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A Phenomenological Study of Instructional Leadership and Preparation: Perspective of Urban Principals

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

Drexel University

by

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of

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Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving husband, Santee, whose unwavering love and support propelled me through my most doubtful moments; my children Jennifer and Jason, who are my hope and promise for the future; and to my parents, Sara and Stanley who first taught me to love learning.

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This was an intellectually stimulating endeavor that was intended to make a meaningful contribution to the field of education. I hope future readers will find it to be informative and useful.

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Abstract

A Phenomenological Study of Instructional Leadership and Preparation: Perspective of Urban Principals

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The role of the principal as an instructional leader has continued to change since the 1970s. Our understanding of the complexity and ambiguity of the role has grown and the focus shifted from management and supervision to one of building capacity for shared leadership and implementing second order change. This phenomenological study was undertaken to uncover perceptions of urban principals have regarding their view and implementation of instructional leadership and challenges that affect implementation. Qualitative methods of in depth interviewing, on site observation and artifact collection were used to collect data from 10 elementary and 2 middle school principals.

An analysis of interview data revealed several themes regarding how principals view their instructional leadership role and how they implement the role. First, principals perceive 1) themselves to be the instructional leader of their school; 2) the role to be important, complex and multifaceted; and 3) it as only one of many roles they have. Second, they perceive themselves implementing the role through 1) provision of professional development; 2) monitoring instruction; and 3) building relationships. Principals perceived their instructional leadership to be challenged by 1) limited time to monitor instruction and 2) not having enough staff for the delegation non-instructional duties. Artifact analysis revealed that principals do provide professional development and

monitor instruction. Overall, artifacts did not show the content, format or context in which professional development occurred. Evidence of professional development linked to building capacity in others toward shared leadership or to address second order change was also not present.

A major recommendation of this study recognizes that university programs designed to prepare principals for instructional leadership have not kept pace with changes in the role. The recommendation suggests that universities might consider using the principles of second order change to design preparation programs characterized by a thoughtful mixture of research, theory, practitioner voices, course work, reflections and authentic learning experiences that will result in principals being prepared to 1) effectively build capacity in others to participate in shared leadership; and 2) lead deep change in schools that will result in increased numbers of students achieving at higher levels.

Chapter 1: Overview of The Study

We felt that schools were failing to meet the needs of society, yet most educational administrators were trained by universities to maintain the status quo. (Cambron-McCabe, 2000, p. 313)

The Problem

It has become increasingly evident that schools, especially those in large cities, are not adequately educating our young people to compete successfully in the global work place. As evidence of this we have only to review recent standardized test scores in comparison to expectations and goals described in documents such as No Child Left behind Act of 2002; or Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (2006); or the Declaration of Education adopted by the local School Reform Commission for the School District of Philadelphia (2006); to see how little progress our students are making.

The demands and expectations of education have changed a great deal over the last century. One illustration of this was provided by Arthur Levine, a noted educational researcher, who wrote that, “to be employable in an information society, our children need more advanced skills and knowledge than were required in the past” (Levine, 2005, p.11). These demands are exacerbated by the fact that, “educators and non-educators alike are frustrated by the seeming inability of schools to solve their most intractable problems, especially those related to educating minority and poor students” (Lambert, 2002, p. xv).

It is widely accepted that the principal’s leadership role is critical to the effectiveness of the school toward educating its students. (Marzano, Walters,

McNulty, 2005, p. 4; Lambert, 2002, p.37; Wagner, Kegan, Lahey, Lemons, Garnier, Helsing, Howell, and Rasmussen, 2006, p. 11). Research presented in chapter 2 of this proposal will show that the importance of instructional leadership was recognized as early as the late 1970s, yet it was not well defined (Edmonds 1979; Bossert 1988; Marsh, 1997; and; Krug 1993). In the first decade of the 21st century, instructional leadership is still not well defined. Some theorists and researchers take a broad view of instructional leadership and recognize it as the single encompassing role of the principal. Others hold a more narrow view of instructional leadership and recognize it as one of many roles implemented by the principal. Guidance concerning how a principal should implement instructional leadership is also unclear. Additionally, there is general recognition that school cultures vary and can influence what the principal chooses to recognize and address as the instructional leader. The lack of a clear definition and understanding of what instructional leadership is and the absence of clear models for successful implementation has placed each school principal in the position of having to construct his or her own role of instructional leadership.

Our understanding of the complexity and ambiguity of instructional leadership has grown and the focus of instructional leadership has moved from one of primarily management and supervision to one of shared leadership and change (Marsh, 2000; Senge, 2000; Lambert; 2003; Mitchell and Castle, 2005; and Marzano, Water, and McNulty, 2005). Factors that contributed to the change include an ideological shift from behaviorism to constructivism, persistent low student achievement and the expectations of employers, parents and communities

(Marsh, 2000; Ruff and Shoho, 2005; Marzano, Waters, McNulty, 2005; and Wagner, Kagan, Lahey, Lemons, Garnier, Helsing, Howell, and Rasmussen, 2006).

The complexity of instructional leadership is illustrated in the variety of studies undertaken on this topic and research designs used. However, the actual lived experience of urban principals in the United States regarding their own instructional leadership is missing from the literature. As an example, Sheppard (1996), conducted a quantitative study with 624 teachers and principals in fifty-eight K-12 Newfoundland schools to determine congruence between instructional leadership and selected school-level characteristics. In another study, qualitative methods were used to investigate the instructional leadership of the principal as an influence relationship supporting change in teaching practices (Spillane, et. al. 2003). This study was conducted in Chicago schools. However, the participants were all teachers asked to reflect on the practices of principals. Mitchell and Castle (2005) conducted a qualitative study to ascertain how principals understood and carried out their role as instructional leader. The study was conducted in Ontario and Labrador, neither of which is in a United States urban setting. Finally, the quantitative study undertaken by Marzano, et. al. (2005) surveyed 650 principals from all over the United States to gather data regarding implementation of 21 categories of leadership behavior. Even though several recent studies focused on how principals implement instructional leadership, only one qualitative study was conducted in an urban area of the United States and that study did not include principals as participants. Other studies were also examined.

No phenomenological studies were found in the literature that captured the actual experiences of implementing instructional leadership, as described by the urban principals themselves.

At the same time that reconceptualization of the principalship was taking place, administration preparation programs continued to follow tradition. “Changes in the nature of principal preparation programs have been slow to follow this change in the conceptualization of the work of the principals” (Grogan and Andrew, 2002, p. 240). University administration preparatory programs “might best be characterized as preparing aspiring principals and superintendents for the role of top-down manager” with the knowledge base built “around management concepts, such as planning, organizing, financing, supervising budgeting, scheduling and so on…” (Grogan and Andrew, 2002, p. 238). We know from the literature that the principal’s role has “evolved further from manager to instructional leader” (Jwanicki 1993, p. 284). Hess (2003) warned that, ”Unless we address the leadership crisis, broader reform efforts will encounter a stiff headwind.” He further stated that, “In the new century, in a changing world, it is time we think anew about how to provide our teachers and our children with the leaders they deserve” (p. 41). Others like Levine (2005) support this line of thinking and believe that, “Our nation faces the challenge of retooling current principals and superintendents while preparing a new generation of school leaders to take their places” (p. 5). There is general agreement that university educational leadership preparatory programs need to change (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, and Kleiner, 2000; Elmore, 2003;

Hallinger and Snidvongs, 2005; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson, 2005; and Levine, 2005). The literature suggests that course work and learning experiences in university administration preparation programs should be redesigned so they are better aligned to the skills and knowledge principal candidates need to successfully lead our schools in the 21st century. "However, little is known about how to help principals develop the capabilities to influence how schools function and what students learn" (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, 2005, p. 20). Stated another way, "… existing knowledge on the best way to prepare and develop highly qualified candidates is sparse" (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPoint, and Meyerson, (2005). These two statements taken together identify a second gap in the literature that this study will address.

This phenomenological study was designed to address two gaps found in the literature. As discussed earlier, no phenomenological studies were found that uncovered the actual lived experiences of urban principals regarding how they implement instructional leadership. In addition no phenomenological study was found that investigated what university administration preparatory programs might do to prepare principals to be successful instructional leaders.

Purpose of The Study

The intent of this phenomenological study was to uncover the actual lived experiences as told by urban principals themselves regarding how they implement instructional leadership. It is expected that the insight obtained from the thick, rich descriptions provided by urban principals will provide valuable information

regarding instructional leadership itself and the preparation needed to be effective in this role. The research questions that will guide this study are:

1. How do elementary and middle school principals view and implement their role as instructional leader?

1A. What challenges must principals overcome to implement the role of instructional leader?

Personal Interest

Over the course of my 35-year career as an educator in Philadelphia, I have held the positions of teacher, school principal, central office administrator, and adjunct professor at an area university.

Within the last five years I provided professional development to both aspiring and newly appointed principals. During the time I provided the training, I became aware that while both groups needed some of the same information, their requests for knowledge differed along several lines as did how they constructed their own perception of instructional leadership. Routinely, aspiring principals had an almost insatiable appetite for knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of principals or the *what* of the principalship. New principals wanted information and feedback on their actions or put another way, their *know how*. Since I usually did not have a thorough knowledge of each of their schools as a learning community, it was difficult for me to understand their actions without first gaining some understanding of their own view of their role.

Since that time, I have re-entered the role of the principalship. I am currently serving as the principal of a small middle school in Philadelphia.

Working with my staff and colleagues has made me keenly aware that instructional leadership is complex and is understood differently by different people. Some of the components that shape and offer variance in the understandings of the role are: the size of the school; trust level between the staff and principal; level of cross role collaboration; the skill, knowledge, needs of the individual; involvement with parents; school culture and climate; available resources; and external supports. Observing a principal's behaviors or actions without understanding the broader context in which he or she functions as the instructional leader is like looking at one piece of a puzzle and trying to discern what the entire puzzle looks like when all of the pieces are in place. We miss the essence of what is transpiring and are forced to guess. I have also observed, through conversations with my colleagues, that implementation of instructional leadership can and does differ from principal to principal.

A long time interest in educational leadership and my desire to increase my own knowledge and contribute knowledge to the field of education prompted me to enter the doctoral program at Drexel. In addition to contributing new knowledge to the field of principal preparation, I also hope to deepen my own understanding of why urban principals do what they do and more specifically to continue to reflect on and strengthen my own practice for the purpose of continuing to contribute in a meaningful way to the education of the children that show up at my school every day.

Significance of The Study

This phenomenological study was undertaken to address a gap found in the literature. After a thorough review of the literature, the researcher did not find any phenomenological studies conducted to present the essence or actual lived experiences as told by urban principals regarding their own instructional leadership.

The significance of this study is divided into two strands. The first strand is focused on instructional leadership. Instructional leadership is not a new concept. However, expectations for the role have undergone significant change in recent years. As a result there has recently been a growing interest in reexamining instructional leadership as it is implemented in today's schools. I hope to contribute new knowledge to the field regarding the implementation of instructional leadership in urban schools by reexamining instructional leadership as it is understood by urban elementary and middle school principals.

Secondly, the review of literature presented in Chapter Two identified a gap in the literature. This gap is related to the concern that many existing programs that prepare our principals are not providing the type of preparation needed for today's instructional leaders. The literature tells us that our understanding regarding the content, structures, and experiences included in principal preparation programs is growing but still "little is known about how to help principals develop the capabilities to influence how schools functions" (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson, 2005, p. 20). In this phenomenological study, data collection methods of in-depth interviewing,

observation and review of artifacts were used to address this gap by capturing the actual lived experiences of current principals. In addition, repeatedly we see in the literature that there should be an inclusion of practitioner voices in preparation programs. Using these data collection methods will help the researcher gain a better understanding of the how principals construct their role of instructional leadership in real schools and will provide valuable insight that can inform content, structures and experiences to include in university administration preparation programs.

Results from this study have the potential to provide useful information that can inform the reconceptualization and redesign of preparation programs for those aspiring to become principals. The results of this study may also provide new direction for ongoing professional development of current principals.

Delimitations of The Study

This phenomenological study confined itself to gathering data from elementary and middle school principals that are employed by the Philadelphia Public School System. Purposive sampling will be used to include principals of schools identified by the School District of Philadelphia as best practices schools and principals of schools identified by the School District of Philadelphia as having the longest history of poor performance.

Limitations of The Study

This multi site phenomenological study was conducted with 12 to 15 urban principals. A limitation associated with qualitative study is related to validity and reliability. “Because qualitative research occurs in the natural setting

it is extremely difficult to replicate studies" (Wiersma, 2000, p. 211). Data will be collected at each site through in-depth interviews, observations, artifacts and multiple levels of note taking. Each interview will be audio taped. Following each interview the audiotape will be transcribed. Perakyla (2004, p. 285), citing Sacks (1984) illustrated the importance of using transcriptions when he wrote,

> It was not from any large interest in language or from some theoretical formulation of what should be studied that I started with tape-recorded conversation, but simply because I could get my hands on it and I could study it again and again, and also, consequently, because others could look at what I had studied and make of it what they could, if, for example, they wanted to be able to disagree with me. (Sacks, 1984: 26)

Using several data collection methods at each site, having the audiotapes transcribed and designing this study with multiple sites were purposeful decisions by the researcher to address concerns regarding validity and reliability of the study. Support for this was provided by Wiersma (2000) when he wrote that, "Verifying results and conclusions from two or more sources or perspectives enhances internal validity" (p. 211).

Another limitation of qualitative studies is generally thought to be generalizability. "Although no qualitative studies are generalizable in the statistical sense, their findings may be transferable" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 43). Recognizing that transfer as "a process with generalizing features" Eisner posited that, "direct contact with the qualitative world is one of our most important sources of generalization. But another extremely important source is secured vicariously through parables, pictures, and precepts" (1998, p. 202). He further stated that, "knowing which perspective to adopt for what purposes is part of the generalizing process" (p. 198). This study may not be generalizable to all

situations. However, it will provide descriptions and examples of how urban elementary and middle school principals view and implement their roles as instructional leaders.

Chapter 2: Review of literature

Introduction

This review of the literature will provide a contextual framework for this study by presenting the theories and relevant research that support it. The literature review is presented in two sections. They are 1) leadership as it relates to the principal and 2) programs that prepare school administrators to become principals. Each section will contain an introduction that will connect it to the study and a summary that will link the research and theories to this study.

The first section of this literature review will focus on leadership. It will briefly review the historical perspective of leadership in general and move on to focus on leadership as it pertains to the principal as the instructional leader of the school. This section will begin with the early perspectives of the principal's role as an instructional leader and move on to changing expectations for the role and end with current perspectives of the role. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for what principals should know and be able to do will be included as they have been used as the foundation for licensure and the redesign of university preparation programs.

The focus of the second section will be preparation programs for principals. In this section research will be used to identify the current state of preparation programs. Current research regarding the content, structures, and strategies that are needed to prepare the instructional leaders we need for today's schools will be presented.

Leadership

"The literature and research into the subject of leadership is voluminous." (Gradwell, 2004, p. 14). There is no shortage of theories on leadership and the concept is universally found across cultures. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) stated that, "the study of leadership is an ancient art. Discussions of leadership appear in the works of Plato, Ceasar, Plutarch" (p. 4). Theories on leadership can be categorized in different ways. Examples of this were illuminated by Marzano, et. al.

> They include approaches such as the "great man theory, which suggests that, for example, without Moses the Jewish nation would have remained in Egypt and without Churchill the British would have acquiesced to the Germans in 1940; trait theories, which contend that leaders are endowed with superior qualities that differentiate them from followers; and environmental theories, which assert that leaders emerge as a result of time, place and circumstance. (2005, p. 5)

Traditional views of leadership in general were rooted in individualistic constructs and behavioral theories that generally supported the leaders exerting power over or control of others (Gardner, 1995, p. 15 and Senge, 1999, p. 340). "Behavioral theories of learning and leading draw from a confluence of thought regarding the nature of the world and the extent to which human phenomena can be measured and predicted" (Walker and Lambert, 1995, p. 10).

Educational leadership followed similar patterns to those generally found throughout the broader leadership literature and research. In schools, the behavioral construct of leadership primarily consists of the principal having responsibility for the quality of teacher performance. The focus was on teaching and principals "shape[ing] teacher behavior" as needed "based on identifiable

measurable behaviors" and using rewards and sanctions to obtain desired results (Walker and Lambert, 1995, p. 11). In this way, the principal is recognized as the instructional leader.

A shift from the focus on the input/output model of behaviorism to that of meaning making or construction grounded in constructivist theory occurred in the field of education during the later half of the 20th century. This shift in world view formed the basis for newer expectations for different types of instructional strategies; shared leadership; school organizational structures; the role of teachers, and the role of principals as the instructional leader.

Principal As Instructional Leader

One aspect of leadership that is unique to principals is that of instructional leader. This role is not generally understood as central to the work of business or military leaders. Interest in the role of instructional leader has fluctuated through the years often because other competing priorities in education have taken center stage. However, instructional leadership has been a popular theme in education leadership over the last two decades. Leithwood and Duke (1999) noted that in a careful analysis of articles on school leadership in four widely respected peer reviewed journals, spanning 10 years from 1988, instructional leadership was the most frequently mentioned educational leadership concept found (p. 46).

Conception of this role has changed over the years. "Today, instructional leadership remains a dominant theme, but it is taking a much more sophisticated form" (Lashway, 2002, p. 3). To better understand how the concept of instructional leadership has developed to its present form, it is important to

understand early perspectives on instructional leadership before moving on to how and why the role changed and finally current perspectives of the role.

Early Perspectives of Instructional Leadership Role

From the 1920s up through the 1960s, the central role of the American principal was that of administrative manager. By the middle of the 1970s, managing curriculum reform and federal program compliance took a more prominent role in the principal's work (Hallinger, 1992, p. 35). During the 1970's, principals did not "allocate a significant portion of their time to managing instructional activities." Instead most of their work day was spent in managerial tasks (Hallinger, 1985, p. 219).

Instructional leadership is generally thought to have gained momentum following the effective schools movement that categorized education during the 1970s and provided recognition that the principal could strongly influence instruction and therefore, student achievement. Early recognition of this was brought to light through the research of Ronald Edmonds. In his seminal study on effective schools and one he conducted with Frederiksen, the test score data of 2,500 randomly selected poor minority students, from 20 public schools in the Model Cities Neighborhood of Detroit, were analyzed and compared to determine the characteristics of effective schools (Edmonds, 1979). The characteristics he identified were: the school's atmosphere; alignment of all resources to support instruction; frequent monitoring of student progress; a climate of expectation that all students would achieve; and "a strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can neither be brought together nor kept

together" (1979, p. 22). This study signaled the importance of the principal's indirect role in instruction and the beginning of movement away from the earlier vision of the principal as a manager of program compliance, curriculum and the status quo. It opened the door for beginning to think of the principal as the instructional leader responsible for moving the school and student achievement forward. Lezotte (1994) supported this assertion when he wrote that, "All the effective schools research studies on the elementary, middle, and secondary levels repeatedly have identified instructional leadership as critical." (p. 20).

Throughout the 1980s instructional leadership was a central focus in educational administration. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) commented that instructional leadership "has meant anything and everything; an administrator trying to be an instructional leader has had little direction in determining just what it means to do so" (p. 217). This prompted Hallinger and Murphy to conduct a study for the purpose of developing a research-based definition of the principal's role as instructional manager [also referred to as instructional leader]. The researchers recognized the instructional management role as a collection of three general dimensions. Those broad dimensions were described as: "defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive learning climate. Those 3 dimensions were further divided into 11 categories that were used to study the instructional leadership behaviors of 10 elementary principals in a working class suburban community near San Jose, California. Three of the eight findings from this study were that generally speaking, the principals studied: "were more actively involved managing curriculum and

instruction"; that principals were engaged in closer supervision and evaluation of instruction than earlier literature suggested; and lastly, most schools did not protect instructional time through policies and practices (p. 217).

In a different study, Bossert (1988) identified 4 characteristics of principals as instructional leaders. They were: emphasis on goals and production; power and strong decision making; effective management; and strong human relations. As the 1980s ended, Bossert wrote that a clear message had been given to school administrators. Quoting Lipham, [he wrote], "It is embodied in the phrase 'effective principal, effective school' which often meant that school principals should become instructional leaders" (p. 346). Interestingly enough, many of the descriptions given of instructional leadership during the 1980s are still being emphasized in leadership preparation of principals today even though there has been a shift in thinking about educational leadership. The shift has moved from thinking of instructional leadership as something the principal does to others to a more democratic view of leadership and learning that is shared with others across the learning community.

One recent study conducted by Reitzug in 1997, illuminated a central aspect of the early role principals played as instructional leaders. That aspect was supervision. Reitzug was intrigued by the fact that principal preparation programs devoted entire courses to instructional supervision and yet it "continue[d] to be viewed as a piecemeal, irrelevant "nonevent" (p. 325). He conducted an analysis of "ten supervision textbooks with copyright dates between 1985 and 1995" to answer the question, "why does supervision continue to be viewed as a piecemeal,

irrelevant “nonevent” (p. 325)? It seemed reasonable to examine the textbooks that were used in principal preparation programs at that time to provide a broad perspective of how principals were being taught to conduct supervision and evaluation in their roles as instructional leaders. His analysis, constructed based on the narrow view of instructional leadership, focused only on sections of the books that dealt with supervision of the classroom instruction provided by teachers. The methodology involved “treating the text data as a form of qualitative data” and coding it in terms of “implicit or explicit assumptions” then using the content of the texts to answer four questions. The questions revolved around the image the texts projected for the principal or supervisor, the teacher, teaching, and supervision (p.326).

