna [*sic*] meet with my eighth-grade assistant principal make sure that she understands what data I need her to collect on the cheerleading incident." Similarly, he proclaimed, ". . . getting ready to meet with two teachers just about their attitudes toward a specific child, give them encouragement to be more patient with this specific child."

Mr. A also briefly replied to email both during the school day and after students were dismissed. Likewise, he made two phone calls focusing on a student concern and personnel situation to the district's central office. As an example, Mr. A pronounced, ". . . called the EC Director and discussed with her some concerns I have about the South Happiness screening process and the specifics of a child that I intend to present at the February screenings." In addition, Mr. A's day entailed picking up pizza for the school's boys' basketball team and attending an after-school basketball tournament, which he expressed, ". . .will end approximately 10 to 10:15 this evening probably at which time I'll be off duty."

Mr. A stated that the ideal education for a student would be specific to the child's interests and support individual growth and development. He declared, "Well, ideally I think it would be individualized enough that every student is able to grow and reach their potential." He elaborated,

. . . it should be able to tap into these students' interests and areas of strength you know[sic] students who are strong in the Arts that you would be able to utilize the Arts, students who like physical activity and athletics would be able to utilize those things, students who love technology and computers you know [sic] would be able to utilize those.

Mr. A. also maintained that the ideal education for students does not include hyper focus on testing or accountability. He said:

I think what it does not include is that we are so concerned with test data and being driven by you know [sic] end-of-course or end-of-year exam that teachers don't feel the freedom to run with teachable moments, don't feel they have the freedom to make decisions as professionals in their classrooms.

Mr. A expressed several abilities or learnings he desired all children to possess prior to leaving his school. First, he declared students should develop high-level thinking skills. He stated, "I want them to . . . understand how to problem solve and be critical thinkers." He also believed students should develop a yearning to learn and that this must be cultivated by the school. He articulated, "If you can instill in them the love for learning, then you know they can become lifelong learners even when they go to high school or beyond high school." Thirdly, Mr. A indicated all children should be able to effectively communicate and collaborate with individuals. Fourthly, he avowed that all students must learn the importance of self-reflection. Mr. A declared, " I think them figuring out what it is they want to do, what is [sic] where their strengths lie, and figuring out how to maximize their strengths is important."

Mr. A next described actions his school implements to ensure every student leaves his building with these abilities (high-level thinking, effective communication,

collaboration skills, self-reflection). He noted practices that attempt to individualize

instruction and excite children about their learning ". . . we've implemented clubs during

the school day where all students participate in clubs, these clubs are theoretically in an

area that the child has an interest or desire to participate."

He also indicated there are several practices he personally carries out to certify all

children depart his building with specific abilities or learnings including high

expectations, stakeholder accountability, and providing staff professional development

opportunities. Mr. A said:

> I think from an administrator's point of view my job is to make sure that you hold
> high expectations for teachers and that you're holding teachers accountable for
> those things. . . and you know [sic] make sure that your teachers are participating
> in staff development.

Mr. A noted that lack of time in classrooms and the existing school culture often prevents

him from executing these actions. He avowed, "If you're not in classrooms and you're

not meeting with teachers and you're not coaching teachers and doing those things, after

time, the teachers will just do what they've always done."

Mr. A described his definition of success as linked to performance on state

accountability exams. However, he elaborated by noting that it doesn't truly

conceptualize students' success. "Well, I think the simple way would be to say their

performance on the end-of-grade exams, but I don't necessarily think that's the case." He

asserted that academic and behavioral growth also constitutes measures of students'

success. Mr. A elaborated:

> I think looking at their growth on benchmark exams and their growth you know [sic] from year to year on summative exams . . . is definitely a score you can look at, but there are other things too . . . we have some students here who last year who [sic] struggled tremendously with behavior, but this year . . . they're starting to make better choices for themselves. In my mind, those students are being extremely successful this year.

Mr. A also explained that success is individualized and includes students reaching their individual potential. He argued helping children understand their lives are not pre-determined is a component of students' success. "As far as student success goes . . . trying to teach them that success is attainable . . . they can have a good income they can be a productive citizen."

Next, he expounded on two primary approaches he utilizes to share his conception of success: establishing high expectations for all learners and constantly communicating his vision with all school stakeholders. He explained, ". . . with teachers it's done lots of ways it's done through weekly updates, it's done through staff meetings, it's done through grade-level meetings with the community . . . I rely on monthly newsletters, conversations with individual parents . . . at community events."

Mr. A also discussed instruments or evaluation tools employed to appraise success. These consist of benchmark and formative assessments, observations of behavioral growth, and gathering stakeholder perceptions. He professed,

> We have the Happiness benchmark testing that we use, we have some other computer programs that we utilize in smaller [sic] with smaller subgroup students . . . We also track discipline referrals that's part of our PBIS program . . . I think trying to keep your [sic] you know the understanding of the pulse of the community and the school as far as where morale lies with your teachers is critical.

Furthermore, he asserted staff morale and willingness to participate in school-based activities such as professional development are indicators he employs to evaluate success.

Table 1. Mr. A's Conception of Success

Components	Strategies to Share Definition	Evaluation Instruments
Performance on state exams	High expectations for all students	Formative assessments
		Benchmark assessments
Academic growth	Constantly communicating vision to all stakeholders	Observations
Behavioral growth		
		Stakeholder perceptions
Individualized		
Students reaching their potential		
Understanding lives are not pre-destined		

Mr. B

Mr. B is principal of a year-round middle school (grades 6-8), located in a small urban area of a large urban center in the Southeastern part of the United States. The school has roughly 915 students. The school's demographics consist of 50 % Hispanic, 40 % African-American, and 7% Caucasian students with 90% of the children receiving FRL. Mr. B has worked 14 years in education with 6 of those as a principal, and the remaining as a physical education teacher and assistant principal. Also, this year is Mr. B's first at his current placement, as he was transferred at the end of the prior academic year. He has an administrative team consisting of three assistant principals and the school

is classified as a North Carolina School of Progress with Expected Growth under the state's accountability system and did not meet AYP the preceding school year. The principal's daily log occurred on a Wednesday between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and the school day was free of any special event or activity.

Mr. B said he spends a majority of his time engaged in discipline and management of student behavior including safety violations. Mr. B avowed he must implement effective procedures and protocol before spending time focused on instructional leadership. Mr. B would prefer to apportion time as an instructional leader including analyzing student data and creating effectual instructional programming for at-risk or struggling learners.

Mr. B's daily recorded logs revealed he consumed a substantial amount of time resolving three student discipline situations. He verbalized, ". . . student discipline issue student cussed at a teacher, dealing with the discipline issue gonna [*sic*] call the parents and move toward suspension." Also, he dedicated time to connecting with students about non-referral incidents and also met with one community member about a joint school and community based program.

Mr. B did allot time to instructional leadership, through informal observations and debriefing meetings, with school staff members. Similar to Mr. A, he completed informal walkthroughs in math stating, ". . . doing classroom walkthroughs with curriculum coordinators and assistant principals in math to determine the effectiveness and what areas we need to grow in with math instruction." Mr. B also passed time taking part in

professional development including reading a book on grading and placement to share with his school's science teachers.

He also devoted a great deal of time communicating with staff including science teachers, a substitute teacher, social worker, curriculum coordinator, and assistant principals. Mr. B spent significant time communicating with students' parents about discipline, laptop usage, a schedule change, and a neighborhood issue that potentially could impact his learners. Also, his day entailed student supervisory duty. Mr. B said, ". . . was on bus lot before I met with boys' basketball team, making sure our buses got off smoothly school safety and new procedure in place want to monitor the effectiveness." He also assigned time to reviewing a variety of messages asserting, "Just got to school, checking voicemail, email, and courier."

Mr. B said the ideal education for a learner would entail qualified, caring teachers, an environment that was technology rich, engaged children, and a fun and exciting atmosphere that cultivated students' reading abilities. He averred,

> I think we need to selectively and creatively find the most qualified teachers in every classroom . . . and designate those teachers to come and work in these high-priority schools where the needs are so high . . . we need people who are just not 9 to 5ers that are here for the kids.

Mr. B proclaimed, "technology-rich classrooms provide students the access and the tools to be engaged in instruction." He also maintained,

> . . . find as many extracurricular activities we can to get kids excited about school wanting to come to school. When kids are excited about what's going to happen at school that day, they actually want to come to school. When they want to come to school, they do better at school.

Mr. B said, "We need to find a way to bridge that literacy gap that exists for that student

. . . to remediate these students in a fun and exciting way."

Mr. B also talked about significant abilities or learnings he wished students would

learn before leaving his school. First, he maintained that children must understand how to

collaborate. Mr. B affirmed, ". . . how to work collaboratively in groups because I think

that is what the future in any profession is going to require them to do regardless of

culture, regardless of personal choice that people make." Second, he said that children

must be effective consumers of information. Mr. B asserted, ". . . this is an information

rich society that we have right now with the Internet. We have to be good consumers of

information and not just take things at face value." Third, he avowed that students must

realize their future can be successful. Also, Mr. B believed it imperative to help his

students understand there is nothing they cannot accomplish with hard work. Finally, he

thought it essential that children learn respect for themselves and all other persons. Mr. B

said, ". . . respect for themselves, having respect for others and having respect for

authority that is something we work really hard on here."

Mr. B explained actions his school completes to make sure students leave his

school with the ability to collaborate, respect individuals, believe in their future, and

become discerning users of information. He mentioned school-level professional

development, tutoring of students, extracurricular clubs, and promoting a common vision

that drives school decision making. Mr. B stated, ". . . not all teachers are created equally

with the same skill set so we might work with some teachers on building relationships

and we might work with some teachers on content." He also declared, ". . . we have those

discussions . . . about where our school's headed and what our vision for our school is."

Mr. B articulated, ". . . getting kids excited will lead to getting them engaged and giving

them enriching opportunities and all three e's will lead to the fourth e, which is

excellence."

The principal also indicated there are a number of actions he personally carries

out including presence in classrooms, accountability, and support of teachers to guarantee

children exit his school with essential abilities or learnings. Mr. B said, ". . . I try to be in

classrooms as much as I can." He also asserted, ". . . there's accessible, approachable, and

accountable just for myself and I think I'll hand that down to the teachers." Mr. B also

expressed, ". . . I feel like I'm a teacher of teachers as the principal so I know [sic] work

with teachers. I affirm them I give them that corrective feedback when necessary." Mr. B

believed that time constraints resulting from discipline frequently prohibit him from

accomplishing these actions. He said, " kids don't always make the best choices; you can

spend several hours you know [sic] as you know, investigating one issue that can take

you away from being accountable, approachable, and accessible."

Mr. B believed academic growth represented success while passing an end-of-

grade accountability assessment did not necessarily equate to success. He declared, ". . . I

don't think success is every kid passing the test. What I do think success is, in one way, it

cannot be measured on the EOG is how the student is growing academically." Mr. B also

maintained success is nurturing children's desire to relish school and learning. He

pronounced, "You want them to know at the end of the day, they want to come back

craving for what's going to happen tomorrow because the teacher is doing something that

is really exciting that you know[sic] enriches their lives." Mr. B avowed that success can also be defined through small steps including reports of a cleaner school building.

He next explained that he utilizes two primary approaches to communicate his vision of success specifically celebrating student and staff growth and using meetings to encourage his definition of success. Mr. B contended, ". . . every time we have a staff meeting . . . in our PLC meetings, you know [sic] we start by celebrating our successes." He elaborated, ". . . I send out emails and do a weekend preview that celebrates things that we've accomplished the previous week and what's on our agenda for next week, and what are our goals, things we need to tune up."

Mr. B also conversed about specific instruments or evaluation tools he uses to measure success including students' growth scores, state accountability assessments, school culture, and external stakeholder or community perception. He said, ". . . the target score is a big one that I use, the growth measures are teachers getting their kids to meet their targeted scores?" Mr. B also stated state accountability testing is also a gauge of success. He stated, ". . . of course, the measure that the state uses are [sic] important too. How many kids are you getting to pass the test?" Mr. B asserted improving stakeholder viewpoints is a fundamental measure of success. He professed, "So just you know [sic] changing those community perceptions and the stakeholder perceptions is another measure of success that we consider."

Table 2. Mr. B's Conception of Success

Components	Strategies to Share Definition	Evaluation Instruments
Academic growth	Celebrating student growth	Growth scores
Desire to enjoy school and learning	Communicating successes	State accountability measures
Individualized	Using meetings to share definition	School culture
Small successes		Community perception

Mr. C

Mr. C is the principal of a traditional elementary-school (grades K-5), situated in a suburban area of a large urban center in the Southeastern part of the United States. The school has approximately 650 students. The school's demographics are made up of 80% Caucasian, 5% African-American, 5% Hispanic, and 10% Other typically classified Multi-Racial children with 6% of the students getting FRL. Mr. C has worked 13 years in education with 3 of those as a principal, and the other 10 years working as a middle-school teacher, athletic director, and assistant principal. The participant has served as his school's principal for the past three years. He has an administrative team comprised of one assistant principal and the school is classified an Honor School of Excellence under the state's accountability structure and did achieve AYP the prior academic year. The principal's daily log occurred on a Thursday between 5:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and the school day was free of any special event or activity.

Mr. C stated he spends most of his time completing classroom walkthroughs and taking action steps related to his emails. He also indicated he was satisfied allocating time to informal walkthroughs and deriving action steps coupled to his emails; however, would like to apportion more time working with a school-based curriculum coordinator.

Mr. C's daily recorded log illustrated that he committed the most time to communicating and conferencing with parents. He stated, "It's about 8:25 and just preparing to have a parent meeting in regard to a fifth-grade student, specifically related to an AIG issue regarding grading so anticipating that meeting to last about thirty minutes." Mr. C also spent an extensive amount of time being visible within the building through supervisory duty. He said:

> From 7:00 to 7:30, I was on morning car duty like I am every morning that I'm here in the building, and I do that to ensure we're keeping a safe and orderly procedure outside as we unload students from cars, but I also do it as part of my micropolitical responsibilities because the visibility to staff, students, and parents in front of the building, at the beginning of the day, is rather important.

In addition to conversing with parents and taking part in supervisory duty, Mr. C also devoted time to completing informal classroom walkthroughs. He averred, "It's approximately 8:00 and I will spend the next thirty minutes doing informal walkthroughs in classrooms and that's an opportunity for me to continually stay on top of the pulse of the school." Likewise, Mr. C articulated, ". . . I got to school today at 5 a.m. and spent thirty minutes reading a book called the *Collaborative Administrator* and I'm reading that as a way to enhance my leadership as we officially implement professional learning communities."

Also, Mr. C allotted a great deal of time going through and responding to stakeholder emails. He declared, "One-thirty to two catching up on emails from the day." He also set aside time working on paperwork including signing checks for the school bookkeeper, approving staff absence requests, and finalizing paperwork for a new staff position. Also, Mr. C allocated time to completing a fire drill and reflecting on his daily actions.

Mr. C believed the ideal education would include employing male teachers at the elementary level, a curriculum that centered on students' individual interests, and a strong foundation in traditional subject areas; however, would not disengage children or remove teachers' professionalism. He said:

> At the elementary level, they're exposed sometimes almost exclusively to females and I think that the ages between five and eleven are so formative and that's not to say our females teachers are doing a bad job, but I just think that there are learned behaviors and values and ways of doing things that our boys need to understand in regard to what it means to be a man that they're not getting at school.

He also declared, ". . . number two I would like to see somehow structured into the elementary day a way that kids could be guided toward learning experiences that are geared toward their interests." Mr. C also said, "I wouldn't want to sacrifice the establishment of strong foundational school skills when it comes to literacy, communication, and math skills." He also maintained that the ideal education does not contain educators who stifle students' personalities, degrade or harm children emotionally, and are unable to utilize their creativity and professionalism due to the demands of high-stakes testing.

Mr. C explained several critical abilities or learnings he believes all children should retain before they depart his building. First, he contended all students should learn higher-level thinking skills such as the ability to think independently and problem solve. Mr. C avowed, "I want them to leave with the ability to think independently. I want them to leave with the ability to problem solve independently." Second, he thought it imperative children exit his building understanding the importance of obligation to others. Mr. C elaborated, "I want them to leave with a sense of responsibility to the community around them . . . I mean the classroom and the school . . . to those other students in their classroom." He also indicated it was crucial that children left his building with a solid underpinning in traditional subject areas including math, science, and social studies. Mr. C maintained students must develop core 21st century skills such as the ability to communicate and collaborate prior to leaving his school. He further expressed, ". . . I want them to leave with a strong foundation in the ability to communicate and the ability to collaborate with others."

Mr. C also discussed several abilities or learnings such as the ability to think and problem solve independently, a nurtured sense of responsibility to others, comprehension of core subject area knowledge, and the capacity to successfully communicate and collaborate he believed all children should possess prior to leaving his building. He maintained integrating these aptitudes or learnings into all classroom instruction and making sure his staff modeled these preferred skills were vital to students' success. Mr. C averred, ". . .we are constantly trying to implement activities that require students to communicate through the written and spoken word." He also professed, "I try to model

the ideas of communication and collaboration and I certainly expect my teachers to model those things by interacting with the kids and providing strong examples of how to interact with one another in a positive and effective way."

Mr. C also discussed actions such as classroom visibility and staff accountability that he personally completes to certify children depart his building with sought after abilities. He explained, ". . . when I'm in classrooms whether it's in a formal or informal way, I really try to focus on those opportunities . . . and when I'm giving feedback to teachers, I try to focus on those things." Likewise, Mr. C talked about how he integrates periodic audits of students' notebooks and teachers' conference notes to ensure their classroom environments are concentrated on fundamental skills including thinking and problem solving independently, a feeling of responsibility to other individuals, and effectively communicating and collaborating. Mr. C indicated that time restraints due to the obligations of communicating with school stakeholders often prevented him from performing these actions. He stated, ". . . I would probably just say time constraints you know [sic] when it comes to like I said, trying to manage the email and communication coming in and following up on those things."