Reitzug found that, generally speaking, the principal was portrayed as an “expert and superior, the teacher as deficient and voiceless, teaching as fixed technology, and supervision as a discrete intervention” (p.326). Of the 10 textbooks studied, three portrayed supervision as empowering and collaborative, even though the prescriptions offered were mainly based on hierarchical and prescriptive images. This notion, of principal supervision, as a collaborative process is more in keeping with the image of instructional leadership understood today. More will be said about this point of view later in this review of literature.

Reitzug made two assumptions that support the view of principal as expert and superior to teachers. The first accepts that the principal’s knowledge base is superior to that of teachers and the second accepts the hierarchical domination of the principal over teachers as “unproblematic” (p.327). These two assumptions

are important to note because the bureaucratic design of most schools today still places the principal in a hierarchical position of having the last word or defining vote over that of the teachers even as we have moved into a more collaborative climate where teacher leadership is widely accepted and encouraged. We cannot forget that raising one to the expert or superior level generally means marginalizing the knowledge and practice of the other. If instructional leadership is to be truly shared in a school or learning community, no one voice should over shadow all others, all the time, or on every dimension related to learning.

There is no single accepted definition or description of the principal's role as instructional leader. "Despite its popularity, the concept [instructional leadership] is not well defined (Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005, p. 18). Terry (1995) pointed out that because there was no "authoritative definition of the concept… it made it difficult to compare research findings" (p. 4). For another view we turn to Mitchell and Castle (2005, p. 410) who quoted Hallinger (1992). "He contends that the term *instructional leadership* has consistently suffered from conceptual and practical limitations, first because the term means different things to different people…" (p. 410). A simplistic approach might be to just look at the vocabulary and conclude that the concept of instructional leadership is exactly what is stated, "leadership in the domain of instruction" (Terry, 1995, p. 4). However, research has alerted us that instructional leadership is a much more complex concept and how it is implemented is dependant on a variety of factors.

As in the preceding paragraph, there was and continues to be an absence of a clear definition for the concept of instructional leadership. Related to this

dilemma was the late 20th century emergence of two distinct views of instructional leadership. The first is often referred to as a narrow view of instructional leadership. In this view, instructional leadership is defined as “those actions that are directly related to teaching and learning-observable behaviors such as classroom supervision.” In this way it is seen as a “separate component of the principal’s responsibilities and actions” (O’Donnel and White, 2005, p. 58). The second view is often referred to as the broad view. In this view, all leadership activities, even routine management tasks, are seen as affecting student learning and are, therefore, included in instructional leadership (Shepard, 1996, p. 326). Marsh (1992, cited in Wanzare and Da Costa, 2001, p. 269) provided two slightly different views of instructional leadership. The first he called the process-oriented view. In this view, “the principal views instructional leadership only as a means of involving teachers in decision making or improvement. The second he referred to as a comprehensive view in which the principal “has a broad view of instructional leadership and uses direct (e.g., developmental supervision) and indirect (e.g., school culture) influences on instruction.”

Hallinger (1992) illustrated his support of the comprehensive view of instructional leadership when he wrote that the instructional leader was “viewed as the primary source of knowledge for development of the school’s educational programme” (p. 37). This description highlights the expectation that the principal is to be “knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction and able to intervene directly with teachers in making instructional improvements” (p. 37). This description also supports the growing notion that the role definition of the

instructional leader includes holding expectations for teachers and students, providing close supervision of instruction, coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student progress. Even though Hallinger supports a broad view of instructional leadership, his description places the principal in a dominant position over the teacher and does not support the notion of collaboration.

Another illustration of the early understanding of instructional leadership was presented in a paper by Marsh (1997). Although the paper was written in the 1997, he referred to instructional leadership as it was described during the 1980s. He wrote that, “The ideal instructional leader of the 1980s was an instructional leader who focused on four key elements of reform.” Citing Murphy (1990) for the first two, he described them as being responsible for:

1) defining the mission of the school;

2) management of the coordination of curriculum, promoting quality instruction, conducting clinical supervision and teacher evaluation/appraisal, aligning instructional materials with curriculum goals, allocating and protecting instructional time, and monitoring student progress;

3) promoting “an academic climate” through the establishment of high expectations for student learning and behavior, visibility, providing incentives for teachers and students, and promoting professional development efforts that were often isolated from practice; and

4) developing a safe orderly work environment that welcomed student involvement, staff collaboration and cohesion, links to outside resources and between home and school (p. 3).

Another description of instructional leadership was provided by Krug (1993). He offers a “five factor taxonomy” that organizes all the activities in which an instructional leader should engage. The five categories identified are, ”defining a mission; managing curriculum and instruction; supervising teaching; monitoring student progress; and promoting instructional climate” (pp. 431-433). These factors were similar to those identified by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and Marsh (1997). Krug did not specifically address collaboration between the principal and staff or links to outside resources. Both were identified by Marsh (1997). The four characteristics identifies by Bossert(1988) seemed more managerial in their focus. As an example, he identified power and decision making and effective management but does not identify promoting an academic climate or attention to the curriculum. He does, however, identify strong human relations as an important characteristic of instructional leaders. This might imply that as early as 1988, there was some level of recognition that collaboration was important to instructional leadership.

The early descriptions of instructional leadership taken from the studies cited above provide evidence that there was early recognition of the complexity of the instructional leadership role. All of the factors and characteristics of instructional leadership identified by Hallinger and Murphy (1985); Bossert (1988); Krug (1993); and Marsh (1997) are present in the widely adopted

Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards that are used to design university programs and for licensure in many states across the country. These standards will be discussed later.

In his study of 624 teachers and principals in 58 K-12 Newfoundland and Labrador schools, Sheppard, a Canadian researcher, collected data using two survey instruments to determine the congruence of instructional leadership "with the development of selected school-level characteristics" (1996, p. 330). Specifically he looked at three school characteristics; teacher commitment; teacher professional involvement; and teacher innovativeness across both elementary and high schools. He found a positive relationship between the instructional leadership behaviors of the principals and each of the three teacher characteristics named above. He also found that school type did not affect the relationship between instructional leadership behaviors and teacher commitment, however, school type had a significant effect on the relationship between instructional leadership behaviors of the principal and teacher professional involvement and innovativeness. High schools, which "are more loosely coupled than elementary schools therefore, direct involvement of the principal in the classroom is less frequent and less expected by teachers" (p. 338). When the findings are examined more closely, we see that as teacher engagement in each characteristic increases; there is less importance in having the principal directly involved in the processes associated with it. This last statement is important for two reasons. First, understanding that when there is a high level of teacher engagement in a school, the need for direct principal involvement in instruction

might be reduced therefore allowing time to be redirected to involvement in other important aspects of the principal's work. Secondly, this provides a basis for understanding that, "not the principal alone should directly control" (Sheppard, p. 340). Instead it opens the way for principals to engage in fostering a "work environment where teachers are committed, professionally involved, and innovative" and construction of learning is realized through instructional leadership that is shared, particularly between principals and teachers (p. 340). Focus on instructional leadership "has waned over the years" due to researchers' turning their interest to other components of the principal's role (Mitchell and Castle, 2005, p. 410). However, the primary work of schools is still educating students. Until that changes, the primary work of principals will be to ensure that students are educated. Therefore, those things that edge the principal away from a focus on instruction such as restructuring, community outreach, mandated accountability measures, etc. only create what Elmore calls "buffers" (Elmore cited in Schmoker, 2006). Schmoker told us to "think of it [buffer] as a protective barrier that discourages and even punishes close, constructive scrutiny of instruction and the supervision of instruction" (p. 13). Schmoker also offered that, "In turn, the buffer ensures that building principals will know very little about what teachers teach, or how well they teach" (p. 13). Because buffers can divert a principal's attention from instructional leadership, Mitchell and Castle felt compelled to advocate for the resurgence of interest in instructional leadership primarily because "instructional leadership deals with the way principals take on

educational tasks" (2005, p. 411). Their work will be included later in this literature review.

In summarizing this section there are a few important things to note. First, the centrality of the principal's role concerning instruction was evident early on and is illuminated in the statement that the principal was expected to be the individual "strong instructional leader" in the school who was solely responsible for improvement (Ginsburg in Wanzare and DaCosta, 2001, p. 271). Secondly, Ginsburg notes that the lack of clear or adequate definition of instructional leadership for principals "may be a stumbling block to implementing effective instructional plans." (p.271) Even so, Marsh (1997, p. 3) states that studies from around the world show that "school principals did not actually carry out this role" thereby providing another reason for the need to redefine the role. He further posited that the role of instructional leader may no longer be appropriate for contemporary schools where leadership is expected to be shared. Finally, even though the concept of instructional leadership was formed in an era perceived as redefining the principal's role from a managerial focus to one of leadership through redefinition of the principal's work activities, the instructional leadership role "was still inherently managerial in nature" (Hallinger, 1992, p. 38).

Role Change

It is widely accepted that the principalship has changed over the last 20 years and still continues to evolve rapidly (Marsh, 2000; Lambert, 2003; Mitchell and Castle, 2005; Wagner, Kegan, et. al, 2006, p. xvi). Several reasons for these changes have been identified. Marsh (2000, p. 126) cited Murphy's description of

dramatic changes in the work environment as including a turbulent policy environment, an overwhelming scale and pace of change, and a new view of teacher involvement and expertise as contributing to changes in the principalship.

Wagner, Kegan, et. al. (2006, p. 3) posited that quick changes in our economy from one in which people used "skilled hands" to support themselves and their families to one where "all employees need to be intellectually skilled" just to make minimum wage is at the root of the need for changes in what students are learning. Employers and academic leaders now expect potential employees and students to have much more than "the basics-the 3 Rs" (Wagner, Keagan, et. al,. 2006, p. 4). Table 1 provides a listing of some of the most recent competencies identified.

Table 1. Key Competencies and Expanded Understanding Needed in Today's Economy

Competency	**Expanded Understanding**
Basic Skills	Reading, writing and mathematics
Foundational Skills	Knowing how to learn
Communication Skills	Listening and oral communication
Adaptability	Creative thinking and problem solving
Group Effectiveness	Interpersonal skills, negotiating and team work
Influence	Organizational effectiveness and leadership
Personal Management	Self-esteem and motivation/goal setting
Attitude	Positive cognitive style
Applied Skills	Occupational and professional competencies

Adapted from Carneval and Desrochers (2003) as cited in Wagner, Kegan, et. al. (2006, p. 5).

This shift in expectations created a significant change in what students need to master in school that will lead to success in the work place and schooling beyond high school.

Fullan identified factors that contributed to a need for change in the instructional leadership role of principal. He listed, "government policy, parent and community demands, corporate interests, and ubiquitous technology as contributors" in ultimately
changing the work of the principal (2000, p. 157). O'Donnell and White named government policy specifically stating, "The mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) to produce high levels of student performance and to staff schools with highly qualified (and skilled) teachers are perhaps the most challenging requirements in the history of American education" (2005, p. 56). This act raised the expectation that the achievement levels for *all* students would increase annually thereby establishing an accountability climate in education that is unprecedented. Ruff and Shoho (2005) took a different stance by asserting that an "ideological shift from assumptions of positivism to assumptions of constructivism decreased the relevance of expertise and increased the need for collaboration" (p. 555).

Changing the results of what our students learn and how prepared they are to function as productive self supporting adults requires a shift in how and what they are taught during the school years between kindergarten and high school graduation. This shift implies that the instructional leadership needed to obtain the type of student achievement results we now desire must also be very different.

The challenge of changing what and how we teach our students requires more than superficial adjustment to the content, the assignments, instructional strategies, and leadership to ensure desired outcomes. Wagner, Kegan, et. al. put it this way.

> Like Heifetz, we believe the adaptive challenge of reinventing American public schools versus merely trying to reform them has profound implications for those who lead them. This challenge requires all adults to develop new skills-beginning with leaders at all levels- and to work in different ways. (2006, p. 11)

Recognizing that there are changing expectations for student learning and achievement supports our understanding that current principals and those aspiring to the position will need additional competencies and skills to successfully create and implement new paradigms that will lead to increased student achievement. Even though we acknowledge the changes to the principalship, one thing has remained constant. The principal is still the one person at the school that is held accountable for the achievement of his or her students (Rhinehart, Short, Short, and Eckley, 1998, p. 630). This in no way implies that the principal is expected to teach all of the students himself or herself. Rather, it implies that he or she must set the stage for instruction and work indirectly through others to make sure that it happens. Because student achievement is strongly influenced by instruction, and the principal is the person at the school that is ultimately held accountable for student achievement, it naturally follows that the principal is the formal instructional leader for the school. To further emphasize this point, consider that when asked about the importance of the principal as an instructional leader, Arnold and Harris' first thought was that, "the sole purpose of the principal was to

be an instructional leader” (2000). They further described instructional leadership as, “orchestrated through the influence of visionary, cultural, servant, and ethical leadership.” In 2005, O’Donnell and White, stated that the most important responsibility of the principal “is to facilitate effective teaching and learning with the overall mission of enhancing student achievement”(p.56). Again, this emphasizes that while the role of instructional leader has and continues to rapidly change, recognition of the principal as the instructional leader has remained constant.

Instructional Leadership Perspectives In The 21st Century

This section of the study will begin with the ISLLC standards and proceed to present several current perspectives, expectations and responsibilities involved in instructional leadership and research related to them. Each perspective has implications for the preparation of instructional leaders and these will be addressed in this section as well.

Standards for Instructional Leaders

As previously stated, along with factors that have reshaped the work of the principal, new perspectives have emerged regarding what a principal should know and be able to do. These perspectives were addressed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). This consortium operates under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) a national nonprofit organization of the “public officials that head departments of elementary and secondary education” in the country (CCSSO, 2006). This

consortium developed standards for school leaders that have come to be known as the ISLLC standards.

It is important to note that although these standards were developed in 1996, they might be viewed as having provided a foundation for current views of instructional leadership by summarizing current perspectives into a set of broad statements that served as criteria for state licensure and as a catalyst for the review and redesign of university education administration preparation programs. The ISLLC standards continue to be significant in 21st century discussions on instructional leadership because they address the complexity, as well as, focus on learning for all students and community building that are the hallmarks of current perspective of instructional leadership. The standards are shown in Appendix B.

The standards were developed over a two-year period during which the consortium drafted a set of six broad standards, each with a "framework of indicators." The indicators are organized in sets of "knowledge, dispositions, and "performances" specific to each standard (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, p. 8). The importance of the indicator sets rests in the ways they provide meaning for the performances of principals. During development, the standards were circulated broadly for review prior to adoption in 1996. Since that time, over 40 states have adopted the standards and many require applicants to achieve a passing score on an assessment aligned to the standards that is designed by the Educational Testing Service before an administrative or principal certificate is issued. It is expected that the standards will again be widely reviewed and revised as needed by the end of 2007.

Several guiding principles, developed by the CCSSO, act as reference points for the ISLLC standards and help to provide a broader understanding of both the standards and their indicators. The guiding principles are:

1. Standards should reflect the centrality of student learning.
2. Standards should acknowledge the changing role of the school leader.
3. Standards should recognize the collaborative nature of school leadership.
4. Standards should be high, upgrading the quality of the profession.
5. Standards should inform performance-based systems of assessment and evaluation for school leaders.
6. Standards should be integrated and coherent.
7. Standards should be predicated on the concepts of access, opportunity, and empowerment for all members of the community.

(CCSSO, 1996, p. 7).

In addition to providing guidance for the development of the ISLLC standards, the seven guiding principles also implications for the roles currently suggested for principals. These guiding principles also challenge current preparation programs and provide a foundation for recommended changes to educational administration programs that have been suggested in recent studies. Studies related to principal preparation programs will be addressed in the section on principal preparation. Finally, the first principle guiding the ISLLC standards draws attention to instruction through the use of the phrase "centrality of student learning." In this way, instructional leadership is positioned at the center of the work of schools and thereby, positions the principal as the instructional leader.

Collaborative Perspective.

At the turn of the 21st century, the principalship was generally viewed as a complex, multifaceted leadership position fraught with ambiguity, challenges, and constraints. Michael Fullan provides us with a description of the principal or instructional leader.

> Wanted: A miracle worker who can do more with less, pacify rival groups, endure chronic second guessing, tolerate low levels of support, process large volumes of paper and work double shifts (75 nights a year out). He or she will have carte blanche to innovate, but cannot spend much money, replace any personnel, or upset any constituency. (Fullan, 2000, p. 156)

This description is one with which many current urban school principals might identify. Marzano, et.al., posits that, "… the validity of this conclusion creates a logical problem because it would be rare, indeed, to find a single individual who has the capacity or will to master such a complex array of skills (2005, p. 99).

While most principals might agree with the job description presented above, the description does not make explicit the growing expectation that the instructional leader acts in collaboration with others rather than as the lone instructional expert at the school.

Marsh refutes the description of the instructional leader shown above by writing:

> The role of the principal as the solitary instructional leader is inadequate for the new direction in educational reform over the last decade. That view-which emphasizes the directive and clinical view of instructional leadership-no longer fits the realities of the time and workload for principals. That view also blocks the development of the collective leadership, culture, and expertise needed. (Marsh, 2000, p. 129)

Marsh's statement makes it clear that a shift has taken place in the how the role of instructional leadership is conceptualized. His statement is also illustrative of how today's instructional leaders are expected to approach their work. The focus has moved from one of management and supervision to shared leadership and learning. Principals are now called upon to "engage people in shaping the content and conditions of their own learning in organizationally coherent ways" (Elmore, 2002, p. 25). This applies to both students and adults. "Principals and superintendents today are seen as the key leaders in schools and school districts that are called upon to manage them through collaborative, pedagogical, or distributed notions of leadership that focus on the role as leader of an instructional team" (Grogan and Andrews, 2002 p.243).

Another perspective is provided by Lambert (2003). She describes the principalship as a unique position in the school because principals "have access to the larger school system, a claim to organizational and historical authority, and the pressure to meet teacher, parent, and student expectations" (2003, p. 43). Lambert further implies that the major undertaking of the principal is working with and through the adult community in the school because teachers, not principals, are directly responsible for instruction. She advocates for recognizing and building leadership capacity across the learning community. Lambert lists several assumptions to support this view of school leadership. The first two acknowledges that "everyone has the responsibility, right and capability to be a leader" and that the most crucial factor in drawing out leadership acts in others is the adult environment (p. 4). Put another way, Lambert states that if schools

organize themselves so, “the principal, a vast majority of the teachers, and large numbers of parents and students are involved in the work of leadership, then the school will most likely have leadership capacity that achieves high student performance. (p. 4).”

Like Lambert, Drag-Severson (2004) recognizes the importance of collaborative leadership and describes it this way.

> Collaborative approaches provide greater access to pertinent information and alternative points of view, assist reflective practice, help cultivate a culture that supports learning and growth, and facilitate change. The principal’s role in such an approach is as a facilitator (rather than the authority) who provides resources for effective work, including creating opportunities for teachers to engage in dialogue and reflection (2004, p. xxiv).

To investigate collaborative school leadership in support of adult [teacher] development, Drago-Severson conducted a qualitative study to determine “What would school leadership look like if designed to support adult development? (2004, p. 20)”. The 25 participants of the study were school principals, purposefully selected based on type of school, location, resource level, population served, and recommendations from colleagues. In depth interviews along with school visits and collection of documents were used as data collection methods. Guiding Drago-Severson’s study was recognition of principals as key figures in supporting teacher learning and determining what schools can do to support teacher learning. The study was also guided by an understanding that principals’ support for teacher development is also a support for student learning. Findings from the study informs a “new learning-oriented model of school leadership, which is supported by four pillars: teaming, providing leadership roles, collegial

inquiry, and mentoring" (p. 20). These findings contributed to the overall movement toward a collaborative leadership model that places the principal in less of an "expert" or "authority" role and more in the role of sharing leadership with others in the school.

Collaborative leadership differs sharply from the "power over" or command and control type of instructional leadership previously cited from Senge (1999) and Gardner (1995) in this literature review. Building and recognizing leadership capacity in others rests on constructivist theory that requires construction of meaning and sense making through interaction with others. Lambert (2002) defined constructivist leadership this way. "We refer to constructivist leadership as the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a shared purpose of schooling. (p. 36)" This makes it clear that the interactions of the principal with teachers are what make it possible for the school to "focus purposefully on student learning"(2003, p.43). The importance of interaction between principals and teachers is illustrated in the study that follows.

A study conducted by Spillane, Hallett, and Diamond (2003) focused on instructional leadership of the principal as an influence relationship supporting the efforts of teachers to change their teaching practice and recognition of others as leaders based on different forms of capital. Eighty-four public school elementary teachers in Chicago were interviewed. Forty-five percent of them were observed in their own classrooms. Spillane, et. al., used four forms of resources referred to as capital to investigate the basis on which the elementary school teachers in the

study selected administrators and other teachers as instructional leaders. The four forms of capital used were:

1. Human capital – acquired knowledge, skills, and expertise that contribute to performance between a leader and follower
2. Social capital –the relationships in a group and between individuals
3. Cultural capital – acquired internal dispositions manifested in stylistic form of being and doing in relationship with others
4. Economic capital – money and other material resources

Findings from this study indicated that nearly seventy-one percent (70.9%) of the participants spoke of their principal or assistant principal as instructional leader, listing terms of cultural capital by referring to their interactive style. Only 21 percent of participants used human capital, which rests on expertise, knowledge and skill, in recognition of the administrators as instructional leaders that influenced change in their practice. In the case of teachers identifying other teachers as leaders that influenced change in their instruction, only 59 percent of the teachers spoke of terms of cultural capital as descriptors, while 50 percent spoke of social capital and 45 percent spoke of human capital. This study is significant for two reasons. First, the findings from the study support Lambert's view that the interaction between principal and teachers is an important component in focusing on instruction and student learning. The study further highlights that the way in which a principal interacts with teachers does influence change in the teacher's practice. Findings from this study support the need for

principals to use cultural capital over human capital or expertise, knowledge and skill influence on a teacher's instructional practice. The second significance of this study is the implication for the preparation of administrators. The findings validate the importance of addressing human capital or expertise, skills and knowledge in preparation programs. However, according to this study, how the school administrator interacts with the staff is even more important in influencing change in instruction. The development of cultural capital or ways of interacting with teachers that will lead to changes in their instructional practice is an important component of instructional leadership that should be addressed in school administrator preparation programs.

Another example recognizing the collaborative nature of the instructional leadership is presented by Mitchell and Castle (2005) through a study conducted to examine understanding and enactments of instructional leadership by elementary school principals. This study was conducted over an entire school year with 12 southern Ontario principals chosen through purposive sampling used qualitative methods involving data collection through semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes, and focus groups to ascertain how the principals understood their role and how they carried out the educational aspects of their role. Findings from the study highlight the complexity and ambiguity of the instructional leadership role. The "principals described themselves as 'balancing on a tightrope" (p. 417). Through this study three sets of tensions were identified as commonly affecting participants approach to leadership. They are:

1. Proactive and reactive – while principals were trying to “enact both a proactive and reactive leadership approach” the in-school observations showed that most of the instructional leadership was classified as reactive
2. Facilitative and directive – principals in the study wanted to establish school cultures that would support teacher autonomy but at the same time wanted to “direct activities to ensure that certain plans of action were put into place in specific ways”. Observations during the study found both leadership approaches present.
3. Building consensus or gaining compliance – the principals in the study portrayed themselves as working through a consensus model even

though

their actions and descriptions did not support this. (Mitchell and Castle, 2005, pp. 417-418)

Findings from this study also identify three dimensions that influenced the instructional leadership views and behaviors of the principals involved. The first dimension is style, which the researchers described as the “variety of approaches to and directions for instructional leadership” (p. 421). Discussion concerning this dimension reveals that all the principals studied placed a higher priority on building an affective climate over building a cognitive climate. The explanations given showed that the principals equates relationship building and trust building with offering a nurturing environment that provided the “foundation for the cognitive climate” (p. 421). The second dimension discussed is coherence. This

refers to the order and amount of consistency in a school between agendas, directions, and instructional moments. Observational data supported the finding that principals and teachers worked together on instruction but, "what the principals held important would take priority in the school" and in cases where the principal focused on teaching and learning, instructional leadership thrived regardless of where the responsibility was situated (p. 423). In schools in which other concerns such as relationship building, student conduct or other agendas were the priority, "the instructional environment did not appear to have a high priority in school-wide discourse" (p. 423). Structure is the third dimension. Within this dimension, the principals identified both system-level structures that supported their capacity to lead and structures within their own schools through which they are able to guide teachers' attention to teaching and learning. The system-level structures named were school improvement planning committees, focused professional development workshops and meetings of principals and teachers that had a critical influence on their capacity to serve as leaders. School-level structures within their own schools were described as grade-level and division-level meetings for teachers to discuss school improvement strategies.

Overall findings from this study did not provide a single definition or model for instructional leadership. The findings did confirm however, that, "priorities of the principals became the priorities of the rest of the school people" (p. 427). This supports previously mentioned views of Lambert (2002); Marzano, et. al. (2005); Wagner, et. al. (2006) and others that "instructional leadership is a key aspect of the school principals' role" (Mitchell and Castle, 2005, p. 428). The

general findings also supported the perspective that instructional leadership is a collaborative endeavor between teachers and principal. As a result of this study Mitchell and Castle posited that the focus should not be whether a principal is doing instructional leadership correctly, effectively, or efficiently, but rather how aware the principal is of what he or she is doing as an instructional leader. In the broad view of instructional leadership all actions of the principal fall under the instructional leadership umbrella. These actions are more meaningful and fruitful if the principal understands how to align his or her actions and leadership in ways that build structures to support leadership in others and influence instruction in ways that will result in increased student achievement.

The results of the study conducted by Mitchell and Castle (2005) also imply that there is not a single one-size fits all model for instructional leadership. Instead there are dimensions of leadership that should be addressed by instructional leaders. Understanding how to construct and work through a variety of dimensions to create optimal learning environments and experiences for students is the work of today's instructional leaders. This suggests that programs that prepare school administrators might better serve the needs of future leaders by addressing the creation, implementation, and interaction of the dimensions of instructional leadership through authentic experiences that take place over time.

Change Leadership Perspective.

Another current perspective of instructional leadership revolves around change of and within the school. McDowelle and Buckner (2002) wrote, "Change, once the exception, is now the rule in education" (p. 95). A great deal has been

written about educational change as it applies to instructional leadership. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies that conducted from 1978 to 2001. They offer this definition of meta-analysis. "In simple terms, meta-analysis allows researchers to form statistically based generalizations regarding research within a given field" (2005, p. 7). The studies used in the meta-analysis involved 2802schools with grades ranging from kindergarten through 12. As a result of their meta-analysis, Marzano, et, al. identified 21 categories of behaviors or responsibilities related to leadership provided by principals. The 21 responsibilities were used to design a survey that was administered by Marzano, Waters and McNulty to more than 650 school principals to provide further guidance related to specific situations. Factor analysis of their responses revealed two factors or traits that allowed further categorization of the 21 responsibilities. First-order change and second-order change were the two factors or traits. While the responsibilities themselves were not new, further categorization of the responsibilities using the traits of first-order change and second-order change was new.

Marzano, et. al. describes first order change as "incremental" or "the next most obvious step" (2005, p. 66). "First-order change requires attention to all 21 responsibilities" (2005, p. 115) and can be viewed as "standard operating procedures in a school" (p. 70). Second-order change was described as involving "dramatic departures from the expected, both in defining a given problem and in finding a solution" (Marzano, et. al., 2005, p. 66). This type of change was also referred to by Marzano, et. al as "deep change" (2005, p. 66). Second order

change or “deep change” (p. 66) results in dramatic changes that require new ways of thinking, new strategies, and an expanded view of things while first-order change results in fine-tuning through logical next steps that offer no real difference from previous efforts. Only seven of the 21 responsibilities are related to second-order change. According to Marzano, et. al. the significant difference between the two types of changes is that the instructional leader who wants to achieve drastically different results in student achievement will need to focus more heavily on the seven responsibilities that are traits of second order change. The responsibilities associated with second-order change are:

1. Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment is self explanatory
2. Optimizer – inspiring and leading new and challenging innovations
3. Intellectual stimulation – ensuring that staff are made aware of most current theories and practices in an climate where discussion is regularly present
4. Change agent – willingly and actively challenging the status quo
5. Monitoring/evaluation – monitoring the impact and effectiveness of school programs and practices on student learning
6. Flexibility – comfortable with dissent and adapting leadership behaviors to situations
7. Ideals/beliefs – communicating and operating from strong ideals and beliefs (Marzano, et. al., 2005, pp. 42 and 70)

It is important to note that the factor analysis conducted by Marzano, et. al. also revealed that four of the 21 responsibilities, culture, communication, order and input, are "negatively affected by second-order change" (2005, p. 73). Instructional leaders need to be aware that staff perceptions may be one of "deterioration" in these areas rather than progress toward desired results when there is heavy emphasis on second order change traits.

There are two implications for the findings of Marzano, et. al. First, to initiate deep changes current instructional leaders will need to understand and give priority to the seven responsibilities identified as traits of second-order change. Second, as university preparation programs for school administration are revised, designing course work and experiences that result in understanding the difference between first and second order change leadership and what leaders should address for implementation of each type of change might better equip candidates to lead schools in the 21st century.

The findings of Marzano, et. al. (2005) support earlier assumptions presented by McDowelle and Buckner who indicated that:

1. All school leaders must deal with change.
2. Change is a difficult process for individuals and organizations.
3. Effective leaders understand the change process and plan carefully when changes are made.
4. Key skills enable leaders to bring about change in their schools successfully.
5. Change does not generally lead to immediate improvement.

(McDowelle and Buckner, 2002, p. 107)

In addition to the above, McDowelle and Buckner (2002) also address the emotional side of change. They remind us that, “Schools are notoriously resistant to change” (p. 96). This resistance is tied to the realities constructed by individuals in the organization and their comfort level of their role and positioning in the organization. According to McDowelle and Buckner, “Changes are typically perceived as threats to identities individuals in the organization have developed” (p.97). As a result, one of the many factors that affect change is the powerful emotions of those involved. These emotions result from the fact that “old realities and old identities must die before new realities and new identities can be established (p. 97). Put another way, change causes a sense of loss that leaders must help participants cope with in order to progress through the change process. This line of thinking is aligned to the negative affect on culture, communication, order, and input as noted by Marzano, et. al. (2005). Unlike Marzano, et. al., McDowelle and Buckner suggest that leaders address this by “use[ing] their understanding of the emotions others feel to be more effective” (2002, p. 102).

This view regarding the emotional side of change, offered by McDowelle and Buckner might be related to the work of Spillane, Hallett, and Diamond (2003), regarding the significance of forms of capital in influencing the practice of teachers. Spillane, et, al. identify cultural capital as acquired internal dispositions manifested in stylistic form of being and doing in relationship with others. Described another way, McDowelle and Buckner assert that emotionally intelligent leaders as those who use their understanding of the emotions others

feel to be more effective. Taken together these statements again remind us of the complexity of instructional leadership and imply that how to work effectively with people might be a foundational part of any program designed to prepare school administrators.

In this first section of the literature review, the research presented makes it evident that even though the principal continues to be recognized as the instructional leader of the school, the role has grown in complexity and continues to evolve from one of managerial command and control to one of collaboration and leadership for change. Table 2 contrasts of the traditional perspectives of instructional leadership of principals that were prevalent before 1990 and the modern perspectives that have become more expected since 1990.

Table 2. Instructional Leadership of Principals - Then and Now

	Traditional Perspective (Pre 1990)	**Modern Perspective (Post 1990)**
1.	Maintain status quo	Lead change
2.	Behaviorism	Constructivism
3.	Top down/direct	Shared/indirect
4.	Focus on teaching	Focus on learning
5.	Principal viewed as expert and superior	Expertise shared across learning community
6.	Principal dominant	Teachers empowered
7.	Managerial	Leading

As stated earlier in this literature review, the role of instructional leader has evolved due to a variety of factors that include pervasive low student

achievement; demands from parents, community, and businesses for future workers that are intellectually skilled rather than having skilled hands; shifting ideology from behaviorism to constructivism; ever changing government policy; and the adoption of standards for what principals should know and be able to do. Inherent in these changes is the need to ensure preparation for aspiring principals that will lead to their effectiveness as instructional leaders of our schools. The next section of this review of literature will concern itself with the preparation of school administrators.

Preparation of School Administrators

Several studies and theories presented earlier in this literature review have provided guidance for needed changes in university programs designed to prepare school administrators that will be effective instructional leaders. Earlier sections of this review of literature provided insight on the change in expectations for what students need to know and be able to do as a result of instruction received at school. This expected change in student results implies that teachers will need to change how they approach instruction. In addition to needed changes in instruction, Marsh (2000); Lambert, (2003); Marzano, et. al., (2005); Wagner, et. al. (2006); and others point out, that these changes in expected student outcomes and approaches to instruction have contributed to changes in the conceptualization of instructional leadership. It is a logical next step to expect that changes in university preparation programs reflecting a closer alignment of course work and experiences needed by 21st century administrators would better prepare them to become instructional leaders that can lead us to desired increases in student

achievement levels. This section of the review of literature will concern itself with the preparation of school administrators to become instructional leaders.

Need For Changes

In most states, one of the requirements for anyone aspiring to become a principal is that he or she must earn an administrative certificate or degree from a state approved college or university preparation program. There has been widespread recognition of the need to align preparation programs to the needs of today's principals. The call originated from various sources but primarily for a single reason. There is common acceptance that with a few exceptions, principals are currently not being trained for the job they are currently asked to do (Levine, 2005; Davis, Darling-Hammond, Lapointe, and Meyerson, 2005; and Hoy and Hoy, 2003). Hale and Moorman(2003) said it this way.

> Implementing the No Child Left behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 is forcing us to confront the weaknesses of contemporary school leadership and is making it impossible to ignore the escalating need for higher quality principals-individuals who have been prepared to provide the instructional leadership necessary to improve student achievement. (p. 7)

Instead of the emphasis on management that was acceptable in the past, "Principals of today's schools must be able to 1) lead instruction, 2) shape an organization that demands and supports excellent instruction and dedicated learning by students and staff and 3) connect the outside world and its resources to the school and its work" (Hale and Moorman, 2003, p. 13).

School principals have been aware of the inadequate preparation for their role for quite some time. In 1990, Barth wrote, "Studies of very successful practitioners continue to reveal that most regard university course work as the

least valuable component of their preparation" (p. 114). Recent studies conducted by Petzko, Clark, Valentine, Hackman, Nori, and Lucas, (2002); Portin, et. al. (2003); Barnett (2004); Levine (2005); and others have provided discouraging evidence that this condition still exists in our country.

One finding in a recent study conducted by Petzko, Clark, Valentine, Hackman, Nori, and Lucas, (2002), through an online survey of more than fourteen hundred middle level principals is that, "52% of the principals indicated that their university coursework was of only moderate or little value, and 55% said the same for university field experiences" (p. 6).

The understanding that there are problems with the systems that prepare our educational leaders should come as no surprise to us today. According to Hale and Moorman, "Back in 1987, the education administration profession self identified key trouble spots" in a publication prepared by "the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)-sponsored blue-ribbon panel, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration." (Hale and Moorman, 2003, p. 8) Their report titled, *Leaders For America's Schools*, identifies problems in eight areas. Five of those areas are directly related to preparation programs. The first problematic area cited by Hale and Moorman is the "lack of definition of good educational leadership". The other four areas that directly relate to this study are: absence of collaboration between higher education institutions and school districts; poor quality of candidates "for preparation programs; preparation programs do not offer relevant content, sequence, and clinical experiences; and preparation programs need to 'promote

excellence" (Hale and Moorman, 2003, p. 8). The call for changes brought to light by the University Council for Educational Administration was echoed thirteen years later by The Education Commission of States (ESC, 2000, p. 2). Siegrist adds this call for change. In a brief article, he wrote, "Graduate schools must move beyond the training of efficient managers, to the preparation of visionary, moral, and transformational leaders." (Siegrist, 1999, p. 297)

Hale and Moorman (2003) assert that while the job of the school principal has changed dramatically, "it appears that neither organized professional development programs nor formal preparation programs based on higher education institutions have adequately prepared" those in the positions, "to meet the priority demands of the 21st century, namely improved student achievement." (p. 7) Their views are supported by Lauder, who asserts, "disappointments in traditional theory-based preparation programs, coupled with the public demand for increased expertise in the principalship" have only heightened the need for changes in education administration certification and degree programs". (2000, ¶ 7)

Citing Black (2000), Barnett wrote that, "Only 25 percent of today's principals are prepared to be effective instructional leaders" (Barnett, 2004, p. 122). In his research, Barnett used the ISLLC standards to focus on the practices of district-wide administrators and to relate their practices to the effectiveness of their graduate training program in preparing them for the particular practice. His results provide a clear indication that "in every instance respondents indicated that

the frequency of completing the identified tasks was greater than the effectiveness they had received in their preparation program" (p. 122).

In another study conducted to examine "what school leaders actually do" (p. 1), Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, and Gundlach (2003), interviewed principals from 21diverse schools, in 4 cities each in a different state. All agreed, "that their preparation for the principalship was poorly aligned with the demands of the job"(p. 43). As a result, one of the recommendations of the researchers is that in university preparation programs, classroom opportunities should be combined with core leadership activities and a meaningful practicum/internship to link both practice and ideas (p. 43).

Additional illustration of the need for change in principal preparation programs is provided by Tucker and Codding who wrote:

> "Now as never before in the United States, the heart of the job [of the principal] is organizing the school to promote gains in student achievement. But this is now mostly left out of the training of school principals, who are mainly trained now to manage the school organization, not its program" (2002, p. xiii).

Research conducted by Tucker and Codding, over a 2 year period, focused on the principalship, and training programs both here and abroad. The Carnegie Corporation, The Broad Foundation and the New Schools Venture supported this research project. These organizations are recognized as leaders in the redesign of preparation programs for principals and share a particular interest in the preparation of leaders for tomorrow's schools.

From their research, Tucker and Codding (2002) identified six reasons why universities have failed to provide the training programs we need for

successful school principals. The reasons given are presented with the university as the central party. However, the states and students themselves also contribute to the failure of higher education institutions to provide different programs. One reason Tucker and Codding identify is related to state approval of programs. Simply put, states approve the programs and are in a position to raise or change the bar in ways that would influence programs that universities design. Universities design programs that are just good enough for approval by the state.

Three reasons given by Tucker and Codding that relate to the role of the university were concerned with the cost saving measures, incentive structure and state support at universities. Addressing each of these reasons individually provides more detail. First, faculty have been pushed to “seek research grants and publish in journals rather than make useful connections to school practice and practitioners that could strengthen their own teaching” (p. 17). Next, due to the low expectation of students who take these courses, many universities “hire adjunct faculty to teach the courses at very low cost” (p. 17). This implies that the qualifications of the adjuncts, the content of their courses, and expectations for students may also be low. Third, when students threaten to drop their course, faculty sometimes “lower their expectations of their graduate students” so that faculty compensation for the course will not be jeopardized (p. 17).

The last two reasons identified are directly related to students that universities admit to their preparation programs. Many educational administrative departments are known as “cash cows” which has led to acceptance into the program of “almost anyone who meets the most minimal academic qualifications”

(Tucker and Codding, 2002, p. 13). In many programs the students select the programs "that are the least demanding" (p. 17), because they are working full time, often have family obligations, and there are no clear quality distinctions made. Lastly, people that enroll in these programs often do so because they are looking for an automatic pay raise. This phenomenon is related to the fact that many school systems, unfortunately, structure their salary system in such a way that teachers earn additional salary when they earn an additional or an administrative certificate whether or not they have any intention of using it. Tucker and Codding (2002) summed up the failure of universities with this statement. "Thus, we have a situation that meets the needs of all of the actors *except* the students who will be taught in the schools where graduates of these programs serve as principals" (p. 17). The graduate students, the university and its faculty, and the state all seem to have their needs met through the programs we currently have in place.

Levine (2005) also, found the overall quality of educational administration programs in our country to be poor. This was illustrated in his statements that, "The majority of the programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country's leading universities" followed by "Collectively, school leadership programs are not successful on any of the nine quality criteria" (p. 23). The 9 quality criteria referred to were described by Levine as "the elements which are commonly used in program evaluation in higher education" (p. 81) and are listed below. Levine's research was conducted using surveys administered to heads and faculty of education school and departments as well as alumni and principals.

Case study method was also used to examine 28 diverse schools and departments of education against the nine quality criteria. The criteria used for program evaluation were listed in Levine's study as:

1) Purpose of the program
2) Curricular coherence
3) Curricular balanced
4) Faculty composition
5) Admission criteria
6) Degree and graduation standards
7) Research quality and usefulness
8) Finances to support program
9) Program assessment (Levine, 2005, p. 13)

Of the educational administration programs studied, Levine found, "The majority of the programs to range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country's leading universities" (2005, p. 23). In his study, Levine noted that the most promising program for school leadership preparation was one founded in England, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). This program was established, as "the equivalent of a national war college for school leadership" by the British prime minister in 1998, and actualized in 2000, "with the mantra, "every child in a well-led school, every leader a learner" (p. 54). Levine found NCSL to be the only program that met all 9 quality criteria he used to evaluate leadership programs in his study. No other preparation program he studied, achieved that status.