Mr. C defined success as developing students' self-images and self-reflection, cooperating with others, parent opinions, and preparing children for subsequent schooling. He expressed, ". . . I would say that success for a student would be having a positive self-image, having confidence in one's abilities, but also understanding one's limitations and then trying to capitalize on strengths to overcome those limitations." Mr. C also stated, ". . . I also see students' success as the ability to cooperate with both adults

and other students and I see success as really a child leaving here at the fifth grade being

prepared for the rigor and the demands of the next phase in their schooling in middle

school." He further explained he uses two primary strategies including constantly sharing

his definition of success with school stakeholders and offering staff a forum to celebrate

or affirm one another. Mr. C contended, ". . . I send out a weekly bulletin to teachers . . .

where I'm constantly just trying to pepper them with different observations . . . trying to

give those teachers a shout out when I see things that equate to what we talked about

helping kids be successful." Mr. C also said, ". . . we provide a forum for teachers or

other staff members to give the staff members similar type shout outs . . . we're providing

those shout outs where we see other staff members being consistent with those values and

those goals."

Mr. C also elaborated on instruments or evaluation tools he employs to measure

success. He asserted he makes use of the state's formal teacher evaluation mechanism to

assess success; however, depends on stakeholders informal feedback to truly gauge

success. Mr. C disclosed, "As principal, I utilize just a lot of informal, anecdotal kinds of

data like emails that I get from parents or passing conversations that I have with parents

in the hallways." He explained:

> Quite honestly informal conversations are much more powerful to me than those
> standardized instruments because I just feel like I can keep an ongoing pulse of
> the building, kind of more a formative assessment if you will rather than a
> summative through those informal conversations and that informal feedback
> that's constantly coming day to day and those kinds of things include body
> language that I observe with kids, tone that I sense in teachers on a daily basis.

Table 3. Mr. C's Conception of Success

Components	Strategies to Share Definition	Evaluation Instruments
Students' self-images	Constantly communicating vision to all stakeholders	Stakeholder perceptions
Student reflective ability		Classroom observations and audits
	Creating forum where staff reinforces success	
Communication and collaboration skills		
	Model behaviors	
Future readiness		

Mr. D

Mr. D is the principal of a traditional elementary-school (grades K-5), located in a suburban area of a sizeable urban center in the Southeastern part of the United States. The school has approximately 500 students. The school's demographics consist of 80% Caucasian, 9% African-American, 9% Hispanic, and 2% Other students with 30% of the children receiving FRL. Mr. D has been employed 12 years in education with 4 of those as a principal, and the remaining years as an elementary and middle-school teacher and elementary assistant principal. Mr. D has worked as his school's principal for the past 4 years. He has an administrative team comprised of one shared assistant principal and the school is categorized an Honor School of Excellence under the state's accountability system and did meet AYP the preceding school year. The principal's daily log occurred on a Monday between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and the school day was free of any special event or activity.

Mr. D maintained he spends a considerable amount of time completing managerial duties including drills, facilities, office work, and planning field trips. He also declared he allocates a sizeable amount of time to students' discipline and attending school-based meetings such as IEP conferences. On the other hand, Mr. D stated he would prefer to apportion his time to practices, behaviors, and actions focused on classroom support for students and teachers. He also said his ability to earmark time to classroom teaching and learning has drastically decreased, which he contributed to managerial aspects he must perform, which he believes are a direct result of his small administrative team**.**

Mr. D's daily recorded log revealed he expended the majority of his time communicating with school staff members including teachers, a counselor, bookkeeper, and the school's data manager. Mr. D expressed, "At 2:15, once I got back into the building, I talked to a parent about a teacher issue, a parent had emailed a teacher." He stated, "After that, probably 8:55, I looked at the allotment sheet . . . and talked to my coordinator about that."

Mr. D also dedicated time to visiting classrooms observing teaching and learning. He asserted, ". . . I went and walked around the school and got in some classrooms to just see you know [sic] what was going on check out instruction and task time." Mr. D also allocated time to interviewing two candidates for a vacant school-based position. He declared, ". . . about 12:00 or 12:10 to interview again or for me to interview, and that was a different person that was for the EC position that we have open."

Mr. D spent time interacting with community stakeholders including an athletic association who utilizes his school's facilities and twice spoke with his district's central office related to personnel and accreditation matters. For example, "Uh, 7:30, I had a parent drop off books for our donations took them from her talked to her for a minute."

He also used time ensuring students' safety through morning and afternoon supervisory duty. Mr. D avowed, "From 7:00 to 7:30, I just made rounds walked around the school, walked the outside of the school, the tardy bell rings at 7:30." Finally, he spent a small amount of time working with a student discipline issue, checking and signing paperwork, and meeting with a parent.

Mr. D believed the ideal education for any student would consist of higher-level thinking, individualized instruction, a project focus, and student initiated learning. He stated, "One that's hands on, one that's problem solving oriented, one that's student-led uh [sic] facilitated, but student led." Mr. D continued:

> Of course, one that could be project based where kids are working at an independent level based on where they are, something where the teachers are just kind of having a hand in pushing them along as opposed to giving it to them and saying here's what you need to do.

He also maintained the ideal education does not include over testing students using end-of-grade assessments or worksheets that serve as time fillers.

Mr. D chatted about important abilities or learnings he believed all children should mature prior to leaving his building. First, he declared students must learn self-confidence before exiting his school. Mr. D said, "Yeah, confidence, common sense, you know [sic] not doubting themselves and always having to say is this right?" He further

averred his school must cultivate students' facility to effectively problem solve. Mr. D asserted, "The ability to think for themselves to be problem solvers, whenever they come into something, they can think and go what tools I have?"

Mr. D discussed actions his school implements to guarantee children depart his building with the capacity to problem solve and possess a developed sense of self-confidence. First, he professed his school strives to make problem solving and self-confidence a significant part of classroom instruction. Mr. D avowed, "We try to focus on problem solving. We try to make that a part of every area and even specifically label it problem solving and not just necessarily in math . . . but in all areas." Similarly, he asserted, "Being able to prove it that's problem solving . . . and if they can prove it's correct and they have confidence in it, then most of the time it's going to be right."

Next, he described practices such as classroom visibility and modeling preferred behaviors with staff he uses to make certain students exit his school with self-confidence and problem-solving skills. Mr. D affirmed, ". . . when I walk around classrooms, making sure things like that are happening." He maintained, "Making sure that the teachers give those kids the opportunities to do that and grow problem solving." Mr. D also emphasized the importance of modeling stating, "I try to do the same things with my staff anytime there is an issue instead of giving them a solution I'll give them the issue and they'll come up with the solution letting them be the problem solvers." He mentioned time constrictions related to managerial aspects prohibit him from effecting behaviors such as being a visible classroom presence and modeling necessary behaviors with staff.

Mr. D said, "The crunch of the day . . . all the management aspects of the school not necessarily the instructional aspects."

Mr. D believed success was connected to academic growth, behavioral growth, and instilling confidence in children to ensure they reach their potential. He declared, ". . . success is in growth, it's not necessarily getting a three or a four on a test." Mr. D further articulated, "Its growth, it's having confidence in themselves letting them know . . . that they can do it, it is possible." He said, ". . . if a kid is having some behavior issues, then yeah behavior growth would be a part of that." He also talked about how he discloses his definition of success to school stakeholders. Mr. D mentioned the most effectual way to communicate his conception of success is through ingraining it in all conversations with school stakeholders. He elaborated, "Just in conversations that we have with parents and community members . . . letting them know it is about growth and isn't about a test score." Mr. D stated, "So, having those conversations with those key members . . . the parents and community members anytime we get a chance we share our vision and what we're doing it."

Mr. D also chatted about instruments or evaluation tools he exercises to measure success including growth scores from various formative assessments and end-of-grade accountability testing. He maintained, "Well, we look at their individual diagnostic reports to find out their individual growth." Mr. D also revealed his school uses end-of grade assessments to judge success; however, also explained the fact they're only given once a year limits the value he places on their significance.

Table 4. Mr. D's Conception of Success

Components	Strategies to Share Definition	Evaluation Instruments
Problem solving	Constantly communicating vision to all stakeholders	Growth scores
Academic growth	Visibility	End-of-grade assessments (minor tool)
Behavioral growth	Model desired behaviors	
Self-confidence to reach potential		

Mr. E

Mr. E is the principal of an International Baccalaureate (IB) high school (grades 9-12), located in a suburban area of a large urban center in the Southeastern part of the United States. The school has approximately 1,370 students. The school's demographics include 98% Caucasian and 2% minority learners with 2% of the children receiving (FRL). Moreover, the principal has worked for 38 years in education with 26 of those as a principal, and the remaining as an elementary teacher and high-school coach. This is the participant's first year as principal in his current placement, as he was transferred at semester. His administrative team is comprised of three assistant principals while the school is designated an Honor School of Excellence, which is the state's highest recognition within its accountability system and did make AYP the previous school year. The principal's daily log occurred on a Tuesday between 7:20 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. and the school day was free of any special event or activity.

Mr. E indicated he spends a substantial amount of time communicating with parents coupled to school-related concerns. As a result of these parent communications, he allocates a sizeable amount of his daily time talking with teachers about these parental matters. As an example, Mr. E cited scheduling conversations as a practice he allots a large quantity of time to on a daily basis. Conversely, Mr. E would rather spend his daily time collaborating with teachers, building personnel, and district employees focused on instructional improvement.

Mr. E's daily recorded log showed he expended an extensive amount of time communicating with school-district employees connected to staff personnel issues. Mr. E said, "Talking on the phone with Dr. X about several personnel issues. I will have a meeting with Dr. X via teleconference about 11:00 a.m. today." He averred, "One o'clock, have a call with Dr. Y, a conference call, about a personnel situation." Mr. E also spent an immense quantity of time taking part in supervisory duty and attending after-school events. He stated, "It's 7:30, one basketball game down one to go, got to hand out the trophy to the girl who has scored a thousand points in her career that's pretty cool." He also asserted, "Starting my first round of lunch duties . . . now I'm going back to lunch duty for the fourth time."

Also, Mr. E apportioned time to meeting with school stakeholders including his bookkeeper and administrative team. He maintained, "Ten o'clock, starting an administrative team meeting that should have happened at 8:30, but we had other things that came up so we're going to have our meeting now." Mr. E earmarked time after school to answer stakeholder emails, return phone calls, and finish paperwork. He also

dedicated time to arranging coverage for two staff members who were absent. Mr. E

declared, "I also have my athletic director who is out for the day, I think I have to find

some coverage for him and I have another assistant principal that is out for the day I have

to find coverage for that person."

Mr. E believed the ideal education included individualized instruction, an

environment with a small student to teacher ratio, and opportunities to develop

communication skills. He stated, ". . . the research is pretty clear it would be an

individualized instructional program with one on one or one to three ratio of student to

teacher." Mr. E further asserted, ". . . but there's [sic] probably needs to be some

opportunities for students to socialize in groups."

Mr. E also talked about abilities or learnings including problem solving,

communication skills, work ethic, collaboration, and critical thinking, which he contends

all students should retain before leaving his school. He declared, ". . . I think

communication is probably the most important area. They need to be able to

communicate verbally; they need to be able to read and understand written material."

Mr. E claimed:

> I think they need to be able to problem solve; I think that's a huge piece; they
> need to be able to work in large groups and small groups and be able to work
> independently, be able to solve situations when they come up by using certain
> steps.

Mr. E discussed actions his school undertakes including modeling behaviors to

students to ensure children exit his building with essential abilities such as problem

solving, communication skills, work ethic, collaboration, and critical thinking. He

explained modeling appropriate skills occurs in various formats including student registration sessions and activities focused on the program of studies.

Mr. E also chatted about behaviors he personally performs including classroom visibility, modeling behaviors to staff, building relationships with children, and accessibility with parents to guarantee students depart his building with important abilities or learnings. He expressed, "I attend classes and talk with kids . . . try to build a relationship with students." Mr. E averred, ". . . my goal is to help staff develop relationships as well as myself develop relationships with students, and to develop communication patterns with parents." He also stressed time limitations typically resulting from communication with parents and supervisory duty prevent him from completing his wanted practices or behaviors. Mr. E avowed, "Parent emails and parent communication is one, lots of supervision that I'm sure are necessary in some cases, but it seems like those are times when you could be doing some important tasks."

Mr. E insisted students' success included grades, a future college plan, awards earned, a positive learning experience, and being well rounded. He held, ". . . if they're making good academic progress, in other words receiving passing grades, that is one way to define student success, some of the awards these kids win shows that they're being successful." Mr. E declared, ". . . they're involved in activities and are involved in academics . . . shows that they're well rounded." He also explained student acceptance into college or creating a future plan for higher education is another fundamental piece of success. Mr. E contended he uses two principal strategies specifically continuously sharing his conception of success with all school stakeholders and celebrating examples

of success to communicate his definition of success with all school shareholders. He said,

". . . we do a weekly message and talk about our strengths, our successes during the week

and upcoming events." Mr. E further stated, "I think through all those groups, working

together and talking with all those groups . . . just a number of activities where we share

our successes with parents and talk about our goals."

He also specified instruments or evaluation devices such as graduation rate, end-

of-course summative examinations, benchmark assessments, number of learners taking

part in school activities, children's grades, and teacher evaluations he utilizes to assess

success. Mr. E declared:

> Well, we have benchmarks for our students, end-of-course tests for our students in
> four core areas, some kind of end of the year or end of the course because most of
> the courses are semester long assessments. Of course we have progress reports;
> we look at the AYP and ABC information; we look at the graduation rate; we
> look at the number of students involved in activities; we just look at a number of
> things.

Table 5. Mr. E's Conception of Success

Components	Strategies to Share Definition	Evaluation Instruments
Grades	Constantly communicating	Graduation rates
Plan for college/future	vision to all stakeholders	End-of-course exams
Awards	Visibility	Formative assessments
Well rounded	Model behaviors to staff	Number of students
Enjoy schooling		involved in activities
Positive learning		Students' grades
experience for children		

Mr. F

Mr. F is principal of a traditional middle-school (grades 6-8), located in a suburban area of a large urban center in the Southeastern region of the United States. The school has approximately 1,350 students. The school's demographics include 78% Caucasian, 10 % Hispanic, and 9% African-American learners with 30% of the children receiving (FRL). The principal has worked 10 years in education with 1 of those as a principal, and the remaining as a teacher, academic facilitator, academy director, and assistant principal. This is the participant's first year as principal in his current placement, as he was transferred at the semester change. Mr. F has an administrative team comprised of three assistant principals. Finally, his school is designated a School of Distinction with High Growth under the state's accountability system and did not make AYP the previous school year. The principal's daily log occurred on a Thursday between 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and the school day was free of any special event or activity.

Mr. F's revealed he devotes a significant amount of his daily time assuring the academic needs of all children are met. He explained meeting the academic needs of children as facilitating their progression to high school. Mr. F proclaimed he allocates a large portion of his daily time to students' discipline including being proactive to reduce children's discipline situations. Mr. F also allocated a substantial quantity of his daily time cultivating effective relationships with external school stakeholders. He would rather spend his daily time developing a practical manner to apply the curriculum of the classroom, create meaningful professional development opportunities, and teach students character education traits, which he believed would promote acceptable student

behaviors. Mr. F explained applying the curriculum of the classroom as ensuring all students, regardless of ability level, are provided high-quality instruction commensurate to their specific developmental level.

Mr. F's daily recorded log indicated he spent the biggest portion of his day being present at school-level meetings. He stated, "Just got out of an ACE meeting with all the administrators, our EC department, as well as our guidance counselors' staff . . . the ACE meeting lasted for approximately 45 minutes to an hour."

Mr. F also allocated a sizeable amount of his time conversing with students for both discipline and non-discipline situations. He declared, ". . . had a student waiting for me the student was doing some inappropriate things, called parent, delivered the student back to class got a consequence for tomorrow." Mr. F said, "Just helped a kid with lost and found that was around 12:10 back in my office."

He also spent a great deal of time communicating with district personnel beginning his day with a conference at the district's central office, speaking with district employees, and completing mandatory district paperwork. Mr. F elaborated, "In approximately [sic], called Mr. Z in regard to a personnel situation for the front office." He also apportioned part of his day to supervisory duty. Mr. F averred, ". . . I went to the hallways around 8:20 and I looked at the transition from the buses to the hallways." He used smaller quantities of time walking into classrooms, sharing information with parents using a computer and phone message system, and finishing the managerial work of making copies. Mr. F also allotted daily time to ensuring a school program would be successful within the next few days. He maintained, "Approximately 11:30, I went down

to the P.E. Department, check out the mic system for the program we are having on Friday, Black History Program."

Mr. F stated the ideal education would be student centered, engaging, and enjoyable. He asserted, ". . . I envision a classroom that would involve a lot of hands on activities." Mr. F further described, "I envision a classroom that would be student based, centered around students." He contended the ideal education is not one where children are passive and disengaged in the learning process. Next, Mr. F chatted about abilities or learnings he expected all children to retain prior to leaving his building. He believed instilling in students a thankfulness for education and fostering their capability for lifelong learning are critical. Mr. F declared, "I want them to have a love for education. I want them to develop into lifelong learners, have an appreciation for education and understand the importance of education."

Mr. F also talked about actions or behaviors his school carries out to guarantee children depart his school with an appreciation for education and the aspiration to become lifelong learners. He said effective scheduling and communication with parents are two such fundamental practices. Mr. F avowed, "We make sure . . . scheduling wise they're in appropriately placed locations that best fit the student." In a like manner, the participant averred, ". . . we involve parents and make sure they understand that [sic] the importance of education."

He said he personally performs activities or practices including being a visible classroom presence and modeling looked-for behaviors to staff, which he completes to make sure children exit his building with a love for education and the longing to always

learn. Mr. F pronounced, "I have been known to go into a classroom and teach a classroom . . . being visible I think is very important." He also stated, "Just today in band class, I participated in the learning process by playing a saxophone and participating in a math competition on Pi Day." Mr. F said financial restraints and their subsequent effect make it difficult to implement school-level and individual practices that cultivate vital student learning.

Mr. F asserted student success is conceptualized through academic, behavioral, and developmental growth. He stated, "I define it with growth, where they entered the classroom and where they leave the classroom." Mr. F further explained, "They come in and they're at this level behaviorally or academically and they reach a different level higher than where they were previously that is growth." He also described success as preparing children to become productive, contributing members of society. Mr. F indicated he conveys his definition of success to stakeholders every time he enjoys an opportunity. He said, "I communicate it, communicate in every forum. I demonstrate it at many forums be it a faculty meeting, be it an advisory meeting, student meetings, anytime anywhere. It's how I share my definition . . . of success." Mr. F also discussed various instruments or evaluation tools including students' grades, work samples, behavioral goals, and EOG scores he employs to appraise students' success. He averred, "There's a myriad of different things or instruments we use to gauge how successful students are."