NCSL has a single focus, to prepare effective school leaders that can raise the standards of school through increased student attainment. Ten operating principles guide its work. The principles are:

1. Be purposeful, inclusive, and values driven;
2. .Embrace the distinctive and inclusive context of the school;
3. Promote an active view of learning;
4. Be instructionally focused;
5. Reach throughout the school community;
6. Build capacity by developing the school as a learning community;
7. Be future-oriented and strategically driven;
8. Draw on experiential and innovative methodologies;
9. Benefit from a support and policy context that is coherent, systematic, and implementation driven; and
10. Receive support from a national college that leads the discourse on leadership for learning (Levine, 2003, p. 54).

The operating principles of NCSL encompass many of the same principles of the ISLLC standards mentioned earlier in this literature review.

Like Tucker and Codding (2002), Levine, also found several problems in school leadership preparation programs. He concurred with Tucker and Codding that the admission standards are low and students do not expect to be challenged. Levine went even further and added that the graduation standards are also low. He also concurs with Tucker and Codding that the faculty is often weak. Descriptions of this include the tension of using practitioners as adjunct faculty who were

"teaching in areas in which they lack scholarly expertise" (p. 36). On the other end of the tension he noted that there are too many full-time professors whose "greatest short coming is being disconnected from practice" (p. 37).

Unlike Tucker and Codding (2002), Levine also identifies the problems of irrelevant curriculum; inadequate clinical instruction; inappropriate degrees stemming from a lack of clear and common understanding about the large variety of educational degrees and certificates; and poor research that he characterized as "superficial and lacking in rigor and was criticized for confusing scholarly and practical inquiry, flitting from topic to topic, prizing breath over depth, and being abstruse"(p. 44).

What Is Needed

In the earlier sections of this literature review, we examined historical and current perspectives of instructional leadership, the changing role of the instructional leader, ISLLC Standards, and the call for changes in principal preparation programs. Building on knowledge and research presented in previous sections of this literature review regarding the types of understandings, behaviors, and actions principals will need to successfully lead schools for high student achievement, the next section will present recommendations and suggestions found in the literature about how educational administration programs may be improved.

In addition to the theories and practices described earlier, the literature also provides guidance concerning what type of content, structures and designs would be most helpful in developing new principal preparation programs that will

produce the instructional leaders we need for our school. Again it is important to remind ourselves that as stated earlier by Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005), "Empirical support within the field of education for many of these elements, however, is thin".

Grogan and Andrews (2002) generalized that practical experiences need to be integrated through program components in a way that is cognizant of real world daily routines as they link to the research and scholarship in a way that allows participants to expand their assumptions and critique them. They go a step further and suggest that if universities take the lead in revising their preparation programs that "it might be advisable for professors to spend more time in buildings and districts, shadowing administrators and sitting in on parent conferences, student disciplinary hearings, and public forums" (2002, p. 251). This would provide a realistic point of reference that might contribute to the design of courses and learning experiences. Like others, Grogan and Andrews "recommend that programs for the preparation of aspiring educational leaders be redesigned with the following characteristics in mind:

1. Programs must be redesigned to reflect the collaborative instructional leader who works through transformational processes to conceptualize school-site or district leadership.
2. The essential knowledge base must be organized around the problems of practice and delivered in collaboration with practitioners.

3. Programs must be organized in such a way that there are opportunities for novices and experts to reflect while in action and reflect about action.
4. Selection of aspiring principals and superintendents must be designed to admit a cohort group of diverse and talented professional educators who have already demonstrated skills as inquiring and reflective professionals and a deep commitment to social justice.
5. Programs must contain development evaluation processes that assess the aspiring principals and superintendents based on their level of development.
6. Programs must be exemplary in the inclusion of the knowledge base as outlined in the ISLLC standards.
7. Programs must be organized in such a way that the aspiring principals and superintendents understand their ethical and moral obligations to create schools that promote and deliver social justice.
8. Programs should contain an intense year-long paid internship for both the aspiring principals and aspiring superintendents in diverse settings.

Programs should have a critical mass of five or six faculty members devoted to the preparation of new forms of leadership for schools. (p. 250)

Reports and research focusing on principal preparation also produced lists of similar “program elements” (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, 2005, p. 21) that might best prepare those aspiring to the position of principal.

Lauder (2000) listed the program components that repeatedly surface in the literature. Her list includes: entrance requirements reflective of the demands of the job; clear performance based standards; opportunities for individualization; development and assessment skills; emphasis on reflective practice; Cohort model; use of trained mentors; and continuous program review and modification.

Levine (2005), in his study of university educational administration programs, suggests three general strategies for improving the preparation of school administrators that should be followed by policy makers, school systems and policy makers. He states,

> Eliminate the incentives that promote low quality in educational leadership programs; enact high standards and when necessary, close inadequate programs; and redesign curricula and degree options to make them more relevant to the needs of principals and superintendents. (p. 63)

Levine further suggests use of Britain’s National College for School Leadership (NCSL) as a model for what programs should look like. In more specific terms he includes: abandoning the pre-service, in-service categorization of courses, in favor of more focused classification based on the developmental needs of leaders; and a redesign of the calendar to take advantage of in-school instruction time, weekends and summer months for more intense learning experiences. Two additional suggestions are that preparation programs be grounded in an integration of research on leadership from across domains in the university and that the

faculty be integrated as well to include both academics from across the university and practitioners (p. 62).

It has also been noted that education and business are seeking different results and therefore may have different expectations of their leaders. Levine (2005) suggests that principal preparation programs should draw faculty and research on leadership from across university departments and domains (p. 62).

In a paper written by Hallinger and Snidvongs (2005), for the National College of School Leadership in England, it was noted that, “Leadership preparation in the field of education has had a long and ambivalent relationship with the world of business” (p. 4). However, they concur with Levine (2005), “despite differences in the purposes and organization of schools, these developments in the education of business leaders hold relevance for educational leadership and management curriculum.” (p. 28)

Conger and Benjamin (1999), coming from a business perspective, identified seven best practices for effective leadership development programs. The seven practices were:

1. Build around a single well-delineated leadership model
2. Use participant selection process with clear criteria
3. Conduct pre-course preparation
4. Use personalized 360-Degree feedback to reinforce learnings
5. Use multiple learning methods
6. Conduct extended learning periods and multiple sessions
7. Put organizational support systems in place (pp. 33-55)

Conger and Benjamin further suggested that there are four fundamental pedagogies that should be used in training leaders. The approaches are conceptual awareness, feedback, skill building, and personal growth. A deeper look at the approach of conceptual awareness showed that this approach "is built around the notion that individuals need to understand leadership from a conceptual or cognitive vantage point" (p. 43). Through this approach participants understand intellectually the important differences in the behavior and world view of leaders versus managers" (p. 45). This notion is visible in the three dimensions identified by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration that should be included in educational leadership administration programs. They are:

> 1. *Awareness,* described as acquisition of concepts, information, definitions, and procedures;
>
> 2). *Understanding*, which refers to interpretation of knowledge, concepts, and skills with practice in the context of school environments; and
>
> 3) *Capability*, which is the application of knowledge and skills to real world problems commonly found in schools. (NPBEA, 2002, p. 9)

It has been noted that education and business are seeking different results and therefore may have different expectations of their leaders.

In a different study conducted by Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, and Gundlach (2003), one of the 4 findings was directed solely to colleges of education. Based on descriptions given by participants in their study, "that their preparation for principalship was poorly aligned with the demands of the job" (p. 43), the researchers offer the somewhat unique view that leadership preparation

should be thought of as a "continuum of experiences, not a single event" (p. 43). Early mentoring, incorporation of practitioners, combination of engaging classroom opportunities linked to leadership activities, on-the-job learning experiences, practicum that are meaningful, and the use of internships to link theories and practice are all experiences that can be found along that continuum (p.43). In their study, the topics principals wished had been included in their preparation programs were also reported. These topics are: "conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, problem diagnosis and solving, organizational theory, and most of all business and financial administration" (p. 38).

Barnett (2004, p. 126) offered detailed recommendations from his study. He stressed the importance of using authentic instructional practices and assessment throughout preparation programs. He applied these two underlying themes to the inclusion of such things as case study presentations, integration of technology usage, and practicum experiences. Barnett also advocates for application of content through assignments that mirror practitioners' activities and schedule. He goes a step further and suggests that all courses should complement each other without repetition of activities, development of a single portfolio across all coursework for presentation in final semester, working knowledge of standards, ongoing dialogue between faculty involved in leadership preparation programs and the leaders they train, and use of an advisory committee the includes membership of practitioners.

We also understand from Senge, et. al., 2000; Lambert, 2003 ; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005; and others that learning and student achievement are

the focal points for the collaborative leadership that we need in schools. These two foci highlight the importance of recognizing that instruction is central to everything that schools do and that principals must build leadership capacity and provide opportunities for shared leadership across the learning community. Our understanding regarding the content, structures, and experiences included in principal preparation programs is growing but still "little is known about how to help principals develop the capabilities to influence how schools functions" (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, 2005, p. 20). In addition, repeatedly we see in the literature that there should be an inclusion of practitioner voices in preparation programs. Gaining a better understanding of the how principals construct their role of instructional leadership in real schools may provide valuable insight that will inform specifically what content, structures and experiences would be most valuable in preparation programs.

Chapter Summary

This review of literature presented theories and relevant research to provide a contextual framework for this qualitative study on instructional leadership and the preparation needed for it. This review was divided into several sections. Following the introduction, the first major section dealt with leadership. In this section of the review, of leadership in general, educational leadership and the principal as an instructional leader were discussed. Research presented addressed definitions, standards, evolution and the complexities of the role as well as reasons for changes in the role of the instructional leadership. The literature revealed the absence of a single definition or model of instructional leadership

and highlighted the importance collaboration, understanding the responsibilities associated with leading change and the variation in how instructional leadership is understood. As a result of research and theories presented in the first major section of the literature review, it is logical to turn our interest to university administration preparation programs to consider the preparation of aspiring principals for the role of instructional leadership.

In the next section of this review of literature, research was presented on the state of university administration preparation programs and recommendations for improving them. The recommendations highlighted the need for keeping instruction at the center of everything we do, inclusion of practitioner voices, closer connections between university faculty and schools, and a need to increase our understanding of “how to help principals develop the capabilities to influence how schools function” (Davis, Darling-Hammond, et. al. (2005, p. 20).

The sections of this review of literature provided a conceptual framework for this qualitative study which was designed to discover how principals implement instructional leadership and to inform the type of university course work and learning experiences that are necessary to prepare aspiring principals to be effective instructional leaders in the 21st century. The next chapter will present the methods and rationale for this phenomenological study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Qualitative researchers are intrigued with the complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily life and with the meanings the participants themselves attribute to these interactions. (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 2)

Overall Approach and Rationale

This qualitative study focused on the perception of school principals regarding their own instructional leadership and the need for universities to revise administration preparation programs.

Selection of a research approach is an important decision made by the researcher. The objective of this decision is to select the approach that offers the "best fit" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 17) for the study being conducted. Determining which research approach to use to conduct a study is affected by several factors. The researcher conceptualizes the study using a particular set of "assumptions about the world," the topic selected for study, and "methodological preferences" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 37). She or he then looks for the approach that will provide the best match or "best fit" that will guide decisions regarding research design, data collection and reporting and ultimately response to the research questions (Maxwell, p. 36).

Qualitative research is guided by an underlying epistemology or set of assumptions (Wiersma, 2000; Eisner, 1998; Rossman and Rallis, 1998; and Rudestam and Newman, 1992). Many lists and descriptions of characteristics of qualitative research exist. Wiersma (2000, pp. 198-199) lists only five assumptions while Janesick (2000, pp. 385-386) lists twelve.

In addition to the underlying assumptions of qualitative research, Janesick offered three common rules researchers should consider when conducting qualitative research. They are: 1) "look for meaning, the perspectives of the participants in the study"; 2) find relationships in the "structures, and occurrences"; [and] 3) recognize "points of tension" or conflict, things that do not fit (2000, p. 387-388).

Selection of a research method for this study was guided by several factors. In the review of literature conducted for chapter two of this dissertation, the researcher found only a small number of studies that examined the instructional leadership of individual principals as they themselves understood and implemented it. The researcher was unable to find any phenomenological studies undertaken in urban schools that focused on the perceptions of principals regarding their own instructional leadership or what should be included in their preparation. She was interested in uncovering the personal perspectives and points of view of individual participants regarding their own instructional leadership. The researcher was further guided by the research topic, the purpose of the study, and the research questions to select a qualitative approach as the best fit for the study.

It was appropriate to use qualitative methods for this study because the researcher planned to conduct the study in naturalistic settings and was interested in uncovering and understanding the perceptions, actual lived experiences, and personally constructed meanings as described by the respondents. Support for using this paradigm was offered by Jansick, who stated, "[the qualitative

researcher] prefers to capture the lived experiences of participants in order to understand their meaning perspectives, case by case" (2000, p.395). Further support was provided by Maxwell (2005), who stated that, "The strengths of qualitative research derive primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers" (p. 22). The data collection methods included in-depth, face-to-face interviews that would yield data in the form of words.

Research Design

The study was further approached as a phenomenological study that would use a multi-site study design. Two definitions of this qualitative strategy led to the selection of this approach for this study. Wolff provided the first definition.

> Phenomenological research emphasizes the lived experience not only of the research participants but also of the researcher. For research participants, the lived experience is that of the phenomenon being studied. (Wolff, 2002, p. 117).

This study was also guided by a description of phenomenological research provided by Marshall and Rossman (1999), who stated that,

> Phenomenology is the study of lived experiences and the ways we understand those experiences to develop a worldview. It rests on an assumption that there is a structure and essence to shared experiences that can be narrated. (p. 112).

Marshall and Rossman (1999) further characterized this type of qualitative approach as using in-depth interviewing "to describe the meaning of a concept or phenomenon that several individuals share" (p. 112).

The phenomenological strategy was appropriate for this study, because like the participants in the study, the researcher was also an urban principal with

experiences and perceptions regarding instructional leadership and preparation for the position of principal. A multi-site study design "implies that multiple sites or subjects are studied" using "a common focus for the research" (Wiersma, 2000, p. 207). The single concept studied across all sites and participants was instructional leadership.

As there is a set of assumptions that guide qualitative research, there is also a set of assumptions that support how phenomenological research should be conducted. Wiersma (2000) provided such a list.

1. A priori assumptions regarding the phenomenon being studied are avoided
2. Reality is viewed holistically
3. Data collection and instruments used should have minimum influence on the phenomenon being studied
4. Openness to alternative explanations of the phenomenon
5. Theory, as applicable, should emerge from the data as grounded theory rather than preconceived theories. (pp. 238-239)

The phenomenological approach using a multi-site design was well suited to this study because even though the researcher was a principal herself, she understood that individual principals constructed their own meaning and perception of instructional leadership. The researcher had no a priori assumptions about the individual perceptions or meanings participants in the study may have for the concept of instructional leadership. Instead, the researcher sought to understand the phenomenon of instructional leadership and implications for preparation

needed for it from the perspectives of multiple principals located at multiple sites. Wiersma (2000) explained it this way. "The phenomenological approach emphasizes that the meaning of reality is, in essence, in the "eyes and minds of the beholders, the way the individuals being studied perceive their experience" (p. 238).

The study was conducted in naturalistic settings. Data collection was primarily conducted using face-to-face in-depth interviews that were taped and transcribed. Additional data collected through observations, field notes, and artifacts was also analyzed and interpreted.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is viewed as the instrument. (Patton, 2002, p.14; Maxwell, 2005, p. 83). The primary data collection method for phenomenological studies is in-depth interviewing that takes place in naturalistic settings. The researcher does not manipulate, stimulate, or externally impose structure on the situation (Wiersma, 2000, p. 239). To further illustrate this point, Patton stated that, "A human being is the instrument of qualitative methods. A real, live person makes observations, takes field notes, asks interview questions, and interprets responses" (Patton, 2002, p. 64). However, the researcher maintains openness, also described as taking a "stance of neutrality" while collecting data (Patton, 2002, p. 51).

Interpersonal skills of the researcher are important to the success of qualitative study. The researcher's ability to: listen and observe, respect participants, their perceptions, and their settings; communicate information about

the study clearly and concisely; build trust and maintain positive reciprocal relations; and be mindful of ethical issues will all contribute to the success of this study. The researcher that conducted this study had experience as a teacher and school administrator in the School District of Philadelphia for more than thirty years. As a result, she had successfully build rapport and working relations with many people. Those experiences also helped the researcher to become familiar with multiple school environments. Taken together those experiences provided the sensitivity and awareness the researcher needed to gain entry with participants, gather data from them, and represent their perceptions.

Through interaction with participants, the researcher was also responsible for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting the data, findings, and conclusions of this study. Many years of administrative work that required the collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of various data prepared the researcher for those tasks. A more detailed description about actual procedures used in this study are addressed in the sections on data collection and data analysis procedures.

As a career educator, the researcher had served both as a teacher and administrator. Through those experiences, she had come to understand that even though there were some common components found across the work of all principals, the meaning each constructed for his or her work and the perception each held was different. This understanding allowed the researcher to set aside her own perceptions and meanings regarding instructional leadership. Setting these aside permitted her to conduct this study from an open or neutral stance that was

appropriate for the design of this study. The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions and meanings held by the participants about their own instructional leadership and the implications of preparation needed for it. This study was not conducted to define one best perception or the right meaning. It was believe that the teaching and administrative experiences of the researcher would assist her in teasing out the perceptions of other administrators regarding their own meaning of instructional leadership and what might that might imply for designing future university preparation programs. In addition, several data sources and methods of data collection were used for the purpose of triangulation. A more detailed description of triangulation will be presented later in this chapter.

Participant and Site Selection

Participant Selection

This study was conducted to ascertain from urban elementary and middle school principals the perceptions and meanings they construct regarding instructional leadership. Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants. "The logic of purposeful sampling is based on a sample of information-rich cases that is studied in depth." (Wiersma, 2000, p. 285). Put another way, "The idea behind qualitative research is to *purposefully* select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (Crewell, 2003, p. 185). The general criteria used for the selection of all participants was that, at the time the study was conducted, each was a principal of a Philadelphia public school identified as a

Best Practice elementary or middle school and that he or she must have been the principal at that school for more than one full school year.

This participant selection method was also referred to as extreme case sampling. According to Wiersma (2000, p. 286) this type of sampling was used to select "units that have special or unusual characteristics." The particular special or unusual characteristic that bounded the participants was that they were principals of elementary or middle schools that have been identified as Best Practices schools by the School District of Philadelphia. This group of principals was selected because the researcher believed that due to the recent recognition of their schools as best practices schools, the principals would be more willing to share their perceptions and less likely to feel inhibited or embarrassed about being invited to participate in the study.

Best Practice Schools were selected by the School District of Philadelphia using criteria based on the "District's own School Performance Index (SPI)" (Best Practices Celebration, 2006, p. 2). This performance index was a value-added indicator of the school's improvement based on improvement on the Terra Nova results and was calculated through determined rates of student growth from 2001-2005. Schools with the highest rates of growth were invited to apply for the award. Twenty-nine of the districts 284 schools were presented the award. Additionally, two charter schools also received this award.

Of the 29 Philadelphia public schools awarded best practices status, 22 were elementary schools. They were so defined due to having kindergarten as their entry grade. The termination grade for these schools varied from grade four

through grade eight. Five of the best practices schools identified were middle schools. Their entry grade was either grade five or six with all terminating at the end of grade eight. Two high schools were included in the total count of public schools. These high schools were not considered for inclusion in this study since the study limited itself to the instructional leadership of principals of elementary and middle schools. Also, the researcher was the principal of one of the middle schools in this group and her school will not be included in the study.

After IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval to conduct the study was granted, initial contact with each of the elementary and middle best practices schools principals was made in the form of a letter written by the principal investigator that introduced the researcher and her goal of conducting this study as partial fulfillment of obtaining her doctoral degree. Also included in the letter was a brief overview of the purpose, design and significance of the study and a request for the principal's participation in the study. The letter also included information about a $25 gift certificate provided to participants that completed the study.

One week after the letter were sent, a follow up phone call was made to each principal invited to participate in the study to request his or her inclusion in the study, answer questions regarding their participation, and arrange an appointment for the in-depth interview, observation and artifact collection. Participants were drawn for inclusion in the study in the order in which they consented to participate in the study until the desired number of participants was reached.

Final selection of participants was guided by the desire of the researcher to include between 12 and 15 participants. This small number of participants is widely supported. Maxwell (2005) stated, "Qualitative researchers typically study a relatively small number of individuals or situations, and preserve the individuality of each of these in their analyses" (p. 22). Tierney and Dilley (2002) also referred to the use of a "small but theoretically significant number of individuals in the course of the study" (p.461). Patton (2002) referred to "using even single cases (N=1) such as Anna or Isabelle, selected *purposefully* to permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomenon *in depth"* (p. 46).

The researcher made additional contacts, if needed, by phone or e-mail to ensure that at least some of the middle schools are included in the study. It was thought that including some middle schools would offer the opportunity to contrast perceptions of elementary and middle school principals if the emerging themes seem to differ by school organizational level.

Site Selection

The focus of this phenomenological study was on the perceptions and meanings constructed by the participants. Therefore it was appropriate to conduct the study in naturalistic settings. As described earlier, this study was designed as a multi-site study. No one central or common site was used for the in-depth interviews, observations or artifact collection. Instead, these data collection methods were conducted at multiple sites. The sites for data collection were the school location at which each principal was assigned.