Table 6. Mr. F's Conception of Success

Components	Strategies to Share Definition	Evaluation Instruments
Academic growth	Constantly share information with teachers	End-of-grade assessments
Behavioral growth	and community members	Grades
Future readiness	Celebrate successes	Work samples
Appreciation for education	Model successes	
Lifelong learners		
Productive members of society		

Mr. G

Mr. G is principal of a traditional elementary-school (grades K-5), situated in a rural area of a large urban center in the Southeastern part of the United States. The school has approximately 630 students. The school's demographics are made up of 42% African-American, 34% Hispanic, and 24% Caucasian students with 86% of the children getting FRL. Mr. G has worked 16 years in education with 6 of those as a principal, and the outstanding years as an elementary and middle school teacher, headmaster, and assistant principal. This is Mr. G's first as the school's building principal, as he was transferred at the end of the prior school year. His administrative team is comprised of one assistant principal and the school is classified a School of Distinction with High Growth under the state's accountability structure and did achieve AYP the prior academic

year. The principal's daily log occurred on a Thursday between 6:45 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. and the school day was free of any special event or activity.

Mr. G devoted the majority of his daily time emailing, working with student discipline incidents, conducting formal classroom observations, communicating with school staff to guarantee district, state, and federal mandates are adhered to, and participating in school meetings. He would prefer to allocate his daily time working with children to enhance their learning, cooperating with teachers for instructional improvement, and visiting classrooms with an emphasis on providing instructors and children authentic feedback.

Mr. G's daily recorded log revealed he apportioned a substantial quantity of time chatting with school employees including teachers, custodians, an assistant principal, the school's behavior specialist, technology professional, bookkeeper, and curriculum coordinator. He stated, "Met with teacher 6:45 to discuss child in poverty coming to school dirty and hungry, and the plan of action with her guidance meeting approximately 8 minutes." Mr. G further stated, "Also, a five-minute meeting with assistant principal to discuss two teachers on a grade level who are not collaborating and to just brainstorm for a plan of action." He asserted, "Two-minute meeting with our school technology technician to make sure our Internet will be up and working for our after-school meetings."

Mr. G also allotted a substantial quantity of time reviewing, signing, or finishing paperwork. He affirmed, ". . . placed a work order to have phones fixed in the office . . . organization of teacher and TA intent forms and submitted transfer forms ten minutes."

Mr. G dedicated considerable time to informal observations of teachers. He declared, "Thirty minutes, visited classrooms one [sic] checking on a teacher" and "Ten minutes walking halls and peaking in and out of classrooms." Likewise, he also apportioned time after the school day to lead school-based professional development training. Mr. G reported, "Forty-five minute staff development meeting for all licensed staff occurred after school, purpose continual growth and provide professional development for staff." He also used his daily time to perform a formal teacher observation and work on hiring a teacher for a vacant position.

Mr. G apportioned a great deal of time to supervisory duty and managerial aspects. He articulated, "Ten minutes took a lap of the cafeteria to monitor" and "Fifteen minutes supervising car rider dismissal line . . . I usually try to do car rider line when I'm in the building." Mr. G also allotted an extensive amount of time dialoguing with school-district personnel including another building-level principal, the district's EC Director, Deputy Superintendent of Human Resources, and the Technology Services Department. He spent part of his day checking email, courier, and mail to respond to school stakeholders and accomplish district directives. Mr. G averred, "Thirty-five minutes of email to clean out email and to take care of all logistical matters that need done before the weekend."

Mr. G believed the ideal education consisted of a small student to teacher ratio, inquiry-based learning, hands on instruction, and teaching that is real-world relevant. He said, ". . . approximately 6 to 1 student teacher ratio, a lot of collaborative learning, exploratory learning, discovery learning, hands on learning . . . and learning in more of a

natural setting versus an institutionalized setting." For example, Mr. G explained science instruction taught in the woods would have real-world application. He averred using math to calculate supplies necessary for a party would develop students' math skills while providing real-world experiences. Mr. G also believed the ideal education does not include a one size fits all testing approach or a lack of parental involvement.

Mr. G talked about abilities or learnings including problem-solving, skills necessary for future schooling, and learning for living, which he contends all children must master before leaving his school. He explained learning for living as being able to live a successful life. Mr. G elaborated: "When it comes to learning for living, they need to learn so they can be successful in life; they can make the right decisions and solve the problems as parents, as professionals in different jobs and fields and different lines of work." He further asserted, ". . . we really need to prepare our students to problem solve and learn at this level so that they can scaffold up and do the same at the middle-school level and the high-school level."

Mr. G described strategies such as technology integration, implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and cross-curricular instruction his school makes use of to ensure students leave his building with necessary abilities or learnings. He declared, ". . . getting our students hands on technology whether it be laptops, interacting with Promethean Boards, researching using the Internet, so that's one of the things we're doing to lead students in the right direction in 2012." Mr. G discussed the Common Core's focus on problem solving and process as something he values and encourages staff to consistently integrate into instructional practices. He said, ". . . a lot of teaching

involves nonfiction-texts, which is helping students learn about set topics and incorporating science learning, social studies learning within our reading instruction . . . because there are just not enough hours in the day with everything."

He also conversed about behaviors he personally completes including being a visible classroom presence and holding stakeholders accountable to make certain children depart his school with indispensable abilities or learnings. Mr. G maintained, "Classroom visiting both informal and formal that holds teachers accountable . . . with the formal observation process as well as just informal visits between two and twenty minutes, to make sure teachers are doing what they're supposed to be doing." He articulated, "Also, there's a lot of accountability with teachers turning in to me so I can review everything from student data notebooks to writing notebooks to reviewing their report cards before they go home." Mr. G also revealed time constrictions associated with managerial aspects including email communications, resource allocation, and discipline often prohibit him from finishing behaviors necessary to make certain children depart his school with specific abilities or learnings.

Mr. G stressed students' success entails academic growth, behavioral or developmental progress, and preparedness for future schooling and successful living. He proclaimed, "Success year to year is showing growth showing growth and adequate if not higher than expected amounts of growth." Mr. G avowed, "Student success ultimately is leaving high school or if they're even going to continue . . . or wherever else leaving there successful and be able to secure a job and become a productive member of society." He further explained elementary-aged children leaving school understanding how to

effectively participate within a school setting can also be conceptualized as success. Mr. G also discussed two chief approaches specifically frequently revealing his opinions of success with stakeholders and celebrating examples of success he makes use of to ensure his definition of success is communicated to all school stakeholders. He stated:

> A lot of it is celebrating the successes whether it be and part of it's with the community through newsletters, just putting different things on the front sign, sending in Connect Ed messages, sharing it with our school staff because then it webs out.

Mr. G declared, ". . . we also share a lot of successes . . . with the daily email where I recognize different people or different successes students or staff have had that really branches out and almost becomes contagious how that can spread."

He also discussed instruments or evaluation devices he applies to determine success such as growth scores through benchmark assessments, state accountability testing, and stakeholder perceptions. Mr. G stated, "Of course . . . end-of-grade test scores as well as the practice end-of-grade tests." He averred, "We use our DRA's for reading and we use quarterly or six week assessments in other subject areas." Mr. G also considered the importance of stakeholder survey data when reviewing success.

Table 7. Mr. G's Conception of Success

Components	Strategies to Share Definition	Evaluation Instruments
Academic growth	Constantly share information with teachers and community members	End-of-grade assessments
Behavioral growth		Growth scores from formative assessments
Future readiness	Celebrate successes	
		Stakeholder perceptions
Problem solving	Model successes	
		Classroom observations and audits
Appreciation for education	Visibility	
Lifelong learners		
Productive members of society		

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Analysis

In order to analyze the data I accumulated through participants' emailed responses, daily recorded logs, and interviews, I scrutinized coded transcripts to ascertain themes that appeared from principal's responses to all questions and their recorded logs related to time allocation. The following themes emerged based on careful analysis of my data:

- Principals want to spend their time working as instructional leaders.

- Participants would like to earmark their time communicating with students to foster their academic, behavioral, and developmental growth.

- Principals distributed their time to three primary actions specifically:

  o connecting with all school stakeholders

  o completing managerial duties

  o engaging in instructional leadership

All three major categories include a number of varying practices or behaviors that comprise each main classification. The discerned themes directly answer my second research question regarding how principals spend their time. Additionally, the analysis enabled me to gain insight into my third research question focused on whether principals' actions were consistent with their definitions of success.

Principals Would Like to Spend Time as Instructional Leaders

As I explored the concept of principals desiring to allocate their time to serving as instructional leaders, I concluded participants defined instructional leadership using Sheppard's (1996) all-encompassing conception of instructional leadership that maintains that principals' indirect and direct actions, practices, or behaviors have a significant influence on children's learning. For example, several participants asserted they would like to collaborate with other school stakeholders to facilitate students' learning. Mr. C stated, ". . . I wish that I could spend more time working with a curriculum coordinator in my building." Likewise, Mr. E expressed a need to work in partnership with school-level and district personnel on instructional improvement. In a like manner, Mr. G acknowledged, ". . . working with teachers to help them improve, visiting classrooms in snippets so that I can provide authentic feedback."

In addition to cooperating with school stakeholders on instructional improvement, participants also would like to encourage, support, and coach school staff to positively impact students' learning. For example, Mr. F maintained he coveted allocating time to developing a practical way to apply the curriculum of the classroom, which he described as making sure his staff is providing all children appropriate leveled instruction regardless of developmental level. Similarly, Mr. A averred, "I wish I had more time to spend in classrooms and coaching teachers." Next, a few principals discussed their desire to have more of a direct impact on students' learning through analyzing data to drive program planning and creating meaningful professional development. Mr. B elaborated:

> I would like to spend more of my time as an instructional leader. I would like to focus more of my efforts to dissecting student data and facilitating plans to develop effective schedules, instruction, intervention, and programming for at-risk or academically struggling students.

Mr. G further asserted he would prefer to allocate his time to cultivating meaningful professional development for school staff. Although principals preferred to spend their time performing instructional leadership practices, they stated three primary tasks specifically completing managerial aspects, students' discipline, and communicating with stakeholders prevented them from dedicating more time to instructional leadership. Mr. G said, ". . . administrivia gets in the way just needing to pull a letter of the Internet to send home to parents that I'm being told to send home by central office or you know just stuff, the managerial tasks." Likewise, Mr. E stated, ". . . there is a lot of busy work for principals . . . parent emails and parent information is one, lots of supervision duties." Also, Mr. B declared, ". . . kids don't always make the best choices; you can spend several hours you know as you know investigating one issue."

The disproportionate majority of my participants stated they preferred to spend their time as instructional leaders. In the last thirty years, educational researchers, university preparation programs, local school districts, and governmental agencies have ardently maintained principal instructional leadership is fundamental to principals' roles and subsequent time allocation, which may explain why participants preferred to spend their valuable time completing instructional leadership activities. Therefore, it is important to analyze participants' principal instructional leadership practices to discern whether they positively impact students and are consistent with their conceptions of

success. Put another way, I explored principals' instructional leadership behaviors to determine if their actions have the potential to make a substantive change in the lives of their students. My findings indicated that four principals, Mr. A, B, C, and G, performed actions that have the capacity to positively affect students' learning and were also connected to their definitions of success while three principals, Mr. D, E, and F, did not take part in activities correlated to their perceptions of success.

Mr. C and G both spent over an hour designing staff professional development opportunities that (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; O'Donnell & White, 2005) found were behaviors connected to advancing students' learning and also matched their conceptions of success specifically facilitating students' growth and development of higher-level thinking skills. Mr. A, B, and C all performed classroom walkthroughs that Witziers et al. (2003) stated promoted visibility and were positively associated with students' growth and development. Furthermore, Mr. A and B conducted the walkthroughs and debriefing sessions with a team of school-based or district employees, which enabled them to complete actions dedicated to staff reflection and instructional improvement that (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Goldring & Pasternack, 1994; Supovitz et al., 2010) say positively impact students' success. These principal instructional leadership actions focused on academic growth and performance on assessments undoubtedly align to principals' perceptions of success. Also, Mr. A, B, and G all spent time communicating with teachers concerning students' learning that allowed them to collaborate and engage staff members in discussions about students, which (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Heck, 1993; Supovitz et al., 2010) discovered were behaviors that support students' achievement and also were

consistent with their conceptions of success. Mr. A, B, C, and G allocated considerable time to instructional leadership practices that promoted visibility, effectively shared their school's missions, enabled them to engage and collaborate with staff members, encouraged staff reflection, serving as an instructional resource that researchers found have a positive, significant effect on students' achievement.

During Mr. E's daily recorded log, he spent no time performing actions connected to instructional leadership. However, in our semi-structured interview discussion he explained establishing relationships with staff, holding faculty accountable, and visibility were actions he completed on a daily basis, which correlate to numerous researchers (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Blasé & Blasé, 2010; O'Donnell & White, 2005) who discovered they were fundamental actions principals undertake to support students growth and success. Mr. D and F spent minimal time completing classroom walkthroughs, which researchers stated promoted visibility; however, they did not conduct additional discussions or meetings that would enable them to serve as an instructional resource, focus on instructional improvement, or facilitate staff reflection that researchers explained were paramount to students' learning (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Supovitz et al., 2010). After analyzing my participants' actions related to instructional leadership, it appeared 4 out of 7 allocated time to actions that researchers cite as instrumental in advancing students' learning while 3 of my participants completed minimal or no actions, which also did not match their conceptions of success.

Principals Would Like to Spend Time Communicating with Students

In addition to yearning to spend time as instructional leaders, another emerging theme was participants desired to apportion time to fostering students' growth and development. According to my data analysis, principals would choose to allot their time to academic, behavioral, and developmental growth. Mr. A claimed positively communicating with and supporting all students, as opposed to only negative interactions focused on behavioral concerns with a smaller segment of children, would be an ideal way to spend this time. Similarly, Mr. F declared he wishes he could devote his time to teaching children important character virtues. For example, the participant said, "We need to teach what acceptable behavior in society is . . . teach students acceptable values and behaviors." Also, one principal articulated he would like to work with students to help them understand their futures are not pre-determined. Mr. B stated, ". . . I want them to understand that you know [sic] they have amazing opportunities that exist before them . . . the world is open for them, there is nothing they can't do." Similarly, Mr. G proclaimed he would prefer to use his time interacting with students to enrich their learning.

Principals Spend Their Time Communicating with Internal School Stakeholders

After carefully studying principals' emailed responses, daily recorded logs and semi-structured interviews, it was apparent participants spent a sizeable amount of time communicating with internal school stakeholders. The conversations focused on a variety of topics including instructional, behavioral, personnel, facilities, financial, technological, and students' developmental needs. Furthermore, analyzing participants' daily recorded

logs showed that every principal except one interacted with building-level teachers. For example, Mr. A averred, ". . . getting ready to meet with two teachers, just about their attitudes toward a specific child, give them encouragement to be more patient with this specific child." Similarly, Mr. B conversed with science teachers about grading practices that were concerning and also discussed potential changes. In a like manner, Mr. D expended time speaking with a teacher involving a morning supervisory matter. The principal professed, ". . . so I talked to the teacher about that and took notes to call that parent later on in the day, to go over our procedures in the morning." Also, Mr. G talked with two teachers about testing students for inclusion in the district's academically gifted program.

Additionally, several principals allocated time chatting with office or building support staff such as school-data coordinators, bookkeepers, or custodians. For example, Mr. E stated, ". . . it is 7:20 I have arrived at school, I'm meeting with the . . . bookkeeper to go over the information from the first semester." Also, Mr. F maintained, ". . . 12:10 back in my office, I spoke with our webmaster she's going to put put [sic] the remaining information on PAM." (Parent Assist Module) Finally, Mr. A and Mr. G communicated, through phone calls and face-to-face meetings, with custodians about building-level maintenance concerns.

Besides devoting time to communicating with teachers, student services support, and office or building-level support, participants apportioned time to speaking or meeting with students often encouraging or supporting positive behavior. Mr. B asserted, "Met with boys' basketball team to discuss conduct with the basketball tournament this week."

Mr. C used part of his morning, lunch, and dismissal supervisory time chatting with

students to ensure visibility and a positive school experience. Likewise, Mr. A contended,

". . . to discuss positive behaviors that were observed with a child and give him a pat on

the back and encourage him to keep up the great choices he's making."

In addition to supporting and assisting students, participants also allotted a

significant amount of time managing students' behavior. Mr. A claimed, "Student

discipline issue, student cussed at a teacher dealing with the discipline issue gonna [sic]

call the parents and move toward suspension." Likewise, Mr. A asserted, ". . . end of

lunch supervision time, pulling a student from the cafeteria to my office to talk about

some discipline that a teacher brought to my attention during lunch block." Similarly, Mr.

F dedicated time to discipline occurrences. The principal avowed, ". . . got a report about

a student . . . he was an exceptional child and I took him into my office . . . and I waited

his parents arrival just to calm him down." Additionally, Mr. D distributed time to

student discipline, as he removed a child from a classroom.

As I reviewed principals' interactions with internal school stakeholders, it was

evident they spent a great deal of time communicating with students primarily focused on

discipline concerns and facilitating their positive behaviors. Furthermore, there was not a

significant discrepancy between the time allocated to discipline and supporting or

advancing students' behavior. Likewise, participants allotted a significant amount of time

conversing with building-level teachers. The majority of the discussions centered on

meeting students' learning needs through quality instruction, accurate placement of

children, and ensuring fair classroom practices. Also, principal and teacher

communications focused, to a lesser extent, on non-instructional issues such as supervisory duty. Similarly, principals allocated a substantial amount of time communicating with office staff predominately school bookkeepers and data coordinators, but also spent lesser time interacting with school-level custodians.

Communicating with internal school stakeholders is not surprising, as it is an integral part of principals' responsibilities. Additionally, chatting with teachers about students' learning needs and conversing with children concerning positive behaviors is an important principal role; however, I did not realize the substantial amount of time principals spend communicating with office support staff specifically bookkeepers and data coordinators. As I deliberated on this new insight, I believed the foremost reason was to ensure efficient and effective school operations that strengthen students' learning. For example, frequently interacting with school bookkeepers is needed to understand the complex system of school finances, which is necessary to purchase resources and materials that foster students' learning and teachers' instruction. In a similar manner, constant communication with school bookkeepers is crucial to ensure vital components of school operations such as instructional reports, discipline breakdowns, and schedules are successfully completed. Moreover, it is critical to understand that communicating with students and teachers is paramount to principals' time allocation, but equally important is interacting with office staff predominately bookkeepers and data coordinators who assist in placing students and teachers in the best possible situations to learn and grow.