Data Collection and Recording Procedures

Data Collection

The primary data collection method used for this study was face-to-face in-depth interviews with support from observations and artifacts collected at each site. This type of interviewing is sometimes referred to as "phenomenological interviewing" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 113). In this form of interviewing the focus is on "the deep, lived meanings that events have for individuals" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 113). Warren (2002) cited Kvale (1996) and Rubin and Rubin (1995) when she described "Qualitative interviewing as a kind of guided conversation in which the researcher carefully listens *"so as to hear the meaning*" of what is being conveyed" (p. 85). Each interview was scheduled for 90 minutes and was conducted in the school location where the principal was assigned.

Prior to beginning the interview, the researcher reviewed the purpose and design of the study and obtained both a signed written consent and a completed *Participant Data Sheet* (see Appendix C). The researcher used this form to collect pertinent information about the principal's training, length of time at the school, and number of students enrolled. The researcher answered any questions related to the study, its design and the interview. A digital tape recorder was arranged and turned on to record the interview.

The interview was designed to begin with several neutral questions regarding the participants schooling and how he or she came to be a principal.

The purpose of these questions was to put the participant at ease and help him or her reach a comfort level with both the researcher and the use of the tape recorder.

To guide the interview and move it along, the researcher used a set of open – ended questions but remained flexible and open to asking additional questions or probes when needed for clarification, to deepen meaning, or to continue along an emerging path of interest that seems pertinent to the study. During the interview, the researcher made notes about the interview. Rather than trying to capture the participants' responses verbatim, these notes focused more on things such as the researchers observations of the participant as they responded, questions that arose for the researcher as the interview proceeded, key words or phrase that were repeated or emphasized, and topics or statements raised that required clarification.

At the conclusion of the interview, the interviewer again reviewed the purpose and design of the study, and thanked the participant for his or her time and commitment to the study.

As a follow up to the interview, the researcher spent some time observing and collecting artifacts at the site to provide additional contextual and supporting data. The data collection phase, was conducted over several weeks in the spring of 2007. Appendix D shows a listing of interview questions and their correlation to the research questions of this study.

Within the two weeks following completion of data collection from a particular participant and site, a $25.00 dollar gift card was mailed to the

participant as a token of appreciation for his or her time and willingness to participate in this study.

Recording Data

Data collected during the interviews was recorded using a digital audio recorder. Precaution was taken to ensure that a fresh digital folder was selected for each interview and the audio files were coded to preserve the confidentiality of each participant. Once the interview was concluded, each audio file was transcribed into printed words for further reference. Field notes and some photographs were taken during the observation. These focused on what was observed, its significance and connection to the data from the in-depth interview and artifacts collected at the site. Artifacts were only taken or copied with permission of the principal. Like the audio files from the interview, all photographs and artifacts collected at the site were coded to preserve the anonymity of the site and confidentiality of the principal as much as possible.

A system of multi level note taking was used throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the study. Illustration of this note taking system was provided by Haslam (1987). She described the levels as:

Level 1 - Condensed account – Direct account; taken quickly during actual event; includes quotes and immediate impressions

Level 2 - Expanded account – Enhancements to level two notes; additional details and key words not recorded during the event

Level 3 – Daily log – record of questions that arise for researcher: researchers view of things at that point

Level 4 – Ongoing analysis of interpretations – notes on connections between interpretations and insights with underlying theories and notes from the first three levels (p. 85)

The audio files, transcriptions, field notes, artifacts, other documents, and data collected and related to this study were reviewed as needed during the analysis and interpretation phases of this study. All audio files, transcriptions, field notes, artifacts, other documents, and data collected that are related to this study shredded after the conclusion of the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

> "The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data" (Creswell, 2003, p. 190).

Wiersma (2000) described data analysis in qualitative research as "a process of categorization, description, and synthesis" (p. 204). Marshall and Rossman (1999) defined data analysis generally as " the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data" (p. 150). Patton (2002) stated, "Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings" (p. 432). He further cautioned that, "no formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes. But no recipe" (p. 432). Marshall and Rossman (1999) further described "data collection and analysis typically go[ing] hand in hand [in qualitative studies] to build a coherent interpretation of the data" (p. 151).

Data analysis in qualitative research can be a daunting task due to the voluminous data that are collected and the generally interpretive nature of the qualitative research paradigm. Patton (2002) offered guidance in his statement to qualitative researchers. He said,

> The challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making-sense of massive amounts of data. This involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal. (p. 432)

Marshall and Rossman (1999) described six typical phases for analysis in qualitative research. The six phases they listed were: "(a) organizing the data; (b) generating categories, themes, and patterns; (c) coding the data; (d) testing the emergent understanding; (e) searching for alternative explanations; and (f) writing the report" (p. 152). These phases were used to guide the data analysis and interpretation in this study.

The researcher heeded advice provided by Maxwell (2005) in not "letting your analyzed field notes and transcripts pile up" (p. 95). Instead, analysis began following the first interview and observation. Following a review of data collected from each participant, the researcher made process notes that addressed initial understandings and thoughts about the perceptions of the participants. The researcher reviewed field notes made during the in-depth interviews, artifact collection, and observations. Audio files were replayed and transcribed to identify emerging categories themes and patterns that were used to organize data. This process was followed after each encounter with a participant. As common themes emerged, they guided adjustments made to questions for interviews with the remaining participants. Common patterns as well as differing viewpoints were noted and analyzed.

Reduction of data using categorization and coding made interpretation of rich descriptions of the perceptions of participants more manageable and were used as the basis for findings and conclusions.

Validation and Reliability

> Absolute reliability and validity are impossible to attain in any research study, regardless of type. (Wiersma, 2000, p. 263)

Validity

In qualitative research, "validity does not carry the same connotations as it does in quantitative research" (Creswell, 2003, p. 195). Qualitative research uses no statistical numbers to support findings or significance levels to indicate what is meaningful and what is not (Worthen, 2002, p. 140). It does not "attempt to design, in advance, controls that will deal with both the anticipated and unanticipated threats to validity" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 107). Instead, Creswell and Miller (2000) as cited in Creswell (2003, p. 198) described validity in qualitative research as, "used to suggest determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account."

To further illustrate how qualitative researchers might check the accuracy of their findings, Creswell (2003) offered eight possible strategies from which a researcher could choose (p. 196). Triangulation was one of those strategies. This study used the widely accepted strategy of triangulation to address validity concerns. It involved collecting data in a variety of ways, such as different data collection methods, settings, or people. Marshall and Rossman (1999, p. 194) defined triangulation simplistically as, "the act of bringing more than one source

of data to bear on a single point." The purpose of using triangulation, as described by Maxwell (2005), is that "it reduces the risk that your conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific source or method, and allows you to gain a broader and more secure understanding of the issues you are investigating" (p. 93).

In this study, data regarding instructional leadership and the preparation obtained through university preparation programs was collected through in-depth interviews conducted with ten to 15 different principals. Each interview was audiotaped and each tape was transcribed. The researcher also conducted an observation and collection of artifacts from each site visited. During each site visit, the researcher made field notes. In this way, the researcher collected several different types of data from each respondent to analyze and interpret.

Reliability

According to Merriam (2002), "*Reliability* refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated"(p. 27). It is widely understood that replication of a qualitative study will probably not produce the same results. Even though this is the case, "this does not discredit the results of any particular study" (Merriam, 2002, p. 27). This is a reasonable assertion since it is commonly understood that human behavior is changeable. In qualitative research "reliability and generalizability play a minor role" (Creswell, 2003, p. 195). Just as validity in qualitative research is understood differently than in quantitative research, there is a different understanding of reliability in the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. In quantitative research, replication refers to the ability to repeat the

study using the same methodology and getting the same results. In qualitative research, reliability is described by Merriam as, "lie[ing] in others' concurring that given the data collected, the results make sense – they are consistent and dependable" (2002, p. 27). The qualitative researcher is guided to focus on a "more important question…. Of *whether the results are consistent with the data collected*" (Merriam, 2002, p. 27). This notion of "dependability" or "consistency" in qualitative research was first recognized by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 288), as cited in (Merriam, 2002, p. 27). Reliability in this way relies more heavily on concurrence of others that the results derived from the data collected "make sense – they are consistent and dependable" (Merriam, 2002, p. 27)

Several methods have been described that were used to ensure consistency and dependability. One common method listed is the use of triangulation. As mentioned above, triangulation was used in this study. It consisted of the analysis and interpretation of multiple data sources from each participant and multiple data sources across multiple respondents.

Ethical Considerations

"In qualitative research, ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge with regard to the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings" (Merriam and Associates, (2002, p. 29) The researcher is interested in collecting authentic, personal data that are accessed from participants regarding their personal world view. It is not uncommon in qualitative studies for the researcher to act as the "primary data collection instrument" and for the participants or informants to

engage in “acts of self disclosure, where personal, private experiences are revealed to the researcher in a relationship of closeness and trust” (Birch and Miller, 2000 in Mauthner, Birch, Jessop, and Miller, 2002, pp. 91-92). It is the deep, rich personal accounts that the qualitative researcher seeks even as he or she has an obligation and responsibility to protect participants while accurately reporting findings. “The researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informant(s)” (Creswell, 2003, p. 201). In addition to protecting the participants, the researcher is also bound to protect the research process. Strategies “such as triangulation, member checks, use of rich, thick description” (Meriam, 2002, p. 30) coupled with obtaining participant consent following disclosure to participants regarding the purpose, process and nature of the study, accurate data collection and reporting findings, as well as the use of integrity in interpretation and drawing conclusions provide evidence that an ethical study was conducted.

The researcher conducting this study took precautionary measures to address the ethical issues that commonly arise in qualitative research. First, this study was designed to eliminate as much as possible risk to participants by disclosing the purpose of the study, seeking voluntary participants, and assuring their confidentiality and anonymity. Written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Drexel University Institutional Review Board (IRB), the School District of Philadelphia Research Review Committee, and individual participants.

The identification of participants and their schools was not made public. Instead, numbers were used to refer to individual participants and their schools.

The numbers were constructed in such a way that the true identity of the participants and their schools are not detectable.

Notes and other written data collected during this study were maintained in separate storage from the audio files and recordings of the interview sessions. Field notes and audio files of the sessions were labeled using a coding system rather than the actual names of participants. Artifacts gathered from each participant were labeled using the researcher's coding system and the participant and school identifiers will be obscured.

The researcher also had no supervisory responsibility over any of the participants or informants in the study. Additionally, the researcher was familiar with her own experiences as a principal. However, continued to maintain an open acceptance of the worldview of others regarding their instructional leadership throughout the study. The researcher was reminded that the underlying purpose of this study was not to tell her own instructional leadership story, but rather to explore and understand how others construct and make meaning of their own instructional leadership.

Finally, while the researcher has worked as a school principal for some time in the Philadelphia School District, she believed that her first hand understanding of the complexity of the principalship assisted her in quickly establishing a comfortable rapport with participants and allowed her to be sensitive to the broad environment and general climate in which the participants constructed their roles as instructional leaders. In phenomenological research one strives to access the experience within individuals. A trusting relationship, where

both [the participant and researcher] are committed to better understanding the experience being explored, allows for greater access to the richness of their experience" (Worthen, 2002, p. 140).

Chapter Summary

Chapter three concerned itself with the methodology and rationale for the research design of this phenomenological study on instructional leadership and preparation for it. As the review of literature presented in Chapter Two described, the field of education is rapidly changing and presenting new expectations for school principals as instructional leaders. These changes and new expectations have implications for how principals implement instructional leadership and changes in how they are prepared for the role. Qualitative methods were chosen as the best fit to address the two research questions because the data sought were the actual lived experiences of the participants regarding how they implement instructional leadership and their perception of what course work and experiences should be included in university administration preparation programs. The research questions were:

1. How do elementary and middle school principals view and implement their role as instructional leader?

1A. What challenges must principals overcome to implement the role of instructional leader?

The research questions grew from a gap identified in the literature. The researcher was unable to find any phenomenological studies that concerned themselves with the perceptions of American urban principals regarding their own instructional

leadership. Additionally, by understanding the expected role of the instructional leader and how urban principals actually viewed and implemented instructional leadership, it was thought that the emerging themes might provide useful information concerning what university preparation programs might include to prepare future instructional leaders.

Purposive sampling, specifically extreme case sampling, was used to identify 12 to 15 elementary and urban principals as participants in the study. As described earlier, the researcher was the instrument for data collection. Data was collected through the use of in-depth interviewing, observation, collection and review of artifacts. Following data collection, the data was reviewed, coded, interpreted and analyzed. From the thick rich descriptions of the lived experiences of the participants, themes did emerge that contributed new knowledge to the field of educational leadership. This knowledge will be useful to practitioners and university administration preparation programs.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter will begin by restating the purpose of conducting this phenomenological study and providing a brief description of the design of the study. These will be followed by a description of the participants and their schools taken from the Participant Data Sheet. The results of the perceptions given by participants in response to individual interview questions will follow. A description of the artifacts collected and on-site observations made in this multi site study will also be presented. The chapter summary will concern itself with answering the research questions of the study by using themes that emerged from the analysis of data collected during the in depth interviews, artifact collection and on site observations.

Purpose of The Study

This phenomenological study was conducted to uncover the actual lived experiences of urban elementary and middle school principals regarding how they viewed and implemented instructional leadership. It was expected that the insight obtained from the thick, rich descriptions provided by urban principals would provide information regarding instructional leadership and possibly identify implications for the design or content of preparation programs that might lead to effectiveness in this role.

Research Design

This multi-site phenomenological study used qualitative methods of face-to-face in-depth interviews, observations and artifact collection conducted in naturalistic settings of each principal's school to collect data. As previously stated in Chapter Three, participants for this study were drawn from those listed as the principal of an elementary or middle school recognized in 2006, by the School District of Philadelphia as a Best Practice School. Thirteen participants initially agreed to participate in the study. One participant withdrew before an interview could take place was due to repeated difficulty in scheduling the interview. The study was conducted with a total of 12 participants.

Data Collection

Each interview took place in the school where the participant was the principal. All interviews were recorded and recordings were transcribed. Field notes were made at each site before, during and after the interview, artifact collection and observation. Each interview was conducted using the same set of open-ended interview questions shown in Appendix D. No interview took longer than one hour. A *Participant Data Sheet* (see Appendix C) was also used to collect information form each participant. Each participant received a $25.00 gift card in appreciation for the time he or she devoted to the interview, observation and artifact collection.

Results of Data From Participant Data Sheet

As previously mentioned, all participants in this study were asked to complete a *Participant Data Sheet.* The information from the individual data sheets was complied into a single table shown as Table 3.

An analysis of this summary chart will be presented here. Participants in this study will either be referred to as participant with the number assigned to them or identified using the coding assigned to them. The coding is shown in the column header of Table 3 as a letter and a number. For example, the code for Participant #1 is P1.

All participants in the study were employed as public school principals at the time of the study. Each participant was the assigned principal of a school that had been designated as a Best Practice School, 2006, by the School District of Philadelphia. Three of the participants were male and 9 were female. There were 12 sites involved in the study. Each was the school of a principal who participated in this study. Eleven of the schools were managed by the Philadelphia School District. One was managed by a contracted educational management organization.

According to data collected using the *Participant Data Sheet*, the participants obtained their administrative certificate from one of seven different universities located in Philadelphia metropolitan area. The largest number of participants received their administrative certificates from Arcadia University (3) or Temple University (3). One participant obtained an administrative certificate at a university located in New Jersey.

Table 3: Summary of Participant Data
Participants 1 through 6

	Participant #1 (P1)	**Participant #2 (P2)**	**Participant #3 (P3)**	**Participant #4 (P4)**	**Participant #5 (P5)**	**Participant #6 (P6)**
Question 3	4 years	9 years	4 years	4 years	7 years	6 years
Question 4	Yes	No	Yes; Various	Yes	No	Yes
Question 4a	6 months	NA	20 years	7 years	NA	5 years
Question 5	Cheyney University	Widener University	Arcadia University	College of NJ	Arcadia University	Arcadia University
Question 6	2003	1998	1981 or 82	1995	1996	1993
Question 7	22 years	10 years	12 years	10 years	10 years	16 years
Question 8	K-7	K-8	5-8	2nd; 5-8	UG–SPED*	K-8 & SPED
Question 13	30	40	50	62	70	36
Question 14	430	412	330	685	457	387
Question 15	K – 3 1 – 3 2 – 3 3 – 4 4 - 4	K – 2 1 – 2 2 – 1.5 3 – 1.5 4 – 2 5 – 2 6 – 2 7 – 2 8 - 1	K – 3 1 – 3 2 – 3 3 – 3 4 – 2	PreK - 2 K – 3 1 – 3 2 – 4 3 – 3 4 – 3 5 – 4 6 – 4 SPED** - 7	K – 2 1 – 3 2 – 3 3 – 2 4 – 2 5 – 2	K – 3 1 – 3 2 – 3 3 – 2 4 – 2 5 – 2 6 – 2

*UG – Ungraded; **SPED – Special Education

Participants 7 through 12

	Participant #7 (P7)	**Participant #8 (P8)**	**Participant #9 (P9)**	**Participant #10 (P10)**	**Participant #11 (P11)**	**Participant #12 (P12)**
Question 3	14 years	3 years	13 years	16 years	1.5 years	3
Question 4	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Question 4a	NA	1 Year	6 years	NA	NA	6
Question 5	Temple University	Cheyney University	Villanova University	Temple University	Gwynedd-Mercy Univ.	Temple
Question 6	1986	1998	1976	1975	1999	1996
Question 7	5 years	29 years	9	21 years	17 years	23
Question 8	5th & 6th	9-12	2, 3, 4, 5	7-12	4; 6 – 8	5-8
Question 13	50	19	35	60	60	20
Question 14	425	260	375	670	750	293
Question 15	K – 2 1 – 2 2 – 3 3 – 2 4 – 2 5 – 2 6 – 2 7 – 2	7 – 5 8 - 6	K – 3 1 – 3 2 – 2 3 – 2 4 – 2 5 – 2	K – 4 1 – 4 2 – 4 3 – 4 4 – 4 5 – 4	K – 8 1 – 9 2 – 9	5 – 3 6 – 3 7 – 3 8 - 3

The length of teaching and administrative experience of the participants varied. The participant with the least number of years spent as a teacher had taught for 5 years before becoming an administrator. Three participants had taught for more than 20 years before becoming an administrator, one for as long as 29 years. As teachers, 10 had taught grade 5 or above, 2 of the participants had taught high school grades, 1 had taught only ungraded special education students, and the others had taught elementary grades.

A wide range of time serving as a school principal existed among the participants. The range for total years as a principal was one and a half years to 24 years. Eight participants had been principals in at least one other location. Five participants had never been principal of any other school other. Participant longevity at the current location ranged from 1-1/2 years to 16 years.

Included in the study were principals from 10 elementary schools and two middle schools. The grade configuration of the elementary schools differed as did that of the middle schools. As an example, one elementary school had students in grades kindergarten through second grade only, while one had students from kindergarten through grade eight. In the case of the middle school the same was true. One middle school only had students in grades seven and eight only, while another had students in grades five through eight. The largest school was reported to have 750 students. The smallest had only 260 students.

Results of Interview Data

In-depth, face-to-face interviews were used to collect detailed data from the perspective of urban elementary and middle school principals to address the two research questions of this study. Those research questions were:

1. How do elementary and middle school principals view and implement their role as instructional leader?

1a. What challenges must principals overcome to implement the role of instructional leader?

A set of eight interview questions (see Appendix D) was used to guide the face-to-face in-depth interview. The first six interview questions were designed to provide data that could answer research question number 1. Interview questions 1-6 were:

1. How do you perceive your role as principal?
2. What stands out for you about instructional leadership?
3. What comes to mind for you when someone refers to you as the instructional leader of your school?
4. Can you give some examples of how you provide instructional leadership for you school?
5. What would you say are the four or five most important things that instructional leaders should do?
6. What would you say are the four or five things an instructional leader should not do?

Interview question 7 and 8 were designed to find an answer for research question 1a. They were:

7. What would you like to do differently to provide instructional leadership?

8. What gets in the way of your being able to provide instructional leadership in these ways?

The same questions were asked of each participant. This provided some consistency and common starting points across all interviews.

These urban elementary and middle school principals reported their own perceptions from the perspective of what they do in their own schools on a day-to-day basis.

Q1 - Principals' Perceptions of Their Role

Two themes emerged from the participant responses to interview question #1. The two themes are 1) the role of the principal is instructional leadership and 2) the role of the principal is complex and multi faceted.

The responses concerning the role of principal followed no particular pattern. Only P11 and P6 gave a description of the principalship as a single role. P11 described his role simply as, "I am the instructional leader of the school." Even though the researcher waited for him to continue his response, no elaboration was offered. Participant #6 also described the principalship as a single role but offered some elaboration. "I am the instructional leader of [school # 6] …my role is to move students to advanced on the rubric and to make sure teachers are prepared, through professional development which is sustained and ongoing, to move those students."