Principals Spend Their Time Communicating with External School Stakeholders

Another theme that appeared from my data, and one that had a close relationship to the purpose of my research, was all participants except the high-school principal allocated time to meeting, speaking, or communicating with parents. Principals' communication focused on a number of concerns such as alleged bullying issues, neighborhood matters, grades, school or district initiatives, missing student property, staff problems, donation of materials, and children's developmental needs. Mr. A professed, ". . . have a parent meeting with a cheerleading parent over a concern I became aware of last evening." Similarly, Mr. B who allocated the largest amount of time to parent communication, stated, "Talked with parents about a concern, moving a student from one math class to another, which I'm adamantly against at this point of the school year." As a note, Mr. B believed continuous and frequent communication with parents was necessary to advance a school culture that was positive, accessible, and approachable, as that was not the situation with the previous principal, which resulted in a fractured school and community relationship. Mr. C continued the trend with three face-to-face parent conferences and several phone calls dedicated to students' grades, academic performance, behavioral questions, a new school language immersion program, and reviewing a child's psychological evaluation results. Also, Mr. F and Mr. G spent time communicating with parents regarding their children's discipline and subsequent well-being. For example, Mr. G stated, "Spoke with parents [sic] . . . on the phone about what she said was bullying issue." Finally, Mr. D expended time speaking with a parent who donated books to the participant's school. While almost all principals afforded time to conferencing, speaking,

or communicating with children's parents, Mr. A, B, and C apportioned significantly more time than other participants. During my conversations with the principals who allocated the greatest amount of time interacting with parents, two of the school leaders, Mr. A and Mr. B, explained their substantial parental communication was necessary to develop a positive school and community relationship, share their vision, and change school perceptions, as they completed their first year in their new assignments.

In addition to allocating time to parental communication, the substantial majority of participants used time communicating with district-based personnel including other district principals, directors, superintendents, and individuals from district departments. The communications took place through mail, face-to-face meetings, and phone calls. The high-school principal spent the most time speaking with district personnel, as he apportioned several hours communicating with district personnel focusing on school personnel subjects. Mr. E avowed, ". . . have a call with Dr. X, a conference call about a personnel situation." Similarly, the participant maintained, "Talking on the phone with Dr. Y about several personnel issues. I will have a meeting with Dr. Y, via teleconference, about 11:00 a.m. today." Likewise, Mr. G devoted considerable time interacting with district staff speaking to another principal about an online report card, a superintendent within Human Resources about a school-level vacancy, a director about the possibility of transitioning a teacher assistant into a teaching position, and a representative from the county Technology Department in relation to school Internet concerns. Similarly, Mr. F committed time to a scheduled meeting with district personnel and also called an employee within the Human Resources Department to discuss a

personnel situation involving his school's office staff. Likewise, Mr. A said, ". . . called the EC Director and discussed some concerns I have about the South Happiness screening process and the specifics of a child that I intend to present at the February screenings." Finally, Mr. D devoted time to his district office on two separate occasions. The first conversation took place between the participant and another building-level principal centered on a shared teaching position while the second communication focused on sharing school information relevant to the school's accreditation process. Mr. D averred, ". . . Finally, at 3:00, I started working on AdvancED information . . . selecting committee members and emailing that to Dr. Smith." As mentioned earlier, analysis of my data revealed the substantial majority of participants allocated time to corresponding with district staff; however, the high-school principal spent the majority of his day speaking with district personnel.

Next, a majority of principals assigned time to communicating with community members; however, the conversations or meetings were not as frequent and did not require nearly as much time as communicating with parents or district personnel. The communications focused on topics including school instructional needs, facilities matters, working with a graduate student, and acquiring food for students. As an example, Mr. B spent time meeting with a representative from the local Boys and Girls Club to discuss a joint venture between his school and the organization. Similarly, Mr. D stated, ". . . I touched base with the basketball official who is over Happiness Athletic Association." Likewise, Mr. A interacted with community members to ensure several of his school's athletes received dinner prior to a middle-school basketball tournament. Also, Mr. G used

part of his time conversing with a local college student concerning a requirement of the student's class. Finally, Mr. F was the only participant who apportioned time to speaking with a community member with reference to an instructional issue that would support students' learning, growth, or development. The participant averred, "Just called Texthelp to get someone down here and look at or do a professional development for our teachers."

As I analyzed principals' interactions with external school stakeholders, it was apparent they spent their most time communicating with parents. Moreover, principals' parental communication typically focused on children's behavior, promoting their visions of success, and nurturing a positive home and school relationship with less time dedicated to meeting students' learning needs. Communicating with parents is central to all principals' roles. Therefore, frequent interactions with parents was not surprising; however, focusing the disproportionate majority of communications on students' behavior, advancing school vision, and cultivating a constructive home and school relationship and not allocating equal time to discussing students' academic learning was unexpected. On the other hand, principals might feel developing students' positive behaviors, sharing their visions, and establishing a quality home and school association will allow all school stakeholders to work together in support of students' growth and development.

In addition to allotting sizeable time to parental communication, principals also spent considerable time communicating with district personnel primarily central-office staff including directors, technicians, and superintendents. Furthermore, these central-office conversations generally centered on non-instructional concerns such as personnel

situations, technology concerns, and school accreditation protocols with less time

apportioned to children's learning. As I studied principals' communications with district-

level staff, I realized a substantial majority of these conversations were directed or

initiated by central services personnel. For example, principals were required to respond

to personnel scenarios, complete district accreditation mandates, seek permission for

hiring staff, and gather information about school-level technology matters. As a result, a

vast amount of principals' communication with external stakeholders were replying to or

asking clarification questions and not principal driven.

Although principals also spent time communicating with community members,

these interactions were less frequent and time consuming than interactions with parents

and district personnel. These discussions rarely concentrated on students' learning, but

often centered on non-instructional subjects. As I further analyzed my data relating to

communicating with community members, it appeared principals were underutilizing

community members who have the potential to bolster students' learning.

Principals Spend Their Time Completing Managerial Tasks

Another theme that emerged from my data analysis was participants spent a

significant amount of time completing managerial tasks including responding or

answering emails, working on school or district paperwork, and performing school

supervisory duty. Again, this theme directly addressed my research question connected to

how do principals spend their time and also enabled me to examine whether participants'

actions or behaviors matched their definitions of success.

Emails

After reviewing coded transcripts, it was obvious that all participants allocated time to reading, investigating, and responding to emails. Principals apportioned time to these activities before, during, and after their respective school days with children. Also, the emails focused on numerous topics including students' grades, district mandates, teacher concerns, students' discipline, personnel situations, facilities management, and numerous other relevant school pieces. Mr. G elaborated on his time spent working with emails stating, ". . . I don't even know where to start, reading just mail and email . . . I probably get 120 to 150 emails per day, 20 of them I need to take action on, but it takes time to sort through the rest of them." Likewise, in Mr. E's emailed responses, he indicated that he passes considerable time emailing parents. When asked a follow-up question in his semi-structured interview, the principal asserted, "I would imagine that reading and planning . . . is probably an hour and a half a day." The principal continued, ". . . we probably are preparing a response or getting information or help [sic] assisting . . . with a particular situation." Likewise, Mr. C apportioned one hour to reading and responding to emails from internal and external school stakeholders such as building teachers, staff, parents, and district personnel. Similarly, Mr. B declared, "Just got to school, it is 7:30 checking voicemail, email, and courier." Additionally, participants A and D apportioned time, during regular school hours, reviewing and answering emails.

Careful examination showed the majority of principals looked over their emails either before or after school with a smaller number reading and responding to their emails throughout their days, which seemed to indicate participants preferred to spend their time,

during the school day, performing other actions such as communicating with internal or

external stakeholders and serving as instructional leaders. Since the bulk of principals

replied to emails both before and after school, it appeared they believed most email

communications were secondary to communication and instructional matters. Likewise,

continuous review of principals' time related to emails showed the significant majority of

their emails were responses to other stakeholder questions or concerns. Additionally, the

preponderance of these reactive emails was connected to parental matters, which again

illustrated the extensive time principals spend communicating with parents. As a result,

this revelation started me thinking about how principals can proactively communicate

with external stakeholders, which should hopefully minimize their number of responsive

emails.

Paperwork

In addition to allocating time to reading, exploring, and responding to emails,

principals also apportioned time to working on and completing paperwork. According to

my data analysis, paperwork concentrated on school issues such as student field trips,

approving staff absences, facilities management, allotments, school financial needs,

building work orders, enrollment projections, after-school programs, and several other

activities essential to school operations. Two principals, Mr. A and Mr. G, described

completion of these tasks as administrivia and asserted they take considerable daily time.

Furthermore, based on my data analysis, Mr. G apportioned the most time to reviewing or

completing paperwork. The participant avowed, ". . . typing in a word document um, to

share with staff about after-school tutoring that we will be offering two days a week from

March through May 25th." Similarly, Mr. G stated, "Went through spreadsheet from the Deputy Superintendent of Human Resources to determine which teachers will be reelected or will not be reelected." Also, Mr. C spent extensive time working on paperwork. The principal maintained, ". . . I will sign some certificates for a student recognition breakfast tomorrow, and will also sign checks and requests for absences and get those back to my bookkeeper." In a like manner, Mr. D said, "About 7:45, worked with the bookkeeper just going over some of our paperwork papers, and signing a few things that she needed me to sign as far as bank roles and things like that." Additionally, Mr. F did paperwork for an upcoming district initiative termed Parent Assist, which is described as a manner that students' parents can immediately review their children's grades while Mr. E also spent time finishing necessary school paperwork.

Although several principals deemed paperwork administrivia and taking their time away from critical principal actions such as instructional leadership and stakeholder communication, my analysis showed it valuable because it helped principals share information with parents, encourage students' learning, ensure school resources were utilized to foster students' growth and development, and develop an effective school staff. For those reasons, I believe allocating time to paperwork is sometimes necessary, as it strengthens both children's learning and teachers' instruction, which was an unanticipated discovery.

Principals Spend Their Time Engaged in Supervisory Duty

Another theme that occurred from data analysis was that all participants allocated time to supervisory duty. Principals' behaviors were similar, as their supervision

generally took place before, during, and after school typically in the cafeteria, hallways, and either the car rider or bus dismissal lines. School leaders asserted supervisory duty was essential because it enabled them to ensure students' safety, model appropriate behaviors, provide teachers duty-free lunch, monitor procedures and policies, and develop positive relationships with students. As an example, Mr. A said, ". . . getting to the cafeteria to help supervise duty free lunch for teachers . . ." Similarly, Mr. B dedicated time to morning, hallway, and dismissal duty because it allowed him time to ensure students' safety and monitor new procedures. The participant held, "Going to monitor breakfast and hallway procedures, student safety and visibility high on the priority list of my first couple of months here." Mr. C also allocated significant time to supervisory duty believing it offered him opportunities to cultivate effective relationships with students and parents while also modeling desired school behaviors. The principal articulated, "Two o'clock until two-thirty outside around buses and car-rider lines supervising dismissal, again, for supervision and safety of procedures, but also as part of the micropolitical duties that came [sic] as part of the role." Similarly, Mr. D spent time performing morning supervisory and dismissal duty. Also, Mr. E dedicated considerable time to morning, lunch, and afternoon supervisory duty; however, similar to Mr. D, did not elaborate why he allocated time to carrying out supervisory duty. Likewise, Mr. G completed morning and dismissal supervisory duty. The participant professed, ". . . took a lap of the cafeteria to monitor, basically just to make sure everything was going well and to make sure students were behaving." Finally, Mr. F apportioned time to morning and afternoon hallway changes focusing on transitions.

As I spoke with principals, it was obvious they performed supervisory duty to ensure students' safety. Several participants maintained their top priority was providing children a safe learning environment where they could flourish both academically and emotionally. On the other hand, a considerable number of principals explained supervisory duty was an opportunity to positively interact with students and model appropriate behaviors to all students, which contrasted with the traditional reason of completing supervisory duty specifically ensuring a safe and orderly school environment. Consequently, this finding was unexpected and again demonstrated the importance principals placed on communicating with students.

Principals Spend Their Time Engaged in Instructional Leadership

An additional theme that emerged from my data was principals spent time working as instructional leaders and being a visible classroom presence performing actions including classroom walkthroughs, observations, subsequent post-conferences, leading professional development or taking part in professional development to improve their professional practice, and modeling or celebrating desired actions, behaviors, or practices that aligned with school goals, vision, or mission. Principals allocated significantly more time to conducting classroom walkthroughs, formal observations, subsequent post-conferences, and modeling behaviors, practices, or actions associated with school goals than leading or participating in professional development. Again, this theme answered my research question how do principals spend their time while also providing insight into my research question related to principals' time allocation matching their conceptions of success.

Classroom Walkthroughs and Formal Observations

My data analysis showed that every participant except one spent time performing

walkthroughs or observations. The walkthroughs or observations took place with school

or district staff members including curriculum coordinators, assistant principals, or school

leaders simply completed them on their own. Also, some principals focused their

walkthroughs on specific subject areas while others did not have a similar focus. Mr. A

spent well over two hours with a district curriculum coordinator completing

walkthroughs. The principal said:

> Going to begin classroom visits with a math curriculum coordinator, trying to
> assess the level of preparation that is occurring, what models of instruction are
> being used, and is [sic] overall effectiveness of math classrooms throughout the
> building. Will be on these visits hopefully until about lunchtime, just so I can
> spend a few minutes in every math classroom with the math county curriculum
> coordinator.

Similarly, Mr. B spent well over an hour with school staff completing walkthroughs. The

participant said, "Doing classroom walkthroughs with curriculum coordinators and

assistant principals, in math, to determine the effectiveness and what areas we need to

grow in with math instruction." Moreover, both Mr. A and Mr. B followed their

collaborative walkthroughs with post-conference meetings with the individuals who

performed the observations with them. For example, Mr. B elaborated, "Post-

conferencing with administrators and curriculum coordinators . . . the post-conferences

lasted about 30 minutes." Continuing, Mr. C declared, ". . . I will spend the next 30

minutes doing informal walkthroughs in classrooms and that's an opportunity for me to

continually stay on top of the pulse of the school . . ." Similar to Mr. C, Mr. D performed

his classroom walkthroughs on two separate occasions and without the assistance of any other school or district members. Mr. G also spent time with classroom walkthroughs averring, ". . . walking halls peaking in and out of classrooms." In addition, Mr. G also apportioned time to an informal observation of a current student teacher and potential full-time instructor. Finally, Mr. F dedicated time entering classrooms and assessing his school's teaching and learning.

Besides conducting classroom walkthroughs and formal observations, participants also spent time in classrooms interacting with students, participating in instructional activities, and ensuring teachers' instructional practices aligned to school goals. For example, Mr. C asserted, ". . . when I'm in classrooms I talk to students, I ask them questions . . . because that gives me a sense of how we're coming along with their development of those communication skills." Mr. D believed being a visible classroom presence enabled him to make certain teachers were delivering instruction aligned to the school goal of cultivating students' higher-level thinking skills such as problem solving. The principal expressed, "When I walk around classrooms, making sure things like that are happening . . . making sure that teachers give those kids the opportunities to do that and to grow problem solving." Mr. E reported he strives to be a classroom presence because it affords him the opportunity to mature and nurture relationships with students and model effective communication with staff and students. Similarly, Mr. F also thought being a visible classroom presence allowed him to model desired behaviors for staff and students. The principal said, ". . . being visible I think is very important . . . just today in band class, I participated in the learning process by playing a saxophone and participating

in a math competition in [sic] on Pi Day." While performing classroom observations and providing feedback is commonly accepted as an essential component of principals' instructional leadership, using walkthrough and observation time to develop positive relationships with students and model desired actions is less widespread, which made the finding unpredicted and again highlighted the importance of principals communicating with students.

Professional Development

Another activity principals spent time with was directing or participating in professional development opportunities. The professional development experiences were aimed at both staff and personal growth and development. Mr. C committed the most time to taking part or leading professional development spending close to two hours with the activity. The principal acknowledged, ". . . spent thirty minutes reading a book titled *The Collaborative Administrator* and I'm reading that as a way to enhance my leadership, as we officially implement professional learning communities . . ." Similarly, Mr. C stated, "From 12:00 until about 12:30, I'll organize information for a presentation that I'll be doing . . . at this stage it's just in the planning, because we still have another month." Mr. G similarly maintained, "Forty-five minute staff development meeting for all licensed staff occurred after school, purpose continual growth and provide professional development for staff." Continuing, Mr. B read a book connected to grading polices while Mr. D watched a video centered on reconnecting education with both actions supporting their professional growth and development. After studying principals' time allocation related to professional development, it appeared elementary principals

dedicated more time to taking part or leading professional development than their

secondary colleagues.

Principals Spend Their Time Modeling or Celebrating Actions, Behaviors, or Practices Associated with School Goals, Vision, and Mission

An interesting theme connected to principals' time allocation was participants

spent time modeling or celebrating actions, behaviors, or practices linked to school goals,

vision, or mission. Furthermore, this theme was an example of how principals' indirect or

mediated actions impact students' learning, which is critical to the broader conception of

principal instructional leadership. Moreover, this theme was pervasive, as all principals

except one apportioned time to these actions, behaviors, or practices. Mr. B believed

celebrating staff and student successes linked to school goals of a positive school culture,

student growth, and pride were necessary to his time allocation. The participant said, ". . .

when I got here, there was no student artwork up in the halls . . . so, we just kind of try to

make the environment a showcase for what students are doing." The principal further

declared, "we start by you know, talking about the small things that people have said to

me or the cards or letters that I've received." Additionally, the school leader maintained,

". . . teachers are starting to do that by recognizing each other with those little notes of

you know [sic] affirmation that they're giving each other." Also, Mr. C spends time

modeling or celebrating actions, behaviors, or practices that are critical to facilitating

student or staff growth. For example, the school leader alleged, "Each and every morning

I share what I call morning words of wisdom that are broadcast to the whole school, and

those are things all geared toward . . . being cooperative, being productive . . . being

strong communicators." Also, the school administrator said he attempts to model,

whether in student or staff interactions, essential skills or behaviors including

collaboration and communication, which he maintained were indispensable components

of success. Likewise, Mr. D spent time modeling problem-solving skills with staff and

students, which he contended are vital to school and children's growth. The participant

indicated, "I try to do those same things with my staff anytime there is an issue instead of

giving them a solution . . . I'll give them the issue and they'll come up with the solution."