The second theme that emerged in response to this question was that the role of the principal is complex and multifaceted. Participants described the role

of principal by listing the different task domains that they address in the day-to-day operation of their schools. Instructional leadership was included in the listing of task domains given by every respondent. The listing of task domains provided strong illustration of a second theme, the complexity of the role that emerged in participant responses to this interview question.

Complexity of the principalship is not a new understanding. The responses of participants in this study provide current illustrations and validation that in 2007. The perception of urban elementary and middle school principals is that the role of principal remains multi faceted and complex. Perceptions of the role's complexity were evident in the responses of the participants who typically described themselves as having the final responsibility for everything that goes on in their schools. This was best illustrated in the description of the role of the principal provided by Participant # 8.

> My role as a principal is a role of multiple responsibilities. First and foremost, I am the instructional leader and after that I'm everything else. I'm facilities. I'm parent involvement. I'm community involvement. I'm discipline. I'm supplies and equipment. I'm office management. I'm lunchroom manager. Just multiple roles that I play. And I'm mother, father, sometimes doctor, nurse, often lawyer, sometimes counselor. It's just everything.

Participant #4 gave the lengthiest description. She saw her role as, "instructional leader of the building and the operational manager of the building to ensure that everything is working effectively to make the conditions for learning optimal." In her description she included that she prepares the roster, staffs the building, purchases the materials for the building, and all the thought processes are geared to creating optimal conditions for students to learn." This participant repeatedly

referred to her school as “the building” in a way that seemed to convey her thinking that everything in the building was interconnected and dependant on her attention, oversight, and control.

Listening to participants in the face-to-face interviews it was interesting to watch their facial expressions as they described their roles. Some almost winched as they described the list of domains that required their attention. In contrast, when describing their instructional leadership role, their facial expressions softened and their speaking tones became less tense and irritated as if the instructional leadership component was the more pleasant facet of their work.

It is interesting to note that in subsequent questions, all respondents except one talked about working in collaboration with others in their schools and building capacity and a sense of team with others. Yet, in response to this general question about the role of the principal most participants alluded only to building capacity in others through their mention of providing professional development as a task domain.

Two unique perceptions of the role were presented. They included:

1. “….be the head learner and build an environment where everyone is learning, including the adults” (P11);
2. “My role. It’s my job. My job is my life. And it’s also, for me, it’s my mission field. As a Christian, I really feel this is where God’s called me”. (P2)

In summary two themes emerged from the responses to Q1. The two themes were: 1) the role of the principal is instructional leadership and 2) the role of the principal is complex and multi faceted.

Q2 - Instructional Leadership – What Stands Out

The responses to this question were fairly similar across participants. As a result two clear themes seemed to emerge from the responses to this question. The first theme was monitoring instruction. This seemed to be viewed by all participants as an important action of an instructional leader. The second theme that seemed to emerge centered on professional development. Each theme will be addressed individually using excerpts taken from the participant interviews.

The first theme, monitoring instruction, was addressed in several ways that sometimes sounded different from participant to participant. All participants indicated in some way that they take some action to "follow through to make sure that it is being carried out in the classrooms" (P10), or as Participant # 11 put it, "to make sure that high quality teaching is going on." Typically, respondents spoke in generalities and their responses addressed one or several items such as review of lesson plans, informal and formal class visits, setting expectations for teacher and student performance, providing resources, reviewing data, and providing professional development. Most respondents seemed to respond from a mental checklist that included the items listed above. One example was provided in the response of Participant # 7.

> Monitoring, reviewing data, assessing not only the children but also the teacher, doing observations, just making sure again that the children are getting the best opportunities that they can, best education they can through their teachers. Again it's really monitoring, observing, being on

> top of current issues, making sure that all the needs of the children are met, that materials are available… it's kind of general but it's what I do all day every day. (P7)

What stood out for Participant # 4 was that the instructional leader "sees all the good things going on and the not so good things going on, or let's say, the potential for better things to go on" and that the instructional leader has to have "the confidence to take action." (P4) The example she gave was that she had recently visited a classroom where she was not impressed with the instruction. Even though it is now May, she still wanted the instruction to be rigorous every day from September to June. As a result, she took the necessary actions of discussing the unsatisfactory lesson with the teacher, making suggestions for improvement and indicating that she would be back to see the improvements implemented.

The second theme, professional development, seemed to also emerge from the responses to this question. Some respondents described professional development as something that was important for their teachers. In response to this question, most respondents did not speak of professional development for themselves. Rather they spoke of engaging in professional development with teachers. The benefit was clearly described as for the teachers to improve their instruction. This was clearly illustrated by Participant #12, who stated that,

> When a teacher has difficulty in a certain area or isn't comfortable, it's about providing support to that teacher or coaching in a variety of ways to make sure that everyone has the tools they need to deliver the curriculum the best it can be delivered. (P12)

Some respondents spoke of participating in the professional development with their teachers or actually leading it. Participant #6 provided one of the most comprehensive and in depth responses. She said,

> In order to ensure that you have a school that is moving students, you as the administrator must be well versed across all areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment…. stay current of pedagogy, that helps me to become a better leader and also to instill in my teachers those kinds of things that they need to understand how children learn. I believe that teaching and learning is at the basis of…, that it's the umbrella that ensures that all of these pieces fit together. (P6)

Unlike other respondents, P#6 described instructional leadership as a system of components that all work together. In her complete response, she provided several examples that set her apart from other respondents. One example was her description of professional development for teachers. P6 described professional development for teachers as "instill in my teachers those kinds of things that they need to understand how children learn" rather than how to teach. Her focus was on student learning rather than teaching.

A unique perception was offered by Participant #2 who stated, "I feel like as an instructional leader, we're still missing too many kids." She further explained that the school had been without a certified 8th grade mathematics teacher for a month due to absence of the regularly assigned teacher. As a result, the school has had to do what it could to place a teacher in front of the class each day. A suitable substitute had not yet been found. This participant knew that the students were not getting the instruction they should. She also made a more general statement about her wider spread sense of failure. "I don't know how to keep reaching those kids who don't have those skills or have so many needs when

they come into school. How do we build on that? How do we correct what we can and build on it?” (P2) This was the only participant that indicated failure in any way in response to any question. A reoccurring theme for this principal across all the questions seemed to be a strong desire to increase the achievement of more students by overcoming any barrier to learning even if the barrier appeared to have its roots outside the school.

To summarize, the two themes that appeared to emerge from the responses to this question were 1) monitoring the principals engaged in to ensure instruction and 2) professional development. All participants addressed both themes in their responses.

Q3 - Perceptions of Being Referred to As The Instructional Leader

The common themes that emerged from responses to this question were similar to those of question # 2. They were 1) monitoring through classroom observations or visits, 2) provision of resources, and again, 3) providing professional development and support.

> What comes to mind? That makes me feel good. That’s what I want people to think that I am. I’m not the principal, I am the instructional leader and whenever I can I write that down on any kind of paper work. (P6)

No response was given as forthrightly and proudly as the one given by this participant. Most participants did not take such a strong stance in response to this question. Participants often seemed to build their responses by repeating statements they had given in response to previous questions. Just like the responses given to interview question # 2, the participants seemed to respond using a mental checklist of elements that appeared common across participants.

The common elements that surfaced were classroom observations or visits, provision of resources, and providing professional development and support.

A few unique perceptions did surface. Participant #9 alluded to engaging in modeling through the provision of demonstration lessons for teachers by "stepping in and doing it. I have no problem with going in and doing lessons in the classroom….If they [teachers] see that I can go in and do it, then they figure I can do it also." (P9) Participant #4 also spoke of modeling for teachers from a different perspective. "I show them that I am serious about my job. One example is they receive e-mails from me all day and all night…They are seeing someone that is on task" (P4).

One participant spoke of taking steps to remove unsatisfactory teachers. Participant #7 said, "In some cases to go the next step to remove that teacher from the position because children otherwise would suffer if I did not take on that responsibility."

"I need to surround myself with a team that can carry out instructional leadership" (P3).

Only one participant described herself as "the expert in the building." That participant began the response to this question of being referred to as the instructional leader by saying, "The boss! The one that has to have all the answers no matter what." (P1)

The common themes from responses to this question were similar to those of question # 2. They were 1) monitoring through classroom observations or

visits, 2) provision of resources, and again, and 3) providing professional development and support.

Q4 - Examples of How Principals Provide Instructional Leadership

Professional development was the strongest theme that emerged in the responses to this interview question. When asked to provide specific examples of their instructional leadership, some of the familiar themes from the previous two questions seemed to emerge. No new themes seemed to emerge in response to this question. However, in response to this question typically more detail was provided. As an example, many participants in response to previous questions had mentioned professional development. Typically respondents mentioned professional development as a type of task or duty preformed. Very little, if any, description was provided about when, who, where, why or how it was provided. A comparison of the response given by Participant # 11 to Q3 and Q4 illustrates the different levels of detail between responses to the 2 questions. For Q3, being referred to as the instruction leader, the part of her response that addressed professional development was simply, "providing professional development for the staff." In response to Q4 she said,

> Professional development is something I do as an instructional leader. We did a variety of things in grade group, whole group. I brought in people from C & I [Curriculum and Instruction]. I went to workshops and I delivered professional development for the staff. I went into classrooms, these are not formal observations but I'm going to give you feedback on what I see. And the teachers were generally really open to it because they want to be better at what they do. In addition to that I have a critical friends group meeting here. There are 13 teachers that meet here once a month for two hours and we really talk about how to be a reflective learner… Having them look at their practice and how they can improve upon it and doing reflective memos on lessons they do and forcing them to be reflective of their practice. (P11)

The theme of professional development was included in the response of every participant. Each participant devoted the largest amount of time in his or her response to it. It was usually described as being provided by the principal, members of the leadership team, outside presenters, or through observing in another teacher's classroom. It was described as taking place at grade/group meetings during the day, on early dismissal days for students, after school hours, or during sometimes during the summer. Lesson plan review, feedback to teachers following class observations, providing resources such as textbooks and other instructional materials were frequently mentioned.

A unique idea that emerged was that of creating an environment where it was possible for teachers to take some instructional risks by trying new things. "I give my teachers the freedom to do…I empower them. I give them the freedom to try new things." (P2)

Q5 - What Instructional Leaders Should Do

Three themes emerged as common across responses to this question. They were 1) relationship building, 2) monitoring by popping into classrooms and walking the building instead of spending all their time in the office and 3) engaging in and providing professional development for teachers.

The first, relationship building was alluded to or implied throughout responses given to many of the interview questions. However, this was the first time that participants mentioned it by name and each spent quite a bit of time talking about it. Participant #1 began her response to this question with the following:

> Building relationships in the building. To have everyone know that you're just not the instructional leader. You are here to make things run smoothly for them, the parents, the students and everyone. (P1)

Participant #5 said building relationships is important and described how to build them this way: "Providing meaningful conversations between teacher to teacher, teachers to leadership team, teachers to myself." (P5) Participant #2 explained the importance of relationships this way.

> Definitely having a good relationship with your teachers so they can accept my candidness and they respect what you say. Some of my teachers don't always like it, I memo them about something, they get upset; they call the [union] staffer or at least talk to the building rep. Like, one of them after four weeks e-mailed me and just apologized. She said you know you were right. Sometimes, being candid, it's hard to hear, and it hurts but they eventually come around.

Participant #7 also talked about relationships and offered the following as evidence of how they sometimes work in her school.

> If something is bothering them, they will come and talk with me whether it's about a child, a parent or a family issue at home or they need take some time off. They come to me, I guess as a friend, a psychologist, whatever. I'm the one they'll come to share with and get some feedback. (P7)

The second common theme that emerged in response to this question was monitoring instruction and everything else. It was referred to as spending time outside the office. Participants described this in terms of "never in the office" (P2) "around the building… must know what is going on" (P8). Again, it was not uncommon for participants to talk about being in classrooms, hallways, and the cafeteria.

The final common response topic was professional development. This area of responsibility was usually referred to as professional development. Since

professional development had been mentioned several times in their earlier responses, many of the respondents used phrases like, “As I said before,” or “The whole professional development thing discussed earlier,” to link the researcher back to the earlier response about professional development. Participant # 10, however, never used the words professional development. Instead he described his role regarding it.

> “Be part of the introduction of the initiative in some way shape or form. Introduce it, explain it, be there in the room to communicate that it’s important. Checking to see that it is being done through lesson plans. By informal observations and formal observations. By talking to teachers at grade/group meetings, Alluding to the initiative, Get people to talk about it.” (P10)

Another participant gave a similar response. “Attending the meetings and professional development. If I’m expecting it of my teachers then I’m sitting right along with them as a learner.” (P5)

The response given by Participant # 6 deviated considerably from responses given by other participants. Her response appeared to be more global. While some participants sounded almost tentative in their response, Participant # 6 spoke with an assuredness that most other participants did not seem to exhibit. Her response to Q5 follows.

> “Ensuring that teachers are in a safe clean climate because you can’t work and children can’t learn if it is other wise. A climate that is not only clean but aesthetically lovely, a place that you want to come every day. Ensuring that teachers stay abreast of current practices not only in Philadelphia, but across the nation. Sharing a belief system that all students can learn at high levels. Making sure that instruction, curriculum and assessment are the key pieces that we talk about all the time. Looking at student work on an ongoing basis to ensure that children are achieving at high levels. Keeping the community involved, ensuring that parents are involved in the school community.”

A continuous theme throughout all of Participant # 6's responses was the interplay between curriculum, instruction and assessment. Observations and artifacts from her school provided evidence of this as well.

In summary, the three themes that emerged from responses to this interview question were 1) relationship building, 2) monitoring by popping into classrooms and walking the building instead of spending all their time in the office and 3) engaging in and providing professional development for teachers.

Q6 - What Instructional Leaders Should Not Do

Two common themes marked participant responses to this question. The first was not to portray yourself as the "expert" to the staff. The second was to preserve relationships with the staff even when difficult conversations were needed.

Participants seemed to have difficulty responding to this question. The tape recordings of their responses provide evidence of this. There were numerous pauses and false starts. The tone of voice was often quiet, thoughtful or tentative. Initially, participants seemed to be searching for what to say. Several participants got side tracked and reverted back to saying what instructional leaders should do. The responses of the participants varied more widely on this question than any other. A sampling of the disparate elements found in participant responses is shown in the list below. The participant(s) that gave this response is also indicated.

1. Don't avoid irate parents (P1)
2. Don't model poor behavior (P1)

3. Don't interrupt instruction (P1)
4. Don't speak negatively about a teacher to a parent (P4)
5. Don't ask them [teachers] to do anything you wouldn't do (P11) (P8)
6. Don't spend all day in the office (P7)
7. Don't accept things the way they are (P7)
8. Don't break a confidence (P4)
9. Don't be inflexible (P7)
10. Don't make promises you cannot keep (P7)

Even though the responses varied widely, two themes emerged from the responses. The first was that instructional leaders should not "Think they know everything." (P6) Participant # 8 began her response with a similar sentence. "We shouldn't present ourselves as if we know everything and we have the answers for everything." However, she contradicted herself in her next sentence by saying, "Even though we are instructional leaders and we are the experts or should be the experts within the school we truly don't know everything."

Participant # 9 expanded on this idea and provided a possible solution. She said, "Don't think you know it all. I certainly don't. Be willing to put yourself out there and say I'm confused. I'm really poor in this area. Can you come in and help me or do you know someone that can come in to help me….I consider myself to be a learner too."

The second idea that emerged as common across the responses of several participants was related to preserving relationships with staff while still sharing your concern with them. The *don't* was described as ridicule, use vindictiveness

or power play. “You do not want to ridicule a teacher in the presence of any students.” (P8) A different respondent made this statement.

> Sometimes it’s [the principalship] a vindictive kind of position. Sometimes principals can be…like if sometimes if someone doesn’t do what they’re supposed to do, there tends to be that vindictive type of power play. I feel that as an instructional leader to get the most out of your teachers and programs the principal needs to be, um…not struggling for power, has to be a nice community where everybody shares ideas and people feel comfortable coming to talk to a principal…. and the principal is not threatening. (P12)

Participant # 10 explained this yet another way. He said,

> They should try not to criticize. If the person is off, they need to be given feedback but at the same time you don’t want to crush the person either. Some people have an easier time to adapt to things than others. So the ones that are having the difficulty, we have to talk to them, see where they are coming from and work from that point of view.

Participant # 2 gave a similar response.

> Never berate, even though sometimes you feel like it. Don’t confront a teacher in front of a class or their colleagues. I always try to praise in public and talk privately, pull them aside, all that kind of stuff. If I am going to go in to talk to them about what they need to correct or fix, I’d better have some suggestions on hand or somewhere they can go, or someone to work with.

In each of these responses, the participant was concerned with providing the feedback needed for the staff member to change or improve. However, it also appeared that respect and caring for the staff member and preserving the dignity of the staff member were equally important.

Q7 - Things Principals Would Like to Do Differently

The two clear themes that emerged were concerned with time and staff. Responses to this question were more closely aligned between the participants. There were far fewer different responses to this question than to the previous one.

Most respondents indicated a need to have more time for classroom visits and observation. One participant specifically spoke of wanting to mange her time "more effectively." The second theme that emerged was concerned with staffing. Participants generally wanted either additional staff or the opportunity to select their staff members.

Two unique responses did surface. The first came from Participant # 3. "I can't think of anything I would like to do differently, because I have been blessed with a place that has allowed me to do the things that I think are right, and has accepted it." Based on this statement it appeared that his assignment to this school was a good fit for both he and the school. Participant # 6 provided the second unique response. Among other things, she wanted to be able to better meet the needs of her failing students.

It is important to note that these interviews were conducted shortly after the completion of school budgets for the coming school year. Most schools had seen a reduction in their budgets, which frequently translated into a loss of staff positions due to fewer dollars to spend.

Q8 - *Challenges to Providing Instructional Leadership*

The strongest theme identified throughout the responses to this question was time. The secondary theme that emerged was the need for additional staff. Responses to this question were not lengthy or particularly varied. In this response, participants spoke of time for meetings, planning, and everything that must be done. Mentioned under the category of everything that must be done were things like discipline, paperwork, e-mails, community and parent involvement.

Participant # 6 initially responded, “I don’t think too much, because I won’t allow it”. Her sheer sense of determination to provide instructional leadership appeared to come through in this statement. She was the only participant that took this stance. A response given by Participant # 5 seemed more typical of what other participants attempted to convey. She said,

> What I had hoped to be was a pure instructional leader, but with the many demands of the jobs, I’m finding that to be extremely difficult…particularly now in an elementary school now where safety was never a concern, it is now a concern… ultimately I believe I am in charge of everything that happens on a day-to-day basis within this building, and instruction is one of them.

This response highlights the frustration felt by many principals concerning their role of instructional leadership.

Summary of Interview Data Analysis

From the interview questions, three major themes emerged regarding how principals view their role of instructional leader. The themes were 1) the importance of the role; 2) the complexity of the role and that 3) instructional leadership is only one of the roles a principal plays. Three themes emerged regarding how the principals implemented instructional leadership. The themes were 1) providing professional development, 2) monitoring and 3) relationship building. Professional development emerged as the strongest of the three themes. Analyses of responses to the six interview questions revealed professional development as an important theme that emerged in responses for five of the six questions. Interview question 6, what instructional leaders should not do, was the

only one for which professional development did not emerge as a theme from the responses.

With regard to the challenges principals must overcome to implement their role as instructional leader, two clear themes emerged. The two themes were time and not enough staff. Additional time most often was desired for use to monitor instruction in classrooms, meeting more often with staff to plan and to conduct professional development. Not having enough staff prevented principals from being able to spend as much time as they indicated they wanted to in classrooms.

Results of Artifact and On-Site Observation Data

In most locations artifact collection was difficult and not particularly fruitful because information related to instruction was not found in one central file or place. Instead it was spread among different binders, files, and even rooms and closets. Some items were actually kept in the principal's office. Other items were only accessible through files maintained by the secretary or a school based teacher leader. Some participants indicated that they did not really generate much printed material about instruction for their staff. As an example, Participant #9 said, "I don't do agendas and memos, I just talk with people directly." One participant indicated that, "Everything they [teachers] need is in the core curriculum." (P10) The core curriculum referred to was a grade specific document developed by the School District of Philadelphia that shows skills and concepts to be taught for each of the six six-week cycles of the school year. The core curriculum also contains weekly timeline, eligible content that will be assessed in state

assessments, materials coordinated to the lessons, an appendix that outlines teaching strategies and several other resources for teachers.

Artifacts collected showed that most participants seemed to rely heavily on pre-printed information that came from a central source outside the school such as the regional office or the school district's central office as their primary materials for professional development. These artifacts included scripts for professional development, PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) Test preparation reminders and tips for staff, parents and students.