In a like manner, Mr. E performed actions such as celebrating students' successes and

demonstrating effective communication with stakeholders. The principal insisted, "So,

my goal is to help develop relationships as well as myself develop relationships with

students, and to develop communication patterns with parents." Similarly, Mr. F

allocated time building effectual home and school relationships, which he thought were

crucial to school success. The participant avowed, ". . . we involve parents and make sure

they understand that [sic] the importance of education." The major behaviors associated

with principals' instructional leadership were performing classroom walkthroughs,

formal observations, post-conferences, guiding or partaking in professional growth

opportunities, and modeling desired behaviors or actions; however, a few participants

also worked on interviewing and hiring prospective staff employees, but it was not as

prevalent and did not constitute a main theme. As I assessed why principals spent their

time modeling or celebrating actions, behaviors, or practices connected to school goals, it

was clear the majority did so to motivate and encourage children's learning, create a

climate of continuous student and staff growth, and foster student and community

relationships, which directly align to most principals' perceptions of success.

The Interconnectedness of Participants' Actions, Behaviors, and Practices

A fascinating theme that appeared within my data analysis was the notion that principals' time allocation was complex and interrelated. In other words, participants did not spend time communicating with school stakeholders, performing managerial tasks, or serving as an instructional leader in isolation; however, frequently completed these actions, behaviors, or practices as a cause and effect with one another. Put another way, how principals apportioned their time was often the result of a previous and related action.

The relationship between participants' primary actions of communicating with stakeholders, completing managerial responsibilities, and functioning as an instructional leader were not linear with one theme automatically resulting in a second theme, but circular where all three foremost themes could theoretically be the cause and effect of another. As an example, several participants communicated with school stakeholders because of their time allocation operating as instructional leaders. Mr. A stated, ". . . going to begin classroom visits . . . trying to assess the level of preparation that is occurring . . . as soon as that's going, will be going to my office to debrief with the curriculum coordinator." Similarly, Mr. B performed the managerial task of hallway supervisory duty that caused a discussion with an assistant principal, which demonstrates the relationship between executing managerial actions and communicating with school stakeholders. In a like manner, Mr. C was collaborating with district personnel concerning a vacant teaching position and subsequently completed paperwork necessary to advertise the employment opportunity, which establishes the relationship in time

allocation between conversing with school stakeholders, operating as an instructional

leader, and finishing the managerial act of paperwork. Similarly, Mr. D asserted,

"Worked with the bookkeeper just going over some of our paperwork papers, and signing

a few things that she needed me to sign as far as bank roles and things like that." As a

result, the interconnectedness between principals' actions of communicating with

stakeholders and completion of paperwork is evident. Additionally, Mr. G worked with a

student discipline issue because of a conversation with a parent, which highlights the

connection between communicating with stakeholders and performing managerial tasks.

What's more, this theme of interrelatedness between principals' actions, behaviors, and

practices was ubiquitous within my data analysis. While some participants' actions were

more affected with this association than others, all principals' actions were impacted and

the relationships occurred among all primary themes.

Principals' Perceptions of Student Success

After carefully studying coded transcripts from my semi-structured interviews,

several themes materialized concerning principals' perceptions of success. The following

themes emerged from my data analysis: Principals believed success included the ability

to:

- effectively collaborate
- develop higher-level thinking skills such as problem solving and critical thinking
- cultivate the belief in future success
- commendably communicate

- become lifelong learners with an appreciation for education

- nurture academic, behavioral, and developmental growth

- perform adequately on end-of-year standards-based assessments

- meet or improve stakeholders' school perceptions

- understand success is also individualized depending on students' specific needs

The theme derived from this part of my data analysis provided insight into my research question linked to principals' beliefs of success while also allowing me to gain understanding of my research question focused on whether participants' actions were consistent with their conceptions of success.

Ability to Collaborate

A primary theme that surfaced from my data analysis was participants' belief that success included students' ability to collaborate with one another. Principals stated collaboration was a skill that would be necessary for children's successful futures. Mr. A said, ". . . I think them understanding how to collaborate, being a team player, and work with others is extremely critical." Similarly, Mr. B avowed, ". . . how to work collaboratively in groups because I think that is what the future in any profession is going to require them to do, regardless of culture, regardless of gender, regardless of personal choice [sic] that people make." Likewise, Mr. E asserted being able to work in small and large groups is a central component of success. Also, Mr. C declared, "I want them to leave with a strong foundation . . . and the ability to collaborate with others."

Higher-Level Thinking Skills

The next emerging theme related to success focused on students developing

higher-level thinking skills such as problem solving and critical thinking. After careful

scrutiny of my coded transcripts, all principals with the exception of one held fostering

problem-solving and critical thinking skills was fundamental to success. Mr. A

summarized, ". . . I want them to understand how to problem solve and be critical

thinkers." Likewise, Mr. B discussed success as the necessity of nurturing children's

critical thinking skills.

The participant asserted:

I want them . . . not just be able to recall knowledge, but be able to investigate and
find information in various forms . . . this is a [sic] information rich society . . . we
have to be good consumers of information and not just take things at face value.

Mr. C and Mr. G also believed success comprised students' ability to effectively problem

solve. Likewise, Mr. D emphatically asserted problem solving was necessary to success.

Moreover, cultivating children's problem-solving abilities was the cornerstone of his

definition of success. The principal elaborated, ". . . to be problem solvers, whenever they

come into something, they can think and go what tools do I have? Even though they may

not have the exact knowledge background, what tools do I have that can help me work

through this?" Mr. E supported the opinion of Mr. D stating, "I think they need to be able

to problem solve . . . be able to solve situations when they come up by using certain

steps." Also, the participant reiterated Mr. B's conception of success as developing

critical-thinking skills stating, ". . . be able to find the information even if they don't have

it memorized, if it's not in their cognitive thoughts." As I scrutinized principals' beliefs that developing students' critical thinking skills was a central component of success, I discovered the majority of participants conceptualized higher-level thinking skills as primarily problem-solving ability. Conversely, a significantly smaller number of principals equated higher-level thinking skills to being consumers of information with the capacity to critique and evaluate knowledge, which more closely aligned with my beliefs. As a result, I gained insight into principals' conceptions of higher-level thinking, which enabled me to contrast my beliefs and expand my definition.

Future Readiness

Another noteworthy theme contained within my data analysis was principals' conception that success consisted of future-readiness skills. The theme was widespread within participants' opinions of success, as it was discussed in almost all participants' perceptions of success. Several school leaders contended an integral component of success included possessing skills necessary for subsequent levels of schooling. Furthermore, a majority of principals' maintained future readiness also included instilling in children the confidence they can lead successful lives and become productive members of society. Mr. A said, "As far as student success goes . . . when you work with the student body I work with . . . trying to teach them that success is attainable . . . they can have a good income, they can be a productive citizen." Mr. B affirmed:

> I want them to understand that you know [sic] they have amazing opportunities that exist before them, if they'll just work hard and do what they need to do to get through middle and high school the world is open for them; there is nothing they can't do.

Mr. D asserted success encompassed children leaving his building with skills necessary for middle school; however, did not specifically address success beyond subsequent school levels. Similarly, the high-school administrator, Mr. E, maintained success consisted of children being prepared for post-secondary education. The participant said, ". . . many of them are accepted into colleges . . . they have a plan where they want to go and are comfortable with their plans so I guess those are areas we look at." Mr. G reinforced colleagues' contentions stating an important piece of success is preparing children for life beyond high school. The participant averred, "college, a trade school or wherever else, leaving there successful and able to secure a job and become a productive member of society." Moreover, the school administrator also repeated other participants' views that success involved coaching children for future levels of schooling. During my discussions with principals, future readiness was almost always explained as developing skills that prepare children to become productive members of society with a significantly smaller number only describing future readiness as nurturing skills for success in subsequent levels of schooling.

Communication Skills

The next major theme derived from analysis of coded transcripts was participants believed success constituted children possessing the ability to effectively and appropriately communicate with other individuals. Principals contended both written and verbal forms of communication were included in their conception of communication. Mr. A declared, "I think teaching them effective communication skills written and oral is extremely important." Mr. B said effectual communication is essential to success, but

also thought socially appropriate communication must coincide. Also, Mr. C declared quality communication skills were critical to success, as he believed along with the ability to collaborate, they were the two facilities he desired all children possess prior to leaving his school. Additionally, Mr. E strengthened participants' assertions that success included the ability to effectively communicate maintaining, "They need to be able to communicate verbally, they need to be able to read and understand written material."

Lifelong Learning and an Appreciation for Education

Another theme linked to success was principals' opinions that appreciation for education often manifested in nurturing students' desire for continuous and lifelong learning was a major part of success. Participants believed an appreciation for education would enable children to succeed academically in the classroom and afterward in future society. Similarly, principals claimed maturing students' appreciation for education would lead to engagement and success. Mr. A elegantly stated, "If you can instill in them the love for learning, then you know they can become lifelong learners even when they go to high school or beyond high school." Mr. B professed, ". . . getting kids excited will lead to getting them engaged and giving them enriching opportunities and all three of those e's will lead us to the fourth, which is excellence." Also, Mr. E insisted ensuring a positive learning experience results in children's happiness and enjoyment of learning, which is fundamental to success. Similar to participants A and B, Mr. F believed appreciation for education and corresponding lifelong learning were primary to success. The principal maintained, "I want them to develop into lifelong learners, have an appreciation for education, and understand the importance of education." Additionally,

Mr. G believed success included enjoying the learning process and becoming lifelong learners.

Academic Growth

Another major theme within data analysis was the belief that academic growth represented success**.** Furthermore, this opinion was specifically stated by all principals with the exception of one. Participants believed academic growth was primarily gauged through improvement on benchmark or formative assessments; however, a smaller number of school leaders held academic growth could be determined using students' grades or growth on end-of-year state assessments. Mr. A said, "I think looking at their growth on benchmark exams and their growth you know from year to year on the summative exams or the end-of-course exams is definitely a score you can look at." Similarly, Mr. B asserted, "What I do think success is, in one way, it can be measured on the EOG is how the student is growing academically . . . there's no excuse not to get students to grow." Mr. D maintained academic growth is the essence of students' success and the most important part of quantifying it. Furthermore, the school leader averred growth should be evaluated using benchmark or formative assessments, and not end-of-grade examinations avowing, ". . . the most important part for us is the individual growth . . . if we don't see there's any growth coming . . . we have to back up and reevaluate you know what's going on, what we're doing, what level we're at." Also, Mr. F believed academic growth was the primary determinant of success and growth was conceptualized as progressing to a higher developmental level. Finally, similar to other principals, Mr. G alleged academic growth is the foundation of success. The principal acknowledged,

"Success year to year is showing growth, showing growth and adequate if not higher than expected amount of growth." Also, the participant thought growth was measured through children's performance on benchmark or formative assessments.

Behavioral or Developmental Growth

A surprising theme that emerged from data analysis was principals' view that a critical part of success was children's developmental or behavioral growth. This theme was omnipresent in participants' beliefs, as all school leaders except one maintained it was crucial to success. In our contemporary standards-based accountability era, behavioral and developmental growths are often considered secondary to performance on summative accountability measures, which is why this theme was unexpected. Additionally, several principals stated behavioral or developmental growth should be individualized, which supplied me information necessary to discern a following theme that will be discussed in an upcoming section. Continuing, Mr. A believed behavioral growth was an instrumental piece of success because it facilitated students reaching their potential.

The participant maintained:

We have some students here, who last year struggled tremendously with behavior, but this year they're cooperative, they're doing better, their grades are improving, they're starting to make better choices for themselves. In my mind, those students are being extremely successful this year. Now, whether they pass the state exam or not I don't know, but they're definitely being successful because the effort is there and they're working harder and they're starting to move toward reaching their potential.

Similarly, Mr. B contended behavioral growth defined as students having respect for each other and authority is central to success. For example, the school leader maintained, ". . . when they go to the field trip and they come back and everybody's back in one piece and not one student had to be disciplined, that's success for us." Mr. C supported the contentions of both Mr. A and Mr. B saying a fundamental part of success is cooperating with students and adults alike while also developing a positive self-image. Mr. D repeated participants' assertions avowing student success includes behavioral and developmental growth; however, focused his conception on developmental growth specifically maturing students' confidence, which he believed enabled children to reach their individual potential. Additionally, Mr. F reinforced all school leaders' beliefs declaring behavioral growth an essential portion of students' success. In a like manner, Mr. G held behavioral and developmental growth were fundamental to students' success. The principal said, ". . . it's our job to grow them and grow them fast behaviorally when it comes to that . . . and understand the business of school that they're going to be in."

End-of-Grade Assessments

In our contemporary standards-based education era of education, it was not surprising almost all principals included end-of-grade or end-of-year assessments as a component of success. However, it was unanticipated the majority of participants believed performance on these exams did not adequately conceptualize success. Moreover, these school leaders averred success is a much larger concept that incorporates several other parts. Mr. A said, "I think the simple way would be to say their performance on end-of-grade exams, but I don't necessarily think that's the case." Conversely, the

school leader did assert growth on the examinations is a component of success. Mr. B

reiterated Mr. A's assertion that success is not quantified exclusively with students

passing summative assessments, but believed a much better indication is children's

academic growth on the tests. The principal stated, ". . . there's no excuse not to get

students to grow and I think it's a fair and reasonable expectation." On the other hand, the

principal, unlike Mr. A, did contend performance on these assessments is one part of his

conception of success. Likewise, Mr. D reinforced the contention that growth whether on

formative or summative assessments, is a better basis of success than children's

performance on their end-of-grade tests. The principal stated, "You know success is in

growth. It's not necessarily getting a three or a four on a test." Mr. E asserted

performance on end-of-grade or end-of-course assessments was one indicator of success;

however, he mentioned other parts of success including grades, awards earned, number of

activities children are involved with, plans and acceptance into higher education, and

positive learning experiences, which were equally important as performance on state or

local end-of-course or grade tests. Additionally, similar to Mr. B, Mr. G asserted scores

on end-of-grade examinations are important, but do not conceptualize success for all

learners.

Success is Individual to Each Student

In the course of data analysis, participants described success as acquisition and

development of certain skills and mindsets, academic, behavioral, or developmental

growth, performance on end-of-year assessments, and satisfying or positively improving

stakeholders' experiences. However, the final theme gained from my data analysis was

unique because it said success was individualized to each child and could also manifest

itself with small specific acts opposed to other themes of success that applied to all

children. Mr. A specified, "Individualized, students who are able to reach their potential,

what is successful for a student with a 68 IQ might be different than what success is for a

student with a 120 IQ." The participant argued success with his children specifically

economically disadvantaged learners was helping them understand their lives are not pre-

determined through generational poverty and success is possible. Similarly, Mr. B

asserted success for his students includes recognition of small acts and exposing them to

life experiences that nurture their appreciation for education and lifelong learning. For

example, the participant said, ". . . success is in a lot of different ways, you get to focus

on the small things. When the maintenance team tells us that they see a difference in the

cleanliness of our school, when they come in, that's success." Additionally, Mr. C echoed

the notion that success is individualized saying a significant component of success is

children understanding their distinctive limitations and subsequently working to enhance

them. Mr. D repeated principals' opinions that success is specific to each student

declaring, ". . . the definition of success is going to be different for every child because

they're all different." Also, Mr. E expressed the view success is individualized and one

must define it accordingly. Finally, Mr. G summarized this theme emphasizing success is

individualized and frequently exhibited through small steps.

The principal stated:

for some students, it's just decoding a word that they haven't been able to decode
before, or be able to chunk together or pull a chunk of a reading passage and
summarize it, and they haven't been able to do that before. When it comes to

measuring so many things in this day and age, its numbers, numbers, numbers . . . it's hard to remember to pause and take the time to celebrate those small successes.

Principals' Actions Consistency with Their Definitions of Success

After carefully scrutinizing coded transcripts from my semi-structured interviews and participants' daily recorded logs, several categories emerged related to whether principals' actions were consistent with their conceptions of success. The following categories appeared in my data analysis:

- Principals' actions were consistent with their conceptions of success a *significant* majority of the time

- Principals' actions were consistent with their conceptions of success a majority of the time (however, they do perform some actions that are not commensurate with their opinions of success)

- Principals' actions were not consistent with their conceptions of success

The categories analyzed from this section of my data analysis enabled me to answer my research question focused on whether principals' actions were congruent with their conceptions of success.

Principals' Actions were Consistent with Their Conceptions of Success a Significant Majority of the Time

Mr. A believed success consisted of academic growth, behavioral growth, individualized growth and development, maturing higher-level thinking skills, cultivating communication and collaboration abilities, nurturing children's understanding their lives are not pre-determined and have the possibility of success in future schooling and the

capacity to become productive members of society, and boosting both internal and external stakeholders' perceptions and morale. For these reasons, the two hours the principal allocated to classroom walkthroughs of math teachers, with a district curriculum coordinator, addressed his conception that success included academic growth and development of higher-level thinking skills such as problem solving. During the participant's math walkthroughs, a student discipline issue arose in another classroom; however, the principal continued his focus on students' growth by making sure one of his assistant principals dealt with the situation. The principal stated, ". . . I was called away from the classroom walkthroughs just briefly to assist with a sixth-grade discipline issue, but I was able to hand that off to the assistant principal." Similarly, a personnel situation surfaced prior to the school leader's classroom walkthroughs, but the participant again delegated the responsibility to one of his administrative teammates to ensure he completed his classroom visits.

Likewise, the principal spent time communicating with a student about his improved behavior, which aligned with his perception of success specifically individualized success for children, behavioral progress, and the belief in future success. The participant declared, ". . . called to an EC classroom to discuss positive behaviors that were observed with a child and gave him a pat on the back and encourage him to keep up the great choices he's making." The principal also conferenced with two teachers experiencing a difficult time with a student's behavior and urged them to model appropriate behavior with the child and support his/her learning, which corresponded to behavioral growth and bettering teachers' morale. In a like manner, the participant spends

time daily providing staff duty-free lunch, which again strives to improve morale. The school administrator said, ". . . finally getting to the cafeteria to help supervise duty-free lunch for teachers, usually I try to get there at 11:10."

The principal also allotted time to scheduled and unscheduled meetings with parents, which demonstrated accessibility and attempts to foster an effective home and school partnership. The participant asserted, ". . . have a parent meeting with a cheerleading parent over a concern I became aware of last evening." Mr. A declared, ". . . this was a scheduled meeting with a parent . . . who has some concerns about bullying." Additionally, the school leader interacted with community members at a middle-school basketball tournament, which again demonstrated his accessibility and showed his commitment to improve stakeholder perceptions. The school leader avowed, ". . . head to school across the county for the championship basketball games, these will end approximately 10:00 to 10:15 this evening . . ." Finally, as mentioned earlier, the considerable majority of the principal's actions focused on his conception of success; however, a few actions including speaking with custodians about a facilities issue, cleaning out email during the day, and calling the Human Resources department did not correlate to his definition of success.

Mr. B's viewpoint of success included academic growth, behavioral growth, cultivating positive learning opportunities for children, small successes for students, and improving stakeholders' perceptions especially parents and community members. Therefore, the extensive time Mr. B spent completing classroom walkthroughs and post-conference sessions with his school's curriculum coordinators and assistant principals

addressed students' academic growth and development of positive learning experiences that he believed were crucial to success. The school leader averred, "Doing classroom walkthroughs with curriculum coordinators and assistant principals in math . . . to determine the effectiveness and what areas we need to grow in with math instruction." The principal dedicated time to reading a book about grading practices, which related to his conviction that success involves students' growth, small successes, and promoting positive learning opportunities for children. He stated, "Reading a book on grading . . . before I go into a meeting with the science teachers about grading practices . . . to make changes that we need to make to our grading practices here."

The principal also spent time communicating, in a positive manner, with students to advance positive learning experiences, small successes, and behavioral growth. For example, the principal made morning announcements where he focused attention on students having positive, productive days devoted to academic and behavioral growth. Similarly, he spoke to an athletic team to remind them of behavioral expectations, which aligned to the belief that success involves behavioral growth and enhancing perceptions of community members. The school executive avowed, "Met with boys' basketball team to discuss conduct . . . with the basketball tournament this week." Also, the participant collaborated with an assistant principal on refining hallway procedures, which endeavored to support students' behavioral growth.

Continuing, the participant conferenced with several parents and a community member concentrating on the principal's belief that success must include changing external stakeholders' opinions about his school. As the school leader stated on numerous

occasions, developing an effective home and school connection demands the principal is accessible, approachable, and accountable, which develops through these numerous meetings and is fundamental to his conception of success. For example, the school leader said, "Met with Mr. Thomas to go over plans for the . . . inauguration or the opening ceremonies of the Boys and Girls club here . . ." After analyzing my data, it was apparent the participant allocated a significant majority of his time to activities consistent with his views of success; however, did perform actions primarily students' discipline that were not specifically connected to his opinions of success. On the other hand, though student discipline may not directly address the principal's conception that success includes academic growth and development, it may indirectly cultivate students' behavioral growth that is essential to the principal's definition of success.

Mr. C believed success consisted of students cooperating and understanding their responsibility to others, being ready for future levels of schooling, cultivating children's higher-level thinking, nurturing communication and collaboration skills, progressing subject matter knowledge, and positive parental school opinions. Therefore, the participant performing supervisory duty enabled him to model appropriate behavior, which is essential to cooperating with others, developing responsibility to other individuals, and nurturing a positive home and school relationship. The participant said, ". . . I was on morning car duty like I am every morning . . . I see it as a good time to . . . establish the tone and model the tone of interaction that I want our staff members to have with all students by wishing them good morning . . ." Similarly, the principal's daily morning announcements provided him the opportunity to mature students' positive

relationships with others, which is a core component of the principal's belief related to success. The school leader alleged, "I did the morning message, it's a daily message of wisdom that I . . . utilize with various topics ranging from bullying to service to others." In a like manner, the school leader spent time communicating with students, during lunch, allowing him to illustrate the importance of respecting and cooperating with individuals.

Next, the principal spent a considerable amount of time being a visible classroom presence through completion of walkthroughs that let him assess teachers' effectiveness and students' learning, which is fundamental to developing subject matter knowledge, higher-level thinking skills, and children's communication and collaboration skills. The participant stated, ". . . I will spend the next 30 minutes doing informal walkthroughs in classrooms . . . that's an opportunity for me to continuously stay on top of the pulse of the school instructionally." Additionally, the school leader allocated time to reading a book titled *The Collaborative Administrator* and also did research on a future language immersion program the school will implement next school year, which aligned to his conviction that success involves growing children's higher-level thinking skills and preparing them for forthcoming levels of schooling.

Also, the principal apportioned a great deal of time to meeting or speaking with parents, which is critical to his opinion that success should comprise parents' positive opinions of their children's learning experiences. The participant asserted, "It's about 8:25 and just preparing to have a parent meeting . . . specifically related to an AIG issue regarding grading, so anticipating that meeting to last about 30 minutes." The principal

also took part in two additional parent conferences and spoke with several parents on the

phone concerning a variety of topics such as a new school program, academic concerns,

and behavioral items that allowed him to sustain quality home and school connections,

which he deemed essential to success. The significant majority of Mr. C's actions were

consistent with his definition of success, but a small number of activities such as

completing a fire drill and signing financial and staff absence paperwork did not align to

his conception of success.

Principals' Actions were Consistent with Their Conceptions of Success a Majority of the Time

Mr. F contended success consisted of academic growth, behavioral growth,

coaching children for success in both future schooling and society, and inspiring in

students an appreciation and love for learning. For that reason, the participant attending

his school's Administrator, Counselor, and Exceptional Children (ACE) meeting enabled

him to focus on students' academic growth, behavioral growth, and readying learners for

success in future schooling and society, which were essential to his conception of

success. Similarly, the school leader's communication with a business allied to staff

professional development allowed him to complete actions connected to academic

growth, preparing learners for future success, and maturing students' appreciation and

love for learning, which were imperative to his views of success. The principal stated,

"Just called Texthelp to get someone down here, and look at or do a professional

development for our teachers." Likewise, the participant spent time organizing for the

school's Black History Program, which helped him engage a significant number of

children and foster students' appreciation and respect for learning that were a primary

piece of his definition of success. The school administrator was also a visible classroom presence performing classroom visits and classroom conversations with children, which aligned to his conviction that success includes academic growth and being prepared for subsequent levels of schooling. The principal said, "I usually around lunch time deliberately get into some classrooms and mingle with students and teachers." The principal also participated in instructional activities that addressed his opinion that success consisted of cultivating students' appreciation and love for learning. The school leader maintained, "Just today in band class, I participated in the learning process by playing a saxophone and participating in a math competition in [sic] on Pi Day." Similarly, the principal took part in an extended Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting that allowed him to complete an activity associated with students' academic growth, behavioral growth, and success in future schooling and society, which were vital to his conception of success.

Although the principal spent a majority of his time performing actions or practices that supported or were consistent with his perception of success, the participant also spent time with several actions that were not commensurate with his viewpoint of success. For example, the school leader called his district's Human Resources Department to discuss a personnel situation. Also, the participant worked on paperwork that did not follow his opinion of success. The school leader asserted, "I'm about to run copies for the . . . letter and we're going to be done with that scenario around 12:10." The principal similarly allocated time to communicating with two staff members about creating an email distribution list, which did not correspond to his definition of success. Also, the principal

spent time with discipline situations where he gathered information on a lost cell phone, opened the lost and found door, and watched Internet videos with a child. The participant elaborated, ". . . I took him into my office and he was in love with Scooby Doo so, I put Scooby Doo on . . . and I waited his parents arrival." Additionally, the school leader attended a meeting with his district's central office prior to the students' school day. Though the principal did complete a number of activities that were not consistent with his conception of success, the majority of his acts were dedicated to practices that supported his perception of success.

Mr. G declared success included academic growth, behavioral or developmental growth, facilitating future success in schooling and society, developing higher-level thinking skills such as problem solving, nurturing children's passion for lifelong learning, and small successes individualized to children. Therefore, meeting with his school's curriculum coordinator to discuss staff professional development scheduled later in the day enabled the principal to complete actions potentially dedicated to academic growth, cultivating critical-thinking skills, preparing children for future levels of school, or fostering children's development of lifelong learning abilities, which were essential to his conception of success. The participant avowed, "Forty-five minute staff development meeting for all licensed staff . . . occurred after school, purpose continual growth and provide professional development for staff." Similarly, the school leader spent considerable time visiting classrooms and completing formal observations that enabled him to make sure school goals such as promoting higher-level thinking capacities were happening in classrooms. Also, the participant met with his EC chairperson to discuss

children's individual assessments and conferenced with his assistant principal about two

teachers not collaborating and then brainstormed ideas for improvement between the two

instructors, which connected to academic growth and success in future levels of

schooling. The participant averred, ". . . informal meeting with EC chair to . . . just ask a

couple of questions about progress monitoring reports that we are or are not doing."

Additionally, the principal spoke to his school's behavior therapist about several

students having behavioral problems and conferenced with two teachers regarding testing

children for gifted services, which correlated to fostering students' academic growth,

behavioral growth, and developing higher-level thinking skills that were all fundamental

to his definition of success. The school leader maintained, ". . . informal meeting with the

. . . behavior therapist, she sees five kids at our school, one is a very hot button student

right now." The participant also conferenced with a teacher concerning a student living in

poverty and collaborated on a plan of action for her success, which connected to the

principal's conviction that small successes and developmental growth are fundamental to

success. In a like manner, the principal allocated time to communicating with a teacher

concerning a school program that supports his belief success involves behavioral or

developmental growth and future success. The school administrator said, "Met with P.E.

teacher . . . about a potential after-school program run by our school for boys . . ."

Though the principal did devote the majority of his time completing actions

consistent with his definition of success, he did undertake several activities that did not

support his perception of success. As an example, the participant spent time, on several

instances, speaking to a district technician about his email not functioning properly.

Additionally, the participant allotted time to finishing paperwork. The principal maintained, ". . . write [sic] vacancy posting, fax vacancy posting." The school leader further declared, ". . . placed a work order to have phones fixed in the office between office and guidance." The school administrator also performed several practices including contacting his district's central services, creating letters to distribute to non-renewed teachers, writing notes for a meeting relating to transferring a teacher, and working on renewal paperwork for Human Resources that were not consistent with his definition of success. The participant stated, ". . . went through spreadsheet . . . to determine which teachers will be reelected and will not be reelected . . ." Also, the principal said, ". . . composed letter for letting teacher know that she's an interim teacher, who will not be renewed." To summarize, the principal spent a considerable part of his day performing actions that were consistent with his conception of success, but also apportioned time to actions that did not support his viewpoints related to success.

Principals must undoubtedly participate in administrative tasks that are critical to efficient school operations, but not necessarily related to their conceptions of success. However, principals whose significant majorities of actions were congruent with their definitions of success often found ways to complete these practices without sacrificing time for actions that were strongly associated with their definitions of success. Participants whose significant majorities of actions were aligned to their conceptions of success often delegated these tasks to other administrators, which allowed them to focus more on practices closely connected to their opinions of success. Moreover, they made a concerted effort to perform tasks that were directly associated with their perceptions of

success. For example, one principal made time to commend a student's improved behavior while another participant spent over an hour performing classroom walkthroughs. Similarly, these principals utilized time, prior to and after the school day, to complete managerial tasks such as responding to emails that enabled them to perform actions, during the school day, that were closely connected to their conceptions of success. While all principals must execute basic administrative duties that are fundamental to their role as principal, principals who take part in a significant majority of actions linked to their perceptions of success often delegated, completed these responsibilities before or after school, and made a concentrated effort to execute practices intimately associated with their perceptions of success.

Principals' Actions were not Consistent with Their Definitions of Success

Mr. E believed success comprised quality grades, a plan for college, awards earned, a positive school experience, being a well-rounded learner, acquiring higher-level thinking skills including problem solving and critical thinking, developing a strong work ethic, and nurturing collaborative skills. However, after analyzing the participant's daily recorded log, it appeared he performed almost no actions consistent with his perception of success. For example, the principal stated his day arranging substitute coverage for two staff members who were absent. The principal also performed extensive supervisory duty that could possibly be an opportunity for the school leader to engage students about a number of success components such as a plan for college, their current school experiences, or being well-rounded; however, there was no indication the participant interacted or spoke to children, which was different than other principals who took part in

supervisory duty. The school leader said, "Also, saw my new math teacher, geometry, standing on a chair, almost gave me a heart attack worried about liability." The principal similarly spent a significant amount of time communicating with district superintendents concerning school personnel issues, which did not align with his conception of success, as the participant indicated they concerned personnel issues that transpired outside of school. The school leader declared, "Talking on the phone with Dr. X about several personnel issues. I will have a meeting with Dr. X, via teleconference, about 11:00 a.m. today . . . working with my administrative team to cover some situations . . ." Likewise, the participant avowed, ". . . have a call with Dr. Y, a conference call about a personnel situation." Additionally, the principal allocated time to paperwork and returning phone calls, which again did not support his view of success.

Though the principal's actions and behaviors from his daily recorded log were not matching to his opinions of success, information derived from his semi-structured interviews indicated he performed actions or practices associated with his definition of success. For instance, the principal said being a school and classroom presence is a core component of his responsibilities, which would provide him an opportunity to gauge development of higher-level thinking skills, analyze students' learning experiences, evaluate stakeholders' work ethics, nurture relationships with children, and determine whether collaborative skills are being matured. The principal alleged, "I attend classes and talk with kids, walk around and communicate with them at lunch, go to their activities . . . try to build a relationship." Similarly, the principal said he takes part in school activities focused on ensuring students' academic success in high school and

eventually college, which would support his belief that success included forming a plan for secondary education. The participant averred, ". . . there's an awful lot of . . . activities for students to work with adults so that they can understand the program of studies . . . they understand what path that will help them take." To encapsulate, the principal's daily recorded log showed he did not take part in actions consistent with his definition of success; however, his semi-structured interview highlighted activities that match his opinions of success.

Mr. D contended success included academic growth, behavioral growth, cultivating students' self-confidence to help them reach their potential, and developing children's problem-solving abilities. However, after reviewing coded transcripts from his daily recorded log and semi-structured interview, it appeared he performed a limited number of actions matching his conception of success. The participant started his day walking the school and participating in supervisory duty with no apparent communication with school stakeholders, which did not correspond to his definition of success. In a like manner, the participant spoke to a teacher about a parent situation that occurred in the car rider line specifically following school drop-off procedures that did not seem to correlate with his view of success. The school administrator also dedicated time to learning information about a parent behavior issue that did not look like it aligned with his conception of success. Additionally, the school leader spent a considerable amount of time completing paperwork. The participant stated, ". . . just going over some paperwork papers, and signing a few things that she needed me to sign, as far as bank roles, and things like that." Similarly, the school leader asserted, "I typed an email about . . . intent

forms for staff and that did take me about 20 minutes." Additionally, the school leader

worked on paperwork for an upcoming field trip and committees related to a district-wide

accreditation process. On two separate occasions, the principal communicated with a

local athletic association about use of his school's facilities that did not seem to align to

his perception of success. The school leader said, "I got a [sic] email that I had to deal

with, they use our facilities our gym facilities . . . and for the third weekend in a row, they

did not return all the chairs and put them up accordingly." In addition, the principal

apportioned time to resolving personal email problems that did not appear to correlate to

his conception of success. The principal maintained, "I checked all my email at about

8:15 because I've had so many email issues, worked on that for a little bit." Also, the

participant expressed, ". . . after that I worked on my tech issue again, because my email

was still messed up."

   Although the majority of the principals' actions were not consistent with his

conception of success, he did take part in some activities that matched his definition of

success. For example, the participant met with a parent about book donations, which

possibly supported his belief that success includes academic growth. Likewise, the school

leader spent time with a staff member discussing an impending pep rally, which aligned

to his opinion that success consists of maturing children's self-confidence to nurture

growth and development toward their potential. The participant stated, ". . . met with the

counselor planning . . . for our EOG pep rally . . . for the third, fourth, and fifth-grade

students that is to build up some excitement." The principal also performed classroom

visits and interviewed prospective candidates for a vacant school position, which allowed

him to complete actions focused on academic growth and cultivating children's problem-solving capacity that was fundamental to his definition of success. To summarize, the majority of the principal's time was allotted to practices that were not consistent with his views of success; however, the participant did apportion a smaller amount of time to behaviors aligned with his definition of success.

In conclusion, my data analysis derived from participants' emailed responses, daily recorded logs, and semi-structured interviews provided themes for my research questions that were focused on principals' time allocation, perceptions of success, and whether their actions were commensurate with their opinions of success. My analysis suggested that principals allocated their time communicating with internal and external stakeholders, performing a number of managerial tasks, engaged in activities aligned to instructional leadership, and taking part in interconnected activities where time spent was impacted and affected by other actions, behaviors, or practices. Also, my analysis showed that participants believed success included developing collaboration and higher-level thinking skills such as problem solving and critical thinking, nurturing the belief that future success is attainable, cultivating effective communication abilities and an appreciation for education and lifelong learning, students' academic, behavioral, and developmental growth, performance on end-of-year standardized assessments, meeting or improving stakeholders' school perceptions, and understanding success is individualized to students' specific needs. Additionally, my analysis intimated a majority of participants' actions were consistent with their definitions of success, but a few principals' actions did not support their beliefs connected to success.

Though I analyzed significant data through participants' daily recorded logs resulting in several hundred pages of coded transcripts, I realize there are some limitations future researchers studying these issues must resolve. First, my participants carried out one day of a daily recorded log. Therefore, it would be valuable for future researchers to require participants complete additional days possibly one or two more to yield researchers vital additional information. As a result, researchers would have further data that would help them analyze whether their participants' recorded log actions were how they typically spent their days or were uncommon depending on factors or nuances specific to their recorded log day. Another limitation of my analysis included the amount of detail participants provided in their daily recorded logs. For example, they may not have documented every action or discussed their reasons for carrying out their practices. For these reasons, it would be advantageous for future researchers to request participants record their actions every ten minutes and also offer brief responses explaining why they completed recorded acts, which would help researchers determine whether principals' actions were associated with their conceptions of success. In other words, if a participant supplied a brief explanation why he took part in certain practices, researchers would better be able to analyze whether their actions were connected to their beliefs concerning success. In my forthcoming section, an interpretation of the data taken from transcribed and coded emailed responses, daily recorded logs, and semi-structured interviews will increase understanding of my research questions centered on how principals spend their time, perceptions of success, and whether their actions correspond to their opinions of success.