I was able to collect a few samples of forms and memos related to instruction that had been generated at the school level. These forms were used to collect data about students and their performance, to provide feedback from participants to teachers as follow up to a classroom visit, remind teachers to attend to particular components, instructional strategies or timelines of the mandated core curriculum and instructional plan. I also found professional development and meeting agendas. These were plentiful across sites, but usually not particularly informative. Most were constructed using just bullet points or the names of the topics that were to be addressed during a particular session. For example, an agenda taken from school #3 showed the following:

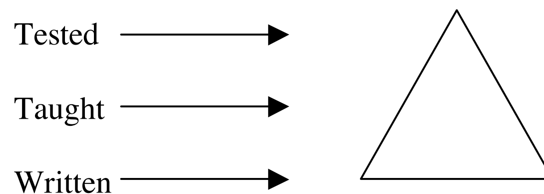
Welcome and Goal Setting

a) Goals and Objectives

b) AYP

c) Phi Delta Kappa Audit

What are we doing to promote student success?



Another example was provided in an agenda taken from school #7.

February 16, 2007

12:15-1:00: General Announcements

Principal: Ms. (P7)

PFT : Name

Literacy Leader: Name

Math Leader: Name

1:00 -2:00 School Net Review: Using the Princeton Review screen to create tests in preparation for the PSSA/Review Constructed Responses

2:00 – 2:45 Grade Group Meetings

This format of listing topics was typical of what the researcher found in agendas across sites. From these artifacts the researcher could only speculate that additional information was provided or distributed at the meeting.

The researcher was able to find samples of communication to parents at all the schools visited. Most of these were printed documents such as newsletters, Home and School meeting or workshop announcements, agenda from those meetings, or PSSA test taking tips, school calendars, and notices of early dismissals. The newsletters did not always contain information about instruction.

In contrast to what I was able to find at most schools, school 6 was a treasure trove of print documents that contained instructional information. There was so much available that it was impossible to review it all during one site visit. A few examples follow. This school had a room where regularly updated displays of a variety of data related to instruction were on display. On the day of my visit, there were charts explaining two instructional strategies. Student work samples showing the strategies in use were attached to the charts. An individual 3X5 card for each low performing student was displayed on the wall. The card showed a record of the student's reading level and the dates of his or her progression from one level to the next. There were charts that had been used to capture the ideas or main points from the latest team meeting regarding instructional strategies for reading that would be used in classrooms. I was able to review a completed form from a team meeting held with a parent to discuss a student's progress. The form showed who was present, the areas of need, the goals for improvement, and the intervention and strategies that teachers and parent would use, and the next meeting date. The classrooms were rich with hand made charts that show strategies for students to use during learning activities.

The school sites were located in various neighborhoods throughout the city of Philadelphia. All sites seemed orderly, pleasant, and well managed. They had a welcoming feel to them. At most sites it was obvious that my visit was expected and the researcher was warmly received by the office staff and the principal. Most participants were not in their offices when I arrived. While I

waited, I was able to observe interaction in the office and talk with a student or teacher that happened to be in the office.

In some sites children could not be heard from the office. In others, children's voices were heard periodically as a class passed in the hall. In some buildings whole class instruction seemed to be common and the classrooms were arranged in traditional rows. The children were attentive but worked more quietly in these classes than in those where small groups were at work. In other sites, both whole class and small group instruction were evident. In some classrooms, children did quite a bit of talking, discussion, explaining, while in others, they did not.

When the researcher toured the building with the principal, most referred to students we encountered by name. The exchange between the principal and the student was respectful and pleasant. The principal usually inquired about the student's destination. In some cases the principal told me a brief story about the student highlighting an accomplishment, issue or concern. In all cases the principal seemed to be well received by the student. The exchange between them was easy and friendly. Students were not aimlessly roaming the halls in any of these school sites. For the most part, engaging instruction was evident in well-managed classrooms.

In summary, the artifacts collected reflected two of the themes that emerged from responses to the interview questions. Those themes were monitoring and professional development. I found a sampling of documents at every school that addressed these components of instructional leadership that

were so often mentioned by the participants in this study. Typical artifacts collected across the sites included:

1. Professional development agendas (these were divided into whole staff and grade group meeting agendas)
2. Classroom visit or walk through feed back sheets
3. Descriptions of a teaching strategy
4. Newsletters to parents
5. Brochure about the school
6. Tips for taking the PSSA
7. Tips for parents to help their child prepare for the PSSA

Artifacts collected did corroborate the descriptions respondents gave regarding the provision of professional development for the staff and monitoring during the interviews. The artifacts, however, did not appear to provide rich descriptions of the instructional messages the principals were trying to convey to the staff nor did they address all seven of the responsibilities associated with second order change. Instead only two of the second order change responsibilities, knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment through professional development and monitoring were evident in the artifacts collected. Evidence of the other five was missing.

With regard to the on-site observations, the sites in this study were all identified by their school district as Best Practices Schools. Therefore it would have been unusual to find that the schools were not well managed and that instruction was not taking place in classrooms. However, observations taken at

the sites primarily showed evidence of a traditional, business as usual instructional program rather than evidence of something unique and innovative that would have signaled a dramatic departure from tradition or that deep change was in progress.

Chapter Summary

Data were collected in this study for the purpose of answering the two research questions of the study. The two research questions were:

1. How do elementary and middles school principals view and implement their role as instructional leader?

1a. What challenges must principals overcome to implement the role of instructional leader?

Data were collected using three methods. The primary data collection method was in depth interviews. In addition, observations were conducted at the school sites and artifacts were collected.

In response to the first research question, the interview data showed that elementary and middle school principals perceive themselves to be the instructional leader of their school. According to the data the principals viewed their role as instructional leader to be important, complex, multifaceted and only one of the many roles they play as a principal. The data also showed that the elementary and middle school principals implemented their role of instructional leadership primarily by providing professional development for teachers directed at improving instruction, by monitoring the instruction in classrooms and by building relationships, particularly with the staff.

In response to the second research question of this study, the data most often showed that time and staffing were the challenges that principals must overcome to implement the role of instructional leadership. The respondents felt they needed more time to visit in classrooms, meet with staff to discuss instruction, plan and provide professional development. The participants felt that time for these aspects of their work was limited due to the other daily demands of the principalship. All but two of the principals in this study did not have assistant principals. The two principals with assistant principals and those without felt challenged by not having more staff. Respondents explained that if they had additional staff they would be able to delegate some of the non-instructional leadership components of their work to the additional staff members. Not having to handle those tasks would expand the amount of time the participant would have to spend on the instructional elements of their leadership. It is interesting to note that these two challenges were usually linked together. If a participant named time as the first challenge the second was staffing. When a participant named staffing first, he or she named time second.

In the next chapter, a summary and discussion of these findings and implication for future studies in the area of instructional leadership and the preparation for it will be presented.

Chapter 5: Summary and Discussion

This final chapter of the study first presents a summary of the research problem, methods used to conduct the study and results of the study followed by the researcher's conclusions, an explanation of the significance of the study and implications for future research and practice, and limitations of the study.

As described in chapter one of this study, the principal's leadership role has been recognized as one of importance in determining effectiveness of the school in educating its students. It is also generally recognized that contributing factors such as an ideological shift from behaviorism to constructivism, persistently low student achievement and the shifting expectations of employers, parents and the community have led to an evolution in the role of the principal as an instructional leader (Marsh, 2000; Senge, 2000; Lambert, 2003; Marzano, Walters, and McNulty, 2005; Ruff and Shoho, 2005). The focus of instructional leadership moved from management and supervision to one of shared leadership and change thereby increasing the complexity of the role.

While the role of instructional leadership has undergone changes, most administration preparation programs have remained fairly traditional and have been slow to change. According to Levine (2005) "our nation faces the challenge of retooling current principals and superintendents while preparing a new generation of school leaders to take their places" (p. 5). However, as explained by Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPoine, Meyerson (2005), "existing knowledge on the best way to prepare and develop highly qualified candidates is sparse" (p. 20).

A better understanding of what principals do as instructional leaders could provide insight into the type of skill development and learning experiences administration preparation programs might develop to prepare candidates for the principalship. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to uncover the actual lived experiences of urban elementary and middle school principals regarding their perceptions of instructional leadership and how they implement their role as instructional leader.

Two research questions guided the study. They were:

1. How do elementary and middle school principals view and implement their role as instructional leader?

1a. What challenges must principals overcome to implement the role of instructional leader?

Qualitative methods were used to conduct this phenomenological study. A phenomenological study was undertaken because during the review of literature the researcher was unable to find any phenomenological studies that had been conducted with urban principals regarding their view of instructional leadership and their implementation of it. Data were collected through recorded, in depth, face-to-face interviews conducted with 10 elementary school principals and two middle school principals in naturalistic settings where artifacts were also collected and observations were made. Participants were solicited from a pool of 26 principals identified as the principal of a school recognized by the School District of Philadelphia as a Best Practice School in December 2006. Participants were included in the study based on the order of their response to an invitational letter

and follow up phone call that invited participation in the study. Appointments were arranged for the first 13 respondents to reply to the invitational letter or follow up phone call. After several cancelled interview appointments, one participant withdrew from the study leaving a total of 12 participants in this study.

Summary of Results

Data were collected in this research study to answer the two research questions stated earlier. To guide the in depth, face-to-face interviews, a series of eight interview questions was used (see Appendix D). Interview questions 1-6 were designed to answer research question 1: How do elementary and middle school principals view and implement their role as instructional leader? From responses to the interview questions regarding how principals view their role of instructional leader, three major themes emerged. They were 1) the importance of the role, 2) the complexity of the role, and 3) that instructional leadership is only one of the many roles a principal plays. Three major themes also emerged from the responses to the interview questions regarding how the participants implemented their role as instructional leader. They were 1) providing professional development, 2) monitoring and 3) relationship building.

Interview questions 7 and 8 were designed to answer research question 1a: What challenges must principals overcome to implement the role of instructional leader?

Reponses to the interview questions concerning challenges principals must overcome to implement instructional leadership revealed two clear themes. The themes were not enough time and not enough staff. Participants most often

described their need for more time to spend in classrooms monitoring instruction and meeting with staff to discuss, plan and conduct professional development related to instruction. Not having enough staff to delegate leadership and managerial responsibilities to was usually seen as forcing the principal to spend less time visiting classrooms or engaging in deep discussion with teachers about instruction due to the need to spend time addressing the myriad of other tasks and responsibilities of the principalship.

Data collected from artifacts and observations provided additional perspectives of a participant's implementation of instructional leadership, corroboration of the perceptions shared by participants during the in depth interviews, and an opportunity to look for similarities or dissimilarities across sites. Artifact analysis validated that 1) principals did indeed provide professional development on instructional topics during grade/group meetings, early dismissal and staff development days and 2) principals did visit classrooms to monitor instruction. Artifacts collected regarding professional development and classroom visits mainly consisted of agendas from professional development sessions and classroom visit feedback sheets or checklists. The agendas were usually constructed to show the topics that would be covered, but did not include the content to be delivered. Classroom feedback sheets were generally organized as checklist with space for a brief comment. The items in the checklists varied from location to location. However, the items were organized around similar categories used to monitor instruction such as classroom management and procedures, quality of instruction, quality of student engagement, appearance of learning

environment, and teacher interaction with students. Artifacts reflected existence of monitoring and professional development focused on curriculum, instruction and assessment across all sites. These are two of the seven responsibilities that must be addressed for second order change to take place. As previously stated, according to Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005, p. 66) there are 7 responsibilities associated with second order or deep change that must be addressed simultaneously. The 7 responsibilities are:

1. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
2. Optimizer [provides optimistic view of what the school is accomplishing and what the school can accomplish]
3. Intellectual Stimulation
4. Change Agent [challenges school practices and promotes value of working outside one's comfort zone]
5. Monitoring/Evaluating
6. Flexibility [invites variety of opinions and engages in situational leadership]
7. Ideals/Belief

Evidence of responsibilities 1, 3, and 5 were present in the artifacts. There was no evidence of that the other four responsibilities necessary for dramatic deep change to occur were present.

Observations conducted at each site provided the researcher with a context for the instructional leadership described by each participant. The schools for the most part, felt busy and bustling even when students were not visible or in some

cases not even heard from the office. Observations made at the sites primarily showed evidence of a traditional, business as usual instructional program rather than evidence of something unique and innovative signaling a dramatic departure from tradition or that deep change was in progress.

Evidence of relationships was abundant. The researcher observed discussions between staff members that provided evidence of friendships beyond work, concern for each other and each other's families, sharing resources, interest in students, and concern for students and their learning. Observations of interaction between the principals and individual staff members revealed that the interaction between staff members and principals was comfortable and friendly as evidenced by the relaxed smiles and body language, joking with each other, and continuances from previous conversations. Most conversations were quick and purposeful involving an exchange of just-in-time information about the schedule, meetings, due dates, students, parents and programs. No one lingered or lounged. Every school felt hurried. Generally speaking the interior of each school was pleasant and welcoming to visitors. Student work displays were colorful, reflective of concepts being taught and visible in the classrooms and many hallways. Schools where instruction followed the more traditional whole class led by the teacher model were generally more quiet than those where many classrooms had small groups working in the classrooms.

Conclusions of the Study

Based on the results of the data collected the researcher drew threw conclusions from this study. They were:

1. The role of the principal as an instructional leader continues to be complex, multifaceted and ambiguous.
2. Principals, as instructional leaders, do not seem to link professional development, monitoring and relationship building with building the capacity in others to share leadership across the school community or to implement deep second order change.
3. Urban elementary and middle schools should be staffed differently and scheduled differently to allow principals the time that is necessary to engage in their most important role – instructional leadership.

The first conclusion of this study was that the role of the principal, as an instructional leader, continues to be complex, multifaceted and ambiguous. Results from the interview questions made it clear that although participants, in their daily practice, often spoke about the responsibilities and roles of the principalship and instructional leadership separately the two roles overlapped and were intertwined. Each influenced the other. The description given by participant #4 provides an example in support of this conclusion.

> I perceive my role as the instructional leader of the building. I perceive my role as the operational manager of the building to ensure that everything is working effectively to make the conditions for learning at the optimum. I staff the building. I prepare the supplies for the building. I prepare the roster for the building and all the thought processes are geared to create optimal conditions for students to learn. I'm conscious of when I place classrooms for specialists periods. I'm conscious of student placement in classrooms. (P4)

In this example, the participant alludes to everything that goes on in the building focused on creating conditions that will lead to student learning. Also in this

example, we see evidence that the role as an instructional leadership is intertwined with other roles for which the principal usually takes responsibility.

In another example of the complexity of the role of instructional leadership was highlighted in a response given by participant #8 who said, “My role as principal is just a role of multiple responsibilities. First and foremost I’m the instructional leader and after that I’m everything else.” In the response provided by this participant other duties that included facilities, parent involvement, community involvement, lunchroom manager, office manager, disciplinarian, equipment and materials manager were also listed.

The review of the literature presented in Chapter Two of this dissertation provided evidence of early recognition regarding the complexity and ambiguousness of the instructional leadership role. Findings from Edmonds’ research, conducted in 1979, showed that without strong administrative leadership the “disparate elements of good schooling can neither be brought together nor kept together” (p. 22). Four characteristics identified by Bossert (1988) provided a look at how complex the role of the principal as instructional leader was then. The characteristics were described as goals and production, power and strong decision-making, effective management, and strong human relations. These elements seemed to still characterize instructional leadership today even though the literature tells us the role has evolved. Recent assertions supporting the multifaceted nature of the role were provided by Schmoker (2005) who wrote that “buffers”, non instructional aspects that demand the principal’s attention, can divert attention from instruction and “ensures that building principals will know

very little about what teachers teach, or how they teach" (Schmoker, 2005, p.411). An example taken from the interview data collected from participant #2 during this study illustrates Schmoker's assertion. The participant said, "I feel my job, my biggest job is to support them [teachers], to protect them from all the stuff of the school district; the paperwork, and the demands, and the parents sometimes and all that to allow them to be able to do their job to the best of their ability" (P#2). Further support can be found in the research of Mitchell and Castle (2005) who identified three sets of tensions that affect the participants approach to leadership. The three sets of tension speak to the ambiguous, multifaceted nature of the role. They are proactive and reactive; facilitative and directive; and building consensus and gaining compliance (pp. 417-418). Evidence of these tensions runs through the data collected in this study. Consider the description given by participant #3 during the interview. "So to spend more time in classrooms would be to ignore the little cancers, things that could be going wrong. Mt conscious choice is to make sure that if there is something that could potentially go wrong I'm there and then it doesn't have to reach the floors, it doesn't reach the classrooms." The tension of whether to visit in classrooms or turn his attention to little things that can potentially grow larger an disrupt instruction exists in the day-to-day work of instructional leaders and must be addressed on a daily basis.

The 6 ISLLC standards for school administrators identified by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996), recognized by most states as the foundational standards guiding

administration preparation and licensure programs, provide additional support for the conclusion that the role of the principal as an instructional leader continues to be complex, ambiguous, and multifaceted. These widely adopted standards set expectations that principals will "promote the success of all students" through attention to establishing a vision, managing the school climate, operations and resources to create a safe, fair environment that is conducive to both student achievement and professional growth of staff and responds to and influences the broader community in which the school is situated (see Appendix B).

It is important to note that there seems to be general agreement in the educational community and across the participants in this study that instructional leadership is the central role of the principal. Even so, in addition to instructional leadership, there are a myriad of other issues concerning facilities, safety, accountability and regulations, budget, resource attainment and management, and parental involvement that must still be addressed on a regular, if not daily, basis in schools. The principal is still the person who has final responsibility for all of them. Illustrations of this could be found in most of the interview data collected. Several examples were provided earlier.

The second conclusion of this study was that principals, as instructional leaders, do not seem to link professional development, monitoring and relationship building with building the capacity in others to share leadership across the school community or implementing deep second order change. As discussed earlier, the position of principal or instructional leader is complex, ambiguous, and multifaceted. It is often characterized by challenges and

constraints as well. As a result, rarely can one person be expected to do it all. Instead, the literature suggests that principals should work through the adult community in the school. With regard to instructional leadership, this is especially true since teachers teach students not principals (Marsh, 2000, p. 129 and Lambert, 2003, p. 4).

Data collected during the current study showed that instructional leaders often cited using professional development and monitoring as ways to improve instruction. The data collected did not show that the participants in the study linked professional development to changing instruction or student outcomes - only improving it. Analysis of the data also showed that participants did not link professional development to building leadership capacity in others or enhancing the leadership capacity in recognized leaders in the building. Illustrations of can be seen in the responses given by 2 participants. Participant #12 provided this example.

> I mean as an instructional leader I guided the whole faculty through the professional development for school improvement and we looked at data, we looked at strategies and we looked at reading levels and we looked at them by gender, by grade, and then by gender in each grade so we could improve what we are doing.

Participant #8 responded that,

> Everything that we ask teachers to do here we provide professional development from benchmark protocol, to grade keeper, to teaching strategies, to monitoring tools. Anything that is going to help the teacher become a better instructor, we provide that professional development to our teachers.

Both responses are typical of those provided by other respondents in this study. The focus is on school improvement and improving instruction. The reason most

often associated with professional development by the principals in this study was to improve instruction. Neither response explicitly linked professional development to building leadership capacity in others or to changing student outcomes, two of the standards cited in the ISLLC standards.

Artifacts collected at the study sites usually listed the principal as the facilitator or leader of professional development. In addition the artifacts also showed that the literacy or mathematics leader of the school sometimes led portions of professional development sessions. These school leaders are usually teachers that have been either fully or partially released from the responsibility of a teaching roster to support teacher and student learning in a variety of ways. However, in the description provided by the principals during the interviews it was rare that a reference was made to teacher leaders providing professional development even though close examination of the professional development agendas did show teacher leaders often listed as facilitators or leaders of some portion of professional development sessions. References that principals made to professional development during the interviews placed the principal in the role of facilitator or leader not learner or mentor.

In contrast to what the participants of this study described, Drago-Severson's research (2004) establishes a four point learning-oriented model of school leadership which recognized principals as key figures in supporting teacher learning but moved the principal from the "expert" or "authority role into the role of sharing leadership with others in the school through teaming, collegial inquiry, mentoring and providing leadership roles to others. Support for Drago-

Serverson's research can be found in the research of Spillane, Hallett, and Diamond (2003) who found that the principal was most often described as an instructional leader by teachers when he or she used an interactive style, referred to as cultural capital, that placed the principal in relationship with teachers and that a teacher's instructional practice was more likely to change when the types of relationships established did not place the principal in the role of "expert". In contrast, leadership styles that created relationships in which the principal was placed in the role of "expert", the provider of materials or money, or that set him or her apart from the teacher group, had a negative effect on changing the practices of teachers.

With respect to change, it is the principal as an instructional leader that is charged with changing the student achievement outcomes (Wagner, Kegan, et. al., 2006, p. 11). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005, p. 66) spoke of two types of change. As previously mentioned, Marzano, et. al, described first order change as "incremental" and second order change as a "drastic departure from the expected." Traits associated with second level change as described in Chapter Two, focus on communicating strong ideals and beliefs; knowledge of the curriculum, instruction and assessment; inspiring and leading new innovations; maintaining flexibility and a climate that regularly supports discussion of current theories and practices; and monitoring and evaluating student learning as it is impacted by programs and practices.

Typically, responses given by the principals in this study addressed 3 of the 7 responsibilities associated with second order change. Those 3

responsibilities were knowledge of the curriculum, instruction and assessment, discussion of current practices and monitoring. The other four responsibilities were absent from the data collected with two exceptions that will be addressed later.

Professional development with a focus on curriculum, instruction and assessment with the goal of improving instruction has already been discussed. Participants presented no evidence that led the researcher to conclude that the participants saw professional development as a tool for building leadership capacity in others for the purpose of changing the leadership structure to one in which leadership is shared across the school community. Additionally descriptions given regarding professional development did not indicate that information on the latest research was part of the professional development discussion.

Participants spoke of improving instruction and referred to how they implemented their instructional leadership by addressing the types of responsibilities Marzano, Water, and McNulty listed as those of first order change. In addition to providing professional development, other examples included in the participants' responses were:

1. Providing materials
2. Ensuring a safe environment
3. Understanding personalities and building relationships
4. Modeling for teachers
5. Being visible

6. Maintaining order
7. Communicating with everyone
8. Reviewing data

These responsibilities are categorized by Marzano, Water, and McNulty (2005, p. 66) as those that are necessary for first order change or the next logical step.

It is important to note that participant responses and artifacts collected on site did indicate that the instructional leaders in this study recognized the importance of being knowledgeable about the curriculum, instruction and assessment and that the analysis of student data was a focus for some. This is one of the traits identified that lead to deep change. However, for second order, or deep change to occur, all seven of the traits or actions must be taken in unison. The data collected showed that 10 of the 12 participants in this study generally addressed three responsibilities associated with second order change.

Two participants provided evidence of addressing a fourth responsibility of second order change. One addressed strong ideals and beliefs and the other addressed the importance of flexibility. Participant #6 provided strong evidence of strong ideals and beliefs she communicates to her staff members. She said,

> I hope you hear me say advanced all the time [in reference to student achievement levels and performance] because we don't talk about proficient [student performance] here. If you talk about proficient you'll get basic or proficient. If we say advanced we'll get proficient or advanced.

This participant also reported that, "so many good things have happened here." These included national recognition of her school, 33 parent volunteers, making AYP, and being identified as a best practice school. Observations made at

the school corroborated her response cited above. There were banners and bulletin boards dedicated to celebrations of consistently high monthly student attendance (above 90% each month), photographs of winners of a regional essay contest, and charts showing how many books the students have read during the year.

Participant #7 addressed the responsibility of flexibility as identified by Marzano, et. al. (2005, p. 66) as it relates to second order change. In her response she included,

> [Instructional leaders] can't be inflexible you have to allow teachers to experiment with different strategies, different models and improve from the appoint. See how it works out. I think principals shouldn't be closed minded that's what it is – give teachers some flexibility and some level of ownership to try different things to see how it works out. There has to be a level of flexibility there.

Finally relationship building, the third way that participants said they implement their instructional leadership, was also not linked to sharing leadership across the building or as a part of building the capacity in others to lead. Instead when participants referred to relationship building, they usually connected its importance to the smooth operation of the school. Several illustration of how the principals viewed relationship building are provided. Participant #2 put it this way.

> You can't treat everyone the same. You've got to understand people's personalities, their needs, their desires, what's going on in their life. So, okay, this teacher, I can give her four [extra] kids today. I can't do that tomorrow, but I can do it today when I'm splitting the class up.

Another illustration is seen in the response provided by participant #3, who said,

> The teachers who are here, they have made this a family and they've made a commitment to each other and to me and to the pparents and to the

> children that they are here everyday, they are prepared and we don't have vandalism, we don't have graffiti, we don't have fighting.

The final example is taken from a response given by participant #12 who said,

> You try to give people an opportunity to be, you know real people. This whole thing of riding people hard who are absent or tardy…. It's important, but at the same time you have to exercise some discretion. If there's illness in the family, if there are other distractions in people's lives, you have to be sensitive to it.

These statements directly illustrate relationship building as it is viewed by the principals in this study. These statements are also illustrative of the research on emotional intelligence conducted by McDowelle and Buckner (2002). McDowelle and Buckner (2002) focused on the emotional side of leadership. Relationship building is fundamental to the instructional leadership work of principals. In order for instructional leaders to use the knowledge and skills associated with emotional intelligence, they must first understand what it is and develop the necessary skills to use it effectively. According to McDowelle and Buckner, "skills such as listening, persuading, motivating resolving conflicts, and communicating are the backbone of school leadership and are based in emotional knowledge and direction." (2002, p. 117)

However, McDowelle and Buckner (2002) also suggest that with respect to change and building capacity in others a key role for instructional leaders is to help teachers cope with the sense of loss that comes during the change process as "old realities and old identities must die before new realities and new identities can be established. (p. 97)" The continual development of knowledge and skills regarding emotional intelligence for current instructional leaders is important and should be undertaken by school districts and universities.

<u>The third conclusion drawn in this study was that urban elementary and middle schools should be staffed differently or scheduled differently to allow principals the time that is necessary to engage in their most important role – instructional leadership.</u>

An earlier conclusion focused on recognition that the work of the principal is complex, ambiguous and multifaceted. It is also widely accepted that the principal is the instructional leader of the school. Taken together, these two statements are supported by Hessel and Holloway who wrote, "Now, it's agreed that the principal is – should be, must be – in charge of learning. Traditional management and discipline duties, however, have not disappeared. Extraordinary demands have been placed on principals today making their jobs in many instances simply not doable." (Hessel and Holloway, 2002, p. vi)

Participants in this study generally indicated that they were challenged by time and staffing. The general theme that emerged from their responses was that having additional staff would free them from some of their non instructional responsibilities which would allow them to increase the amount of time they spend on instructional leadership tasks and responsibilities such as visiting classrooms to observe instruction, meeting more often with teachers to plan, reflect or provide more professional development. It is important to note that with the exception of two participants in this study, the others did not have an assistant principal to share the administrative duties. Additional staff in the form of an assistant principal or additional support staff that could be assigned to manage some of the non-instructional components of the job such as budget, resource

management, discipline, or facilities so the principal could focus more on instruction. Illustration of this is provided in a response given by participant #12 who said, “If I had an assistant principal, I’d love to just, you know, disappear and g into the classrooms and stay in the classrooms and hopefully someone will fill in the other duties.” Participant #5 put it this way.

> If I could have someone else manage all of the nonsense that’s not instruction and them I could be classrooms more. So if I could have a CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and I could be the CAO (Chief Academic Officer) within my building then I think I could be a much better instructional leader.

A second theme related to this conclusion emerged as an alternate challenge faced by instructional leaders. It was time. Just as additional staff might create more time for instructional leaders to attend to elements of their work pertaining to instruction, if the attendance of students and staff was scheduled differently, more undivided time the instructional leaders are looking for would be created. It would allow them to meet more often with staff and observe more often in classrooms. As an example, if the students attended school for six hours a day and the staff was required to work for eight hours each day. Another possibility is that if students attended school four days a week for six hours a day and staff was required to work five days a week for seven hours each day.

Participant #2 offered a different suggestion when she said, “I’d like for us to go back to, you know the kids get out early on Tuesday, we have that hour and then we have an hour after. I think it would be much smoother, much more efficient use of time and everything else.”

Either of these possibilities would provide chunks of uninterrupted time that could be reserved for adult learners to meet, plan, reflect, and learn together in ways that would build the leadership capacity of many others so that the principal would be able to function more as a coordinator of instructional leaders than as the sole instructional leader in the building. This would allow schools to function better from the modern perspective shown in Table 2, in Chapter Two of this study. In that table, the modern perspective presents the principal as an instructional leader that is expected to lead change from a constructivist approach in ways that empower teachers and foster shared leadership based on expertise that is shared across a learning community where everyone is focused on learning.

Little evidence was found in responses of the principals to support shared leadership or building capacity of staff members toward a shared leadership perspective. Many of the respondents indicated in their responses that they felt challenged by not having enough time to meet and plan with staff members. We could infer from this that if additional time was dedicated for collaboration between the staff and principal that principals, who perceive themselves as having too many responsibilities might be willing to move toward a shared leadership model. Movement toward this type of model requires adjustments and preparation of the principal and others that expect to share leadership of the school. Preparation could take place during professional development sessions. A starting point might be using the 10 skills, understandings and dispositions identified by Lambert (2003, p. 50) to help develop shared leadership capacity in a school. Lambert listed these as:

1. Knowing yourself and clarifying your values
2. Knowing the history and needs of the school and leadership qualities of the staff
3. Assessing the leadership capacity of the school
4. Working from the school's present state and collectively moving toward improvement
5. Building trust
6. Developing norms
7. Establishing rules for making decisions
8. Developing a shared vision
9. Developing leadership capacity in others
10. Establishing a leadership/design team

Relationship building is an important aspect in the work of instructional leaders. Support for this assertion is found in the research of McDowelle and Buckner (2002) and Lambert (2003). The research of both McDowelle and Buckner (2002) and Lambert (2003) extended further than the descriptions provided by participants in this study. McDowelle and Buckner (2002) asserted that instructional leaders should use emotional intelligence to help teachers overcome the sense of loss they might feel during the change process. Lambert (2003) described 10 elements principals could develop to support shared leadership. The participants in this study and artifacts collected did not provide evidence of either in their responses.

Significance, Implications and Recommendations For Research and Practice

The three conclusions of this study share two underlying themes. First all the conclusions point to a level of complexity regarding various aspects of instructional leadership. Complexity is an underlying condition found in how principals view themselves as instructional leaders and how they implement that leadership. Second, the conclusions indicate the need for a tighter connection between theory, scholarly expertise and practitioners to create educational systems that work in harmony to provide the developmental training and ongoing support needed to produce instructional leaders that can move our students to the achievement levels they deserve.

As evidenced in the discussion of the conclusions, this research study builds on previous research studies on the topic of instructional leadership. The phenomenological methodology used for this study contributes to the increasing number of researchers that are using the qualitative methods to study instructional leadership.

Support and Extensions of the Study

This qualitative study was limited to one urban school district in the southeast region of Pennsylvania. Additional data gathering and analysis across several school districts within the state, or across the nation using the eight interview questions, collecting artifacts and conducting observations would be helpful in supporting the conclusions of this study more fully.

Leadership style, age, school staffing pattern, number of years as principal of the school and preparation for the position of instructional leadership were not

considered on an in-depth level for this study. It may be interesting to study whether school staffing pattern combined with some other demographic makes a difference in how one views instructional leadership and its implementation. Indication of this research potential can be found in the artifact data collected that showed two sites had assistant principals. Neither principal of these sites mentioned their assistant principals until it was discovered in one of the artifacts reviewed at the site prompting the researcher to inquire about the presence of an assistant principal on staff. It would be useful to understand what effect, if any, having or not having an assistant principal has on the principal's view of his or her own instructional leadership and its implementation.

While principals all named professional development as one of the ways they implement their instructional leadership, they did not go much beyond listing the formats in which professional development was provided. Those formats generally consisted of workshops, grade/group meetings and content area meetings. A more in-depth investigation into the purpose, content, and context for professional development principals provide for teachers as well as changes in teacher practice that result from it would provide more insight about how principals, as instructional leaders, understand the effects of the professional development they provide.

Finally, preparation to become a principal is another area that has relevance in shaping how a principal views his or her instructional leadership. Throughout this study changes in the role of principals as the instructional leader have been addressed.

The literature tells us that university administration preparation programs have generally not kept pace with the changes needed to be an effective instructional leader today. Support for this assertion is provided through the research of Petzko, Clark, Valentine, Hackman, Nori, and Lucas, (2002); Portin, et. al. (2003); Barnett (2004); Levine (2005); and others who provided discouraging evidence in which practitioners described the course work of their university administration preparation program to be of little valuable in preparing them for their role as instructional leader.

We have known since 1987, when the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration issued its report, that there was a disconnect between the preparation principals were receiving in educational administration programs and what they were being expected to do as practitioners. The report titled, *Leaders For American Schools*, identified problems in eight areas, five of which were directly related to preparation programs. Barnett (2004, p. 122), citing Black (2000), wrote that only a quarter of principals were prepared to be effective instructional leaders today. A recent case study conducted by Levine (2005), using nine quality criteria to study twenty-eight schools and department of education also found “the majority of the programs to range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country’s leading universities” (2005, p. 23).

The literature suggests that in addition to problems related to self selection of candidates for the programs, irrelevant curriculum, and low admission and graduation standards, the faculty is often weak (Tucker and Codding, 2002) and

Levine (2005, p. 36). This raised an interesting tension. Using practitioners as instructors, usually categorized as adjunct professors, who are familiar with the work places them in a position of "teaching in areas where they lack scholarly expertise" (p. 36). At the other end, a full time professor may have the scholarly expertise, but their "greatest short coming is being disconnected from practice" (Levine, 2005, p. 37).

It was noted earlier that the role of the principal as an instructional leader has and continues to evolve. Administration preparation programs that prepare instructional leaders will continue to be important. However, they must change to provide course work and learning experiences that reflect the knowledge and skills needed by today's instructional leaders to lead school as the schools are currently staffed and scheduled until such time that they might change.

The literature provides many suggestions about what could be done to better prepare instructional leaders to meet the demands of the job. They include a wide range of recommendations such as elimination of incentives that promote low quality in educational leadership (Levine, 2005, p. 63); drawing faculty from across schools and departments of the university (Hallinger and Snidvongs, 2005, p.28); using a cohort model to organize learners and emphasizing reflective practice (Lauder, 2000); using authentic instructional practices and assessments that draw on the integration of technology and mirror practitioners' experiences, activities and schedules (Barnett, 2004,p. 126); and closing inadequate programs (Levine, 2005, p. 63). Repeatedly, the literature suggests that there should be inclusion of practitioner voices in preparation programs.

This study also provides support for changes needed in preparation programs. When one compares the responses of participants in this study to modern perspective on leadership shown in Chapter Two, Table 2, Instructional Leadership of Principals – Then and Now, it is evident that the perspectives of the participants do not fully reflect the modern perspective shown in the table. As an example, principals in this study mainly viewed professional development as sessions they provided to improve instruction. Professional development was not described as an ongoing discussion based on research and best practice that was designed to build capacity in staff students and parents that would lead to the development of shared leadership nor was it described as connected to changing student outcomes.

The results of data analysis in this study point to three reoccurring themes identified by urban practitioners regarding how they implement their role as the instructional leader by providing professional development, monitoring, and building relationships. Based on the results of data collected in this research study these three dimensions of instructional leadership are important for inclusion in administration preparation programs. However, preparation programs need to be designed to develop the knowledge and skills instructional leaders need to implement second order or deep change that will lead to the bold student achievement results desired in our schools. This may require that universities themselves use the seven responsibilities of second order change to guide the redesign of their programs.

A more in-depth investigation into what effective principals view as the essential skills, knowledge, and learning experiences needed to prepare for the role of instructional leadership could inform the design of university preparation programs to make them relevant to the environments in which practitioners work.

Limitations

This phenomenological study concerned itself with the perceptions of the participants regarding the phenomena of their own instructional leadership. This study confined itself to 12 specific participants and the artifacts and observations made at their schools. The insights and themes that emerged and were presented in Chapter Four of this study were self-described perceptions and interpretations provided by the participants in the study. The results of this study cannot be generalized to all urban elementary and middle schools. The conclusions drawn can be open to other interpretations and analysis.

Summary

The principals in this study perceived themselves to be the instructional leader of their schools. In addition they view the role of instructional leader as the most important of all the roles they play. However, their implementation of the instructional leadership role is challenging because it is embedded in the role of principal and together the roles are complex, multifaceted, and ambiguous. The managerial, day-to-day issues that need to be addressed interfere with the time the principals can spend implementing their leadership in the area of instruction. The reason they give for the interference is related to a staffing pattern that places the responsibility for everything that happens in the building in the hands of the

principal. Instructional leaders described themselves as implementing their leadership in three ways. Based on their own perceptions they 1) provide professional development, 2) the monitor in classrooms and 3) build relationships with staff members.

The modern perspective of instructional leadership as shown in Chapter Two, Table 2, includes seven characteristics. They are 1) lead change, 2) a constructivist approach, 3) shared/indirect decision making and leading, 4) focus on learning, 5) expertise shared across learning community, 6) empower teachers, and 7) leading not managing status quo. Instructional leaders of today must develop knowledge and skills that will allow them to embody the modern characteristics of instructional leadership that are necessary to make bold changes that will result in increased student achievement.

The important role of administration preparation programs in preparing instructional leaders cannot be overlooked or minimized. Redesigning these programs to prepare the future instructional leaders we need for our schools will require a thoughtful mixture of research, theory, practitioners voices, course work, reflection and authentic learning experiences that can be implemented in schools designed to support the success of both students and staff.

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Appendix A

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE
Office of Accountability, Assessment & Intervention
440 North Broad Street, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19130

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Tel.: (215) 400-4260
FAX: (215) 400-4252

February 15, 2007

Ms. Cassandra Ruffin
624 Burnham Road
Philadelphia, PA 19119

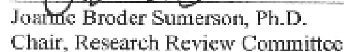
Dear Ms. Ruffin:

Please allow this letter to serve as notice that The School District of Philadelphia, through its Research Review Committee has granted you expedited approval to commence your research entitled, ***"A Phenomenological Study of Instructional Leadership and Preparation: Perspective of Urban Principals."***

Any evaluator interacting directly with children in the school(s) must have both child abuse and criminal checks completed. As with all research in the District, all student data must remain strictly confidential, and entry into a school is contingent on the principal's approval. **You are required to provide a copy of the final report to the Office of Accountability and abstracts must be furnished to each cooperative school or office and region leader.**

Please contact Dr. Joanne Broder Sumerson at jbrodersumerson@phila.k12.pa.us, if you have any questions or concerns related to conducting research in the District.

Regards,



Joanne Broder Sumerson, Ph.D.
Chair, Research Review Committee

Catherine E. Johnson, Ph.D.
Assistant Director
Office of Research and Evaluation

APPENDIX B

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards

Standard 1 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Standard 2 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Standard 3 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe and effective learning environment.

Standard 4 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Standard 5 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, with fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Standard 6 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts. (Hessel and Holloway, 2002, p. 7)

Appendix C

Participant Data Sheet

Participant Information

1. Participant's Name ____
2. Position ____
3. How many years have you been the principal of this school? _______
4. Were you ever a principal at any other urban school?
   a. For how many years? ______
5. At which university did you obtain your principal's certification?_____
6. What year? ______
7. How many years were you a teacher? _____
8. What grade(s) did you teach? _____

School Information

9. Name of School ____
10. School Address ____
11. School Phone ____
12. School Fax ____
13. Number of staff members _____
14. Student Enrollment ______
15. Number of sections/classes at each grade level

    K ____ 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____

    5 ____ 6 ____ 7 ____ 8 ____

- -

Researcher's Notes

_____ Informed Consent Form Signed Date ____________

_____ Interview Competed Date ____________

_____ Observation Completed Date ____________

_____ Artifacts Collected Date ____________

_____ Study Codes Assigned Code ____________

_____ Gift Certificate Sent Date Mailed ______

Appendix D

Correlation of Interview Questions to Research Questions

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
1. How do elementary and middle school principals view and implement their role as instructional leader?	1. How do you perceive your role as principal? 2. What stands out for you about instructional leadership? 3. What comes to mind for you when someone refers to you as the instructional leader of your school? 4. Can you give some examples of how you provide instructional leadership for you school? 5. What would you say are the four or five most important things that instructional leaders should do? 6. What would you say are the four or five things an instructional leader should not do?
1A. What challenges must principals overcome to implement the role of instructional leader?	7. What would you like to do differently to provide instructional leadership? 8. What gets in the way of your being able to provide instructional leadership in these ways?

Vita

Cassandra A. Ruffin

EDUCATION
Ph.D., Educational Leadership and Learning Technologies, 2007
Dissertation Title: A Phenomenological Study of Instructional Leadership and Preparation: Perspective of Urban Principals
Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA

Graduate Coursework for Superintendent Letter of Eligibility, 2000
Arcadia University, Glenside, PA (Formerly know as Beaver College)

Graduate Coursework for Elementary Principal Certificate, 1994
Cheyney University, Cheyney, PA

M. Ed., Education, 1981
Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

B. S., Cheyney University, 1971
Cheyney, PA

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Administrative:
7/2004 – Present: **Principal**, School District of Philadelphia
2002-2004 – **Director**, Office of Leadership Development and Employee Discipline, School District of Philadelphia
2001-2002 – **Assistant Deputy Academic Officer**, Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, School District of Philadelphia
2000-2001 - Executive Director, Office of Early Childhood Education, School District of Philadelphia
1999-2000 – Administrator In Charge, Office of Leadership and Learning, School District of Philadelphia
1997-1999 – Assistant to Associate Superintendent, Office of Leadership and Learning, School District of Philadelphia
1996-1997 – Principal, School District of Philadelphia
1995-1996 – Project Director, School District of Philadelphia

Teaching: 1972- Teacher, School District of Philadelphia
1994-1995 – Teacher on Special Assignment to Office of Assessment, School District of Philadelphia
1972-1994 – Teacher, grades 3 through 8.
1971-1972 – Teacher, ages 3 and 4 year olds, School District of Philadelphia

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
2004 – Adjunct Professor, Drexel University