CHAPTER VI

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Interpretation

My study answered questions concerning how principals spend their time, conceptualize success, and whether their actions matched their perceptions of success. As I scrutinized my data, I expanded and stretched my understanding of these questions to include the following assertions:

- Principals would like to spend their time as instructional leaders and positively communicating with students

- Principals actually spent their time communicating and interacting with internal and external stakeholders and performing managerial tasks, in addition to their work as instructional leaders

- Principals conceptualized success as:

  o development of higher-level thinking skills (including problem solving)

  o belief by students that future success is achievable

  o achieving effective communication abilities

  o having an appreciation for education and lifelong learning

  o growth by students academically, behaviorally, or developmentally

  o improved performance on end-of-year standardized assessments

       o   satisfying or improving stakeholders' school perceptions

       o   understanding success is individualized to students' specific needs

The subsequent discussion will follow the same order as the analysis in the previous

chapter, first discussing how principals preferred to allocate their time and actually spent

their time, their perceptions of success, and finally inspecting whether participants'

actions were consistent with their opinion of success.

      Principals wished to spend time positively communicating with students. Analysis

of my data indicated that participants believed teaching students acceptable behaviors,

character virtues, that their lives are meaningful and that success is attainable, and an

appreciation for education, were all components of positively communicating with

children. An interesting note here was principals of schools serving higher populations of

minority children and learners receiving free or reduced lunch, Mr. A, B, and C all

believed supportively communicating with students was how they should apportion their

time. Likewise, Mr. F, who runs a school with a lower percentage of students considered

at risk, responded similar to Mr. A, B, and C, which appears to counteract the influence

contextual elements including school demographics, may have on how principals desire

to spend their time. However, of note, Mr. F is a first-year principal who was recently

transferred from a different school with similar low-income demographics, which shows

there may be a difference in how principals hope to spend their time depending on

contextual factors. Put another way, principals leading schools or having recent

professional experience in schools with higher numbers of minority children or students

receiving free or reduced lunch held they must spend their time positively

communicating, encouraging, modeling behavior, and motivating their learners. Although this notion was mentioned by other participants, it was more common and fundamental in principals working in schools with larger populations of minority students and children getting free or reduced lunch.

Based on my study data, principals spent time completing three primary responsibilities: communicating with stakeholders, taking part in managerial chores, and working as an instructional leader. All principals, regardless of contextual factors, including school level, size, state or federal assessment classification, or demographics, communicated with students, which makes sense because the prodigious majority of principals believed success involved behavioral growth, belief in future success, and an appreciation for education and love for learning that can be developed through principal and student interactions. For example, several participants reinforced positive student behavior, modeled appropriate social interactions, and taught important character virtues such as respect and responsibility to others that are connected to their opinions of success and require communication with children. On the other hand, a fascinating theme appeared within my data related to principals' time allocation and student discipline. Based on my data, it revealed all three middle-school principals spent the most time working with student discipline. Furthermore, all three school leaders were operating in their first year as principal at their specific school, and two of the three lead schools with extremely high percentages of minority learners and students receiving free or reduced lunch with the third principal having a similar assistant principal background. Therefore,

it looks like principals may apportion their time differently depending on contextual elements such as school level or school demographics.

My data also indicated the significant majority of participants' assigned time to interconnecting with district personnel including other school-based principals, directors, varying superintendents, and representatives from various departments including Human Resources and Technology Services. An attention-grabbing note here was several principals allotted a great deal of time communicating with different superintendents about school personnel matters. Similar to financial responsibilities, personnel situations because of district policies or state statutes are almost always the obligation of building-level principals. For instance, participants apportioned time to renewal and nonrenewal of teachers they were assumedly mandated to complete, which focuses attention on what actions principals choose to partake and what ones they are compelled to spend time with. Participants also used time interacting with community members other than parents or district personnel; however, my data uncovered the communications were less frequent, did not last as long, and rarely addressed teaching and learning. Additionally, only two principals, Mr. B and Mr. F, communicated with community members concerning their beliefs of success while other participants briefly spoke or met with community individuals related to activities not connected to their conceptions of success. For example, Mr. B conferenced with a representative from the local Boys and Girls Club concerning a partnership between his school and the organization that corresponded to his belief that success includes refining stakeholders' perceptions, behavioral growth, developing an appreciation for education and learning, and individualized opportunities

for children. Similarly, Mr. F communicated with a business partner about providing his

staff professional development that would enable them to cultivate students' academic

and behavioral growth that are vital to his viewpoints of success. Although two

participants interacted with community members correlated to teaching, learning, and

their perceptions of success, it was surprising these interactions were limited and that

other principals did not allocate time to establish community relationships that endeavor

to facilitate student growth and development. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to

investigate school and community collaborations that attempt to support schools and

whether or not the relationships positively influence students or schools.

Another factor related to principals' time allocation that my data showed was the

significant majority of principals spent time working on or finishing paperwork. While all

principals apportioned time to paperwork, elementary principals, Mr. C, D, and G spent

the most time on paperwork. Though elementary principals' schools have dissimilar

student demographics, state or federal accountability designations, experience serving as

building-level principal, and levels of education, the unifying factor was they all have one

assistant principal or a part-time assistant principal where all other principals'

administrative teams consisted of three assistant principals, which implies number of

assistant principals may affect principals' time distribution. In other words, it is possible

on certain days there may not be another administrator in participants' buildings that

forces them to complete paperwork and other managerial duties because nobody else has

the capacity to complete them.

A theme of great concern was whether principals dedicated time to instructional leadership practice. Based on my data, all participants except one performed informal walkthroughs, which support the broader conception of instructional leadership where their actions shape students' learning through the indirect effects of other staff members. Classroom walkthroughs enable all participants to hold staff accountable to school goals and beliefs, which all spent time with because it encourages students' growth and development. Moreover, of note, principals Mr. A and Mr. B both principals of middle schools with school demographics including at least 50% minority learners and 70% receiving free or reduced lunch, identified as not meeting AYP guidelines, and earning the lower state designation School of Progress, allotted the most time to classroom walkthroughs. Also, they performed them with school or district personnel and completed debriefing sessions with colleagues focused on targeted areas, which was unique compared to all other participants who completed their walkthroughs alone. This action was consistent with both principals' belief that success includes academic growth, development of higher-level thinking skills, fostering the mindset success is realistic, and promoting an appreciation for education and lifelong learning. Therefore, it appears my data indicates principals working at middle schools with a considerable number of children identified as disadvantaged seem to apportion more time to classroom walkthroughs and instructional leadership, which was unexpected because the same principals also spend a considerable amount of time with students' discipline typically contrasted with instructional leadership activities.

My data also discovered principals used time functioning as instructional leaders through leading or taking part in professional development opportunities. Moreover, two out of three elementary principals spent time presenting or designing professional development for staff members, which hints these principals may have more time to focus on staff professional development than secondary principals. Mr. B and D, a middle school and an elementary principal, allocated time to personal professional development through reading a book and watching a video that conversely insinuates individual attributes including desire for continual improvement, wish to implement contemporary or new programs, or leadership style may also have an effect on principals' time spent as instructional leaders.

Next, my data revealed the unexpected outcome that principals' actions do not occur in isolation and are regularly the cause and effect of subsequent and previous acts. This finding was thought-provoking and unpredicted because I did not find it within any studies in my review of literature. For example, my data showed numerous examples where principals communicated with stakeholders because they recently completed a managerial task. Similarly, there were countless examples where principals performed managerial acts resulting from prior instructional leadership actions. The interrelationships occurred between all three primary ways principals allot their time including communicating with stakeholders, working on managerial matters, and acting as an instructional leader. As a result, this conclusion raised questions such as can principals dedicate time to specific actions that may enable them to work more efficiently and complete several responsibilities while only completing a small number of acts?

The next section centers on my data linked to participants' conceptions of success. My data also disclosed that a significant majority of principals insisted success included instilling in children skills and abilities necessary for future success. Moreover, principals were divided into two distinct future mindsets with the first one focusing on preparing learners for success in subsequent levels of schooling while the second centered on helping children develop mentalities and skills that will allow them to become productive members of society. Mr. A, B, and G, principals leading schools with between 50% to 90% minority students and 70% to 90% of children getting free or reduced lunch, maintained success included imparting in their children the outlook that success is possible and that their lives are not pre-determined, which strongly connects to my opinion of success. As a result, this judgment piqued my interest related to students' beliefs about themselves and how that interacts with children's performance on end-of-year accountability assessments. Also, this finding seems to propose principals leading schools recognized as high needs may include a different and unique component of their definition of success compared to principals leading unlike schools.

Another factor that concentrated on principals' perceptions of success was the belief that success also comprised developing children's excitement and appreciation for learning that supports students' commitment to lifelong learning. Additionally, it correlated to a major part of my opinion of success specifically that success includes exciting and engaging children with their learning. Similar to principals' convictions, I contend excitement, engagement, a positive learning experience, and thankfulness for education facilitate lifelong learning and future academic and life success. This finding is

interesting and creates questions about how to excite and absorb children in their learning and what is the relationship if any to future school and life success.

My data also indicated the disparate majority of principals avowed the most significant and reliable determinant of success was students' academic growth. Also, participants asserted academic growth was crucial to success because it relates to each and every student and can be evaluated on a much more frequent basis than performance on summative assessments, which makes it a more accurate and representative component of success. This conclusion was discovered in my review of literature; however, due to our contemporary standards-based accountability era, it was unanticipated that almost all principals believed academic growth was the most important component of success. While this finding was remarkable and unforeseen, it may connect to the possible reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 with the call from numerous educators and legislators to jettison the AYP section related to subgroup performance on state end-of-year assessments. Additionally, if the legislation is reauthorized and AYP subsequently abolished, it raises questions regarding how the prospective change impacts principals' conceptions of success.

Another unexpected and fascinating theme that emerged from my data was the opinion of the significant majority of participants that success includes behavioral or developmental growth. This conclusion was not anticipated because only a nominal number of studies within my review of literature mentioned behavioral or developmental growth as a component of success, with the extensive majority equating success to children's performance on end-of-year state accountability measures. Furthermore,

fostering students' behavioral or developmental growth would develop self-confidence that is fundamental to academic growth, performance, and nurturing an appreciation for education and lifelong learning, which the overwhelming majority of participants stated were important pieces of success. Also, nurturing children's behavioral and developmental growth facilitates students reaching their academic and behavioral potentials that participants asserted were crucial to success.

Of significant concern for me regarding principals' conceptions of success, was the prominence principals assigned to end-of-year state accountability instruments. Performance on summative state accountability examinations was the most common determinant of success contained within research in my review of literature. Therefore, it was not surprising the disproportionate majority of principals considered scores on these tests an element of success; however, it was unpredicted almost all participants thought success was a much larger concept that involved other pieces such as academic growth, behavioral or developmental growth, progression of higher-level thinking skills, cultivating students' appreciation for education, infusing the attitude that children's lives are not pre-determined, and pleasing or improving stakeholders' school perceptions were equally as essential as performance on these assessments. Principals' also averred success could be individualized or specific to each child, which buoys the notion that success may be somewhat different for each student depending on a variety of factors including previous school experiences, whether a child lives in poverty, or individual characteristics such as a child having a learning disability. Furthermore, it will also be exciting to study if implementation of the new Common Core State Standards and North

Carolina Essential Standards with their amending content standards and the possible

removal of the AYP component of NCLB will alter or make principals rethink the

importance of performance on state accountability mechanisms.

Another factor linked to success my data exposed was the great majority of

participants, regardless of contextual or individual attributes, alleged success could be

conceptualized individually or specific to each child. This finding was unanticipated

because it was not found within my review of literature. Also, several principals coupled

this belief with the idea success also involves small successes specific to an individual

student or larger segment of a school population. Participants' opinions that success may

be individualized align to the viewpoint that growth is a fundamental component of

success because both conceptions endeavor to break success down to the individual child.

Finally, my data showed the preponderance of principals spent time performing

actions that were consistent with their perceptions of success. Additionally, these

principals whose actions matched their opinions of success lead schools with a diverse

cross-section of contextual features including school level, performance on state

accountability assessments, fulfilling AYP requirements, and school demographics,

which suggests individual attributes or beliefs may impact whether principals' actions

correspond to their views of success. For example, when confronted with an activity that

may require principals to perform an action not consistent with their idea of success,

these principals either delegated it to another administrator or made a concerted effort to

quickly finish the act and return to a practice that correlated to their visions of success.

I also ascertained from my data that the two principals who performed minimal actions associated with their definitions of success work at schools earning the highest designation in the state's accountability program and also met AYP mandates, which seems counterintuitive. However, one principal, Mr. D, lost a full-time assistant principal at the completion of last school year and currently has only a half-time assistant principal this school year. In other words, unlike principals who have the ability to designate tasks that may not match their conception of success, Mr. D does not have that option and must complete all actions including those that do not champion his opinion of success. As a result, number of assistant principals appears to be a contextual factor that influences whether principals execute acts consistent with their beliefs of success. Also, my data revealed that Mr. E completed minimal actions related to his definition of success; however, his day was consumed with communicating with district superintendents about school personnel matters that presumably no other school employee had the authority to investigate or complete. As a result, this again focuses attention on what deeds principals choose to complete and what acts they must take part in because they have no alternative or control.

After finishing my interpretation, there were several findings that were problematic and warranted additional discussion. First, my conclusions revealed the contextual variable of school demographics specifically school level swayed principals' time spent with students' discipline. In other words, all three middle-school participants allocated the most time among principals working with students' behavior concerns. Furthermore, two of the three middle-school principals run schools with well over 70% of

their children receiving free or reduced lunch and at least 50% identified as minority

learners. Therefore, it would be interesting to further explore whether school level

specifically middle school, due to children progressing through adolescence, demands

principals apportion more time to student discipline than principals leading school at

other levels. Also, it would be meaningful to gauge whether school demographics

including percentage of children receiving free or reduced lunch or population of children

shapes time spent with students' behavior. Although it appears there may be an

association between principals' time, students' discipline, and school population, it is

important to remember Mr. G runs a school almost identical, in terms of school

demographics, to Mr. A and B; however, allotted almost no time to students' discipline,

which suggests school level and not demographics impact principals' time with students'

behavior.

 Next, my findings revealed that a majority of participants apportioned time to

school personnel matters. While principals spent considerable time performing actions

related to school personnel concerns, it would be fascinating to learn whether these

actions were personal choices or dictates from district supervisors. Put another way, there

are undoubtedly certain acts including personnel affairs principals complete because they

are the only individual, in their building, with the knowledge necessary or legal authority

to complete them. Also, it would be attention-grabbing to discover what other behaviors

principals spent time with because they were the only school employee with the provided

information or the legal authority through local school board policies or state statute.

Additionally, it would also be interesting to examine what actions principals chose to

complete on their own volition and what practices they were required to allocate time to because of district command or directive.

Another potentially problematic outcome that deserved further conversation was the finding that only two principals communicated with community members, other than their children's parents, to support students' learning, growth, and development. Participants' community interactions were limited and principals only allotted a minimal amount of time to communicating with community members. Continuing, this was surprising because a number of participants espoused the belief bettering stakeholders' perceptions was a necessary component of success; however, it seems their sentiments were confined to parents and no other community individuals. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to investigate if schools with strong community relationships or partnerships positively influence components of success compared to schools who do not nurture effective school and community associations.

Next, my conclusions indicated the overwhelming majority of principals completed classroom walkthroughs; however, middle-school principals heading schools with high percentages of students receiving free or reduced lunch or minority learners often characterized as high-needs schools, allocated the most time to walkthroughs. Additionally, they were the only participants to conduct walkthroughs collaboratively with other staff and complete subsequent debriefing conferences, which demonstrated their desire to spend time with instructional leadership practices. However, this appears counterintuitive because of my earlier finding that these same principals allot the most time among participants completing acts associated with students' discipline. As a result,

it seems participants leading schools categorized as high needs with considerable numbers of students receiving free or reduced lunch and a large number of minority learners spend a significant amount of time completing both students' discipline and instructional leadership actions, which calls into question the time they have for other consequential acts that support their conceptions of success.

Another finding that looks problematic and needs further comment was my discovery that only elementary principals dedicated time to leading staff professional development opportunities. Consequently, this outcome submits elementary-school principals may have the time to facilitate staff professional development because they allocate less time to other tasks such as students' behavior that require their time. On the other hand, individual attributes including tacit knowledge of curriculum and instruction, understanding of the Common Core State Standards and North Carolina Essential Standards, or belief in the importance of globalization may affect whether principals spend time organizing staff professional development. For these reasons, it would be appealing to study the nexus between contextual and individual factors relating to leading professional development.

Next, a fascinating conclusion was that principals' actions do not occur in isolation, but are frequently the cause and effect of previous and future actions. In other words, participants' time allocation often seems inextricably linked to their prior and upcoming actions, which was not discovered in studies within my review of literature. If one subscribes to this finding, it would be valuable to scrutinize participants' actions and understand the ones that allow principals to work more efficiently by completing several

responsibilities with the smallest number of acts. As a result of learning and performing these efficient behaviors, principals may be able to allot more time to practices that support their definition of success.

Another thought-provoking and concerning finding related to participants' beliefs linked to children's future success. Although the significant majority of principals maintained success included developing skills for success in future levels of schooling, only principals running schools classified high needs with considerable numbers of children getting free or reduced lunch and minority students conceptualized success as becoming productive members of society and believed a primary responsibility was to implant this mindset in children. Furthermore, it would be useful to investigate whether this principal action reinforces students' growth and development. Put another way, if this practice cultivates growth and development of students who struggle academically, then it must become a significant part of principals' actions. Also, it seems problematic that only principals running schools with higher numbers of children identified at-risk stated nurturing children's belief in future success was an essential responsibility because children who attend other schools could also benefit from this principal behavior. For that reason, it appears meaningful to learn how principals instill this mindset in students and whether it leads to children's future success.

My next finding that called for additional conversation was principals' opinions that growth and not performance on state end-of-year assessments was the central core of success, which was different than almost all studies within my review of literature that likened success to performance on these end-of-year examinations. I speculate whether

participants' views are being influenced by the imminent reauthorization of the No Child

Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 specifically with the cry from numerous educators and

legislators to eliminate the AYP requirement that has driven our contemporary education

era the last ten years. If AYP is abolished, it would be intriguing to see how that affects

principals' perceptions of success. Furthermore, will this prospective change reduce the

importance of state end-of-year assessments and define success, similar to several

participants, as specific and individualized to each child?

An additional outcome that deserves further discussion connects to whether

principals' actions were consistent with their conceptions of success. After analyzing

whether participants' acts corresponded to their perceptions of success, it was found the

significant majority of principals, regardless of contextual variables including school

level, size, or demographics, performed actions commensurate to their opinions of

success, which suggests individual traits may influence this relationship. For example,

individual qualities such as leadership style, trust in administrative staff, or work ethic

may affect if principals' behaviors match time spent with their conceptions of success,

which is concerning because principals completing activities connected to their

perceptions of success almost always provide students an environment to thrive, grow,

and succeed academically.

A final finding that deserves added discussion relates to the effect decreasing a

principal's administrative team has on performing actions. For example, Mr. D's team

was recently decreased from one assistant principal to a part-time assistant principal that

seemingly impacted how he allocated his time. Furthermore, he specifically talked about

how the reduction in staff affected his ability to serve as an instructional leader and required him to react and perform certain activities that previously were undertaken by the full-time assistant principal. Additionally, in light of dramatic recent cuts to local and state educational funds, it appears these decreases affect how principals allot their time and whether their actions are consistent with their perceptions of success.

By investigating how principals spent their time, conceptions of success, and if their behaviors corresponded to their opinions of success, I developed a profound and comprehensive understanding of these subjects. After scrutinizing my findings, I discovered significant outcomes such as school level seems to affect principals' relationships to student discipline, principals sometimes because of local policies, legislation, or access to information must perform particular acts because no other school-based employee has the authority or requisite knowledge, participants leading high-needs schools identified through school demographics including population of learners and socioeconomic level spend considerable time completing classroom walkthroughs coupled with the sizeable time they allocate to students' behavioral issues, elementary participants seem like they commit more time to leading professional development than other level principal, participants' actions do not occur in isolation, but are interconnected to previous and future acts, embedding in children the belief their lives are not pre-determined and they can become constructive members of society seems to be the province of principals running high-needs schools, the possible reauthorization of NCLB with the appeal to remove the AYP stipulation may change how principals view success and open the door for a new individualistic belief of success, and recent declines

in assistant principals resulting from educational funding cuts apparently impacts how

principals spend their time and whether their actions correlate to their perceptions of

success. The conclusions derived from my study of principals' time allocation and

conceptions of success should add considerably to the existing bodies of knowledge

while my findings connected to the relationship between whether principals' actions or

behaviors are consistent with their opinions of success should offer consequential insight

into a subject with significant gaps because I was not able to find any research studies

that addressed this topic.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Impact of Study

The most significant aspect of my study was it expanded understanding of principals' roles conceptualized through their daily actions, behaviors, and practices. As a result, readers gained insight into school operations and functioning, which is fundamental to teaching and learning. Also, my findings provided understanding of principals' behaviors, which Heck (1993) maintained are intimately associated with students' success. My conclusions also facilitated comprehension of principals' leadership, which Leithwood et al. (2004) asserted is second only to quality teaching in its influence on students' growth and development. I strove to develop insight into principals' responsibilities and actions by analyzing the daily actions, behaviors, and practice of a cross-section of principals including such diverse factors as school level, size, demographics, success on state or federal accountability measures, years of educational experience, and time served as a principal. My study functions as professional development for assistant principals and principals who will be able to reflect on their practices, potentially integrate new ideas into their daily actions, and foster a toolbox of strategies that will undoubtedly refine their leadership, teachers' instruction, and support students' learning. In a like manner, my conclusions added to the existing body of knowledge associated with the impact of contextual and individual

variables on principals' time allotment. For example, my study seemed to indicate that school level affects principals' time spent with student discipline and instructional leadership, size of principals' administrative teams impacts their time distribution, individual attributes seem to influence whether principals' actions match their conceptions of success, and school demographics relate to principals' perceptions of future student success.

Another important aspect of my study is it examined principals' opinions of success, which the substantial majority of research studies traditionally define as performance on standardized achievement tests (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Finnigan & Stewart, 2009; Goldring & Pasternack, 1994; Heck, 1992; O'Donnell & White, 2005; Supovitz et al., 2010). However, participants in my study characterized success to include a number of components such as academic and behavioral growth, development of higher-level thinking skills, appreciation for education and lifelong learning, belief in future success, and individualized small successes. Consequently, my study scrutinized perceptions of success that may be changing with the possible removal of the AYP provision of NCLB and implementation of the Common Core and Essential Standards.

As a result, my research offers legislators valuable information they may use to evaluate and potentially refine contemporary definitions of success. My data also delivers teachers crucial information connected to success that may cause them to transform teaching and learning, which is the fundamental core of education. Conclusions in my study also focused on the numerous challenges principals face attached to success and hopefully reinforces the importance principals' individual attributes such as work ethic,

ability to delegate, leadership, communication skills, and trust in administrative staff play in ensuring their actions correspond to views of success.

In addition to potentially impacting education as a whole, my study derived benefits for participants' schools. First, it enabled principals to review how they spent their time, which is necessary in reflecting on whether their time allocation is aligned to their vision, school goals, and beliefs of success. This reflection allowed participants to think about whether their daily actions, behaviors, and practices need to change or if they are content with their current time distribution. Next, findings contained in my study assisted participants in inspecting their notions of success and determining if their current school programs align to their definitions or must be restructured to parallel their convictions. Finally, as participants surveyed their time allocation and its relationship to their opinions of success, they were able to contemplate why their actions did or did not match individual definitions of success, which let them decide if internal changes such as reassigning assistant principal responsibilities were necessary or whether external help from the district was needed.

Besides potentially benefitting the field of education and individual research sites, my study positively impacted my professional practice in countless ways. First, I learned how principals apportion their time and their beliefs of success, which are important as I endeavor to become a building-level principal. Accordingly, I was able to integrate participants' ideas and further my professional knowledge base. An attention-grabbing finding of my study was the conclusion principals' time allocation was often interconnected and linked to previous and future acts, which forced me to begin thinking

about primary acts I should perform to work more efficiently. As I reflected on these

actions, I created a priority list that will guide my current time allotment. In addition,

completing my study enabled me to compare my opinion of success, which often seemed

incongruent to findings from most studies, to participants' convictions, which

surprisingly reaffirmed my definition of success. In other words, several components of

principals' perceptions of success including excitement and engagement, faith in future

success and understanding their lives are not pre-determined, and growth of critical

thinking skills such as the capacity to analyze, evaluate, and produce information

resembled my views of success. This thrilled me and helped me understand there are

similar minded individuals who can interact with other educators and legislators to drive

educational reform. Principals' conceptions of success also infused in me the idea that

while success is an expansive concept, it can also consist of small successes

individualized to specific children. Finally, speaking with participants and subsequently

scrutinizing data provided me examples of how principals hold staff accountable, which I

plan on assimilating into my professional practice because responsibility is vital to my

conception of success.

Lessons Drawn from My Study

After judiciously studying my findings, I believe there are several lessons that can

be drawn from my study. First, principals' responsibilities were enormously demanding

and time consuming, which required them to complete many daily actions, behaviors, and

practices. Participants' time allocation was categorized into three primary categories

including communicating with school stakeholders, performing managerial

responsibilities, and working as instructional leaders. Principals spent the most time interacting with stakeholders and the least amount of time engaged in instructional leadership practices. On the other hand, participants preferred to apportion their time to instructional leadership actions, but were prevented from these ideal activities because of managerial duties and student discipline issues.

My findings also strengthened conclusions from other research studies that reported contextual dynamics such as school level, size, demographics, and other variables sway principals' time allocation (Goldring et al., 2008; Hallinger et al., 1996; Horng et al., 2010). Similar to Horng et al., my findings showed that principals serving high-minority and high-poverty schools appeared to spend more time with students' discipline; however, my conclusion focused only on high-needs middle schools. My results also supported Hallinger et al. who reported principals leading disadvantaged schools as identified by socioeconomic status, spent more time functioning as instructional leaders opposed to principals running schools not classified as underprivileged. Also, my results revealed elementary participants spent considerably more time completing paperwork than did secondary principals, which suggests that contextual factors, specifically the number of assistant principals in the school, affects time allotment. My conclusions also indicated elementary principals expend more time planning and guiding staff development than secondary principals. This again suggests the influence of contextual characteristics on principals' time distribution.

Another critical lesson extracted from my study is that success is a sizeable concept consisting of more than the customary notion that performance on standardized

achievement tests constitutes success. Participants asserted that success included

academic and behavioral growth, expansion of higher-level thinking skills such as critical

thinking and problem solving, learning good communication and collaboration aptitudes,

faith in future school and societal success, appreciation for education and lifelong

learning, and personalized small successes. Furthermore, the vast majority of participants

claimed academic growth was the most fundamental element of success. Although other

educators and researchers (Choi et al., 2007; Lewis, 2006; Viadero, 2006) contend

academic growth is a piece of success, their findings along with my participants' beliefs

are in the minority, which makes this conclusion unexpected and distinctive. In a like

manner, almost all of my principals' maintained behavioral and developmental growth

was a staple of success. Contrastingly, the disproportionate number of studies in my

review of literature, with the exception of Cheng (1994), did not link children's

behavioral or developmental growth to success, which also makes this finding unique.

This conclusion united with the importance participants placed on academic growth

seems to point out that my participants' defined success differently than the significant

majority of researchers, which causes me to speculate there may be changes in the way

future studies delineate success.

Another central lesson drawn from my study is that participants' perceptions of

success sometimes matched my convictions. For example, similar to my views, principals

thought success included the ability to develop skills that will allow children to live

constructive lives, exciting and engaging students in their learning, and fostering

children's higher-level thinking aptitudes such as critical thinking and problem solving that again showed my participants conceived success contrarily than most researchers.

An important finding related to success is the majority of participants' actions were consistent with their conceptions of success, which ostensibly demonstrates principals model desirable behaviors, practice what they preach, and strongly believe the information they shared. Participants whose actions complemented their perceptions of success served schools with a considerable number of varying contextual factors that suggests individual characteristics impact principals' time allocation (Boyan, 1988; Leithwood et al., 1990; Spillane et al., 2007; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005). Therefore, a critical idea derived from my study is that both contextual and individual attributes affect how principals spend their time. Furthermore, both variables impacted principals' time allotment, which indicated these dynamics were important to principals' time allocation, students' learning, and must be recognized by all principals.

Promising Openings

After thoughtfully analyzing and interpreting my findings, there were four concepts specifically principals' choice, interconnection of practices, success may be individualized, and the potential elimination of AYP that were thought provoking and provided opportunities for critical reflection. As a result, it evolved my thinking related to principals' time allocation, perceptions of success, and whether their actions were consistent with their definitions of success in a different manner. Prior to beginning my study, I was under the impression principals were almost always able to choose almost all of the actions they completed. In other words, if a principal elected to be an instructional

leader, communicate with stakeholders, or perform managerial tasks, it was typically because of contextual or individual characteristics that necessitated that choice. After studying my findings, it was apparent that principals' roles were often times defined by other individuals typically district-level supervisors. As an example, several participants spent considerable time completing activities associated with school personnel issues, which stimulated my thinking about why participants allotted time to these behaviors. As I deliberated on this question, I thought about personal experiences, district policies, and state statutes and realized more frequently than I thought participants' actions are driven by district supervisors. This conclusion suggested other principals' practices might be compelled by external groups or individuals, which calls into question what other persons have the most influence on principals' time allocation and defining their roles.

Second, my finding that principals' time allocation does not always occur in isolated random acts, but often through a web of interrelated activities seems different than conclusions associated with almost all research studies. In other words, I fervently believe principals regularly perform actions because they are the result of a previous function. For example, participants frequently communicated with parents after finishing student discipline matters. Participants also commonly communicated with teachers or students after performing classroom walkthroughs. Additionally, principals' practices can also be caused by future actions that must be handled. As an example, a principal may carry out an observation prior to speaking with a parent about a concern or making a decision on the educator's renewal or nonrenewal. Therefore, I contend principals' actions, behaviors, or practices are recurrently the cause and effect of one another, which

I did not discern from reading countless other research studies. This finding piqued my curiosity about whether there are certain practices that would enable principals to work more efficiently and accomplish many responsibilities with a minimal number of acts. After vigilant thought, I contend repeated and supportive interaction with parents, being a classroom presence and providing specific instructional feedback, and developing positive relationships with children are three behaviors that will allow principals to maximize their time. For instance, cultivating a positive rapport and relationship with a student has the potential to minimize student discipline, paperwork, phone calls, meetings, or emails with parents, which would let a principal dedicate time to new meaningful behaviors. Similarly, offering teachers supportive instructional feedback has the ability to lessen time spent with students' behavior, communication with district staff concerning personnel subjects, and paperwork related to human resource interests. For these reasons, it would be worthwhile for all principals to create a priority list of actions that would enable them to maximize their daily time, which would undoubtedly permit them more time to facilitate students' learning and success.

A promising opening gleamed from my study is the finding that success may be individualized. As I looked over numerous research studies, the prodigious majority quantified success as performance on standardized achievement tests (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009; Goldring & Pasternack, 1994; O'Donnell & White, 2005; Supovitz et al., 2010). My opinions of success included viewpoints such as engaging and stimulating children in their learning, embedding the idea their lives are not pre-determined, maturing critical thinking skills, social conscious and civic-minded learners, and fostering a love

for learning. Participants' defined success as performance on standardized achievement tests, academic and behavioral growth, promoting gratefulness for education and lifelong learning, cultivating higher-level thinking skills and the capacity to effectively communicate and collaborate, and advancing the mindset that students' lives are worthwhile and can be successful. Several participants also expressed the opinion that success may be customized with small successes because all children are different, which makes defining success challenging. As I reflected on this sentiment, I wanted to make sure it was not simply a way to lower expectations for specific children, but an approach to assist all children's growth and development. After careful contemplation, I believe acknowledging children's individual, small successes will excite, motivate, and encourage students toward success. As children receive positive praise, recognition, and support, they will grow self-confident and begin to appreciate schooling, understand their lives are consequential, and develop mature skills such as critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. These, in turn, will facilitate subsequent academic growth, behavioral growth, and performance on state accountability assessments, which are my participants' core components of success. Therefore, principals must bolster all educators in advancing the idea success begins with small and individualized acts specific to children because they are the building blocks for success.

Another promising opening from my study related to principals' conviction that success was a substantial concept and seemingly more than performance on state accountability assessments, which again was unpredicted and dissimilar from the majority of research studies within my review of literature. As I analyzed participants'

ideas of success, I pondered how they coincided with the upcoming reauthorization of

NCLB particularly focusing on the appeal to eliminate its sometimes controversial AYP

condition. I speculated participants' views of success were associated with the

information that NCLB would soon be modified. In other words, I internally questioned

whether participants would quantify success so broadly ten, five, or even two years ago.

Therefore, it will be fascinating to see if future legislation impacts principals' perceptions

of success and subsequently affects their time allocation. Put another way, if AYP is

taken away from NCLB and no longer the driving force in educational reform, will the

significant majority of principals' conceptions of success align to my participants'

opinions of success? If principals' views of success change, how will that impact

teachers, students, parents, or legislators? Finally, if success is conceptualized differently

than it has been for the past decade, what impact does that have on education and

students' learning?

Limitations of My Study

As with any study either quantitative or qualitative, there are always limitations

that must be admitted. Though my data was collected from a diverse cross-section of

principals running both primary and secondary schools, schools identified as successful

and not successful under state and federal accountability measures, schools with varying

student populations, and schools with limited and extensive educational and principal

experience, it was gathered from participants working in one school district within one

state located in a specific region of the country. Also, all participants were employed in a

high-achieving district that consistently exceeds state and federal performance on

accountability measures. All schools were categorized, under the state's accountability program, as Schools of Progress or higher, which questions whether principals working in lower designated schools such as Priority Schools or Low-Performing Schools would spend their time differently, define success in a contrasting manner, or perform actions that correlated to their perceptions of success. Another limitation of my study centers on the fact that all principals were white males. Though all participants were white males, I attempted to collect data from schools with diverse characteristics including school level, student demographics, location within the district, principal experience, and performance on state and federal accountability structures. Since my findings revealed that individual attributes seemingly impact principals' time allotment, including female principals may affect data analysis and interpretation. Although I accumulated data from participants with 1 year of principal experience to over 35 years, several participants were finishing their first year working in their current assignment, which may affect my conclusions. In other words, due to their limited experience leading their schools, their time allocation may differ in subsequent years. Though I collected significant data through participants' emailed responses, daily recorded logs, and semi-structured interviews resulting in several hundred pages of coded transcripts, would additional field time change my findings? For example, since principals only recorded their activities for one day, I cannot compare their actions to other days. Also, I spent countless hours dissecting whether participants' actions were consistent with their conceptions of success; however, the lack of principals' context made this analysis extremely challenging. Therefore, I suggest future researchers require participants to provide brief explanation of why they

performed actions, behaviors, or practices, which would enable researchers to better determine whether principals' actions were consistent with their perceptions of success. As a novice researcher, undoubtedly my beginning qualitative research skills shaped data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Finally, as with any qualitative research study, I believe thick description, a paper trail with several hundred pages of coded transcripts, and constant review of my data mitigated limitations ensuring greater trustworthiness of research.

Conclusion

My research study investigated how principals allocate their time, their perceptions of success, and whether their actions were consistent with their definitions. Findings revealed participants spent time completing three primary practices including communicating with stakeholders, performing managerial activities, and serving as instructional leaders. Two conclusions associated with principals' time allocation were unique and surprising, as they were not discovered in my review of literature. First, principals generally control how they apportion their time; however, sometimes they have no choice and must carry out district directions because they are the only building-level employee with the legal authority or requisite information. Second, meticulous analysis of my findings disclosed principals' actions did not occur in isolation, but were often the cause and effect of related previous or future acts.

In my review of literature, the disproportionate number of studies defined success as performance on standardized achievement assessments. Participants defined success as more than performance on state accountability assessments including pieces such as

academic and behavioral growth, appreciation for education and lifelong learning, the belief in future school and societal success, fostering higher-level thinking skills, and an individualized notion of success specific to children. Finally, the finding that success can be personalized was unanticipated because it was not detected in my review of literature.

My last research question, specifically whether principals' time allocation matched their definition of success was eye-catching, as I did not encounter it in my review of numerous research studies. After careful investigation, my data showed the significant majority of participants performed actions that were correlated to their perceptions of success. These findings exposed me to the numerous challenges principals confront as they endeavor to align behaviors to their conceptions of success. Participants who did not carry out a majority of practices linked to their opinions of success were influenced by qualifying factors, which stresses the relationship between contextual and individual attributes and principals' time allocation. My research filled a gap specifically studying whether participants' actions were consistent with their definitions of success.

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