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Measuring Tasks, Time, and Priorities:

A Study of an Alternative School Leader in Action

By

Gregory O'Bryan

Thesis Approved:

Chair, Advisory Committee

Member, Advisory Committee

Member, Advisory Committee

Dean, Graduate School

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Signature Gregory M. O'Bryan

Date 7-5-12

Measuring Tasks, Time, and Priorities:

A Study of an Alternative School Leader in Action

By

Gregory O'Bryan

Bachelor of Business Administration
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky
2003

Master of Arts in Education
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky
2005

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
Eastern Kentucky University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Specialist in Education
August, 2012

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife for her constant love and support,
my mom who always has believed in me, and to Gran
who would never let me settle for anything less than my best.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my professor, Dr. Tara Shepperson for her guidance, tremendous patience with me, and encouragement as I struggled with revisions and the formulation of ideas for my research project. She has assisted me in this process for over two years and pushed me to work at my potential. I would also like to thank the other committee member, Dr. Robert Biggin for his comments and assistance over the past couple of years. I would like to express my thanks to my wife, Marci, for her constant encouragement when I was discouraged and convinced that I would never finish. She gladly took care of the kids so that I could meet deadlines even when she was already worn out. Also, I want to thank Dr. Robin Black for her continuous encouragement, valued friendship, and kind words to me on our daily commutes to work.

ABSTRACT

This study explored whether conventional means to evaluate principal instructional leadership were appropriate in alternative school settings. The mixed methods research included shadowing an alternative school principal over two days during the fall semester, 2011. Data was collected using the Vanderbilt Assessment of Education in Leadership's (VAL-ED) Time Task Analysis Tool™ checklist supplemented by naturalistic observations and ongoing explanations by the principal. Leader activities were categorized within three major categories: instructional, management, and personal. Additional activity descriptions were based on instrument subcategories, multiple cycles of coding, and analytic memoing. Conclusions indicated that the VAL-ED instrument failed to accurately define the range of entrepreneurial and outreach activities this alternative principal undertook. The checklist was insensitive to the degree to which the principal multitasked, combining management with instructional duties. The observations provided important clues to principal function, suggesting a more nuanced evaluation useful in nontraditional settings.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Currently in the United States, nearly one third of all students who enter high school do not graduate on time, and of those, 1.2 million students are on the verge of dropping out (Editorial Projects in Education, 2008). Dropouts earn substantially less during their lifetime, cost the country billions of dollars in lost wages, and are associated with increased crime, uninsured health care costs, and other societal problems (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2008). To combat drop-out rates, districts nationwide implement alternative learning programs to serve students who are unsuccessful in traditional high schools and most in danger of leaving school early (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). Alternative education programs are a popular design, usually based on flexible schedules, school-based decision-making, and adjustments in curriculum to cater directly to the academic and social needs of these most vulnerable students (D'Angelo & Zemanick, 2009; McKee & Conner, 2007; Raywid, 1994).

One district in central Kentucky sought to reduce drop-out rates by creating the School for Success (SFS), an alternative program that targets students who are not successful in their home schools and believed to be in danger of continued failing and/or dropping out. Incoming SFS student characteristics included extremely low grades, high truancy rates, a generally disconnect from school and faculty, and often social isolation from other students or activities at school (Jerald, 2006; Principal of School for Success, personal communication, January 30, 2011; Rumberger, 2004; Shepperson, Reynolds,

and Boulden, 2010). Some of these students created no particular problems in the classroom, but had been assessed to be in danger of falling "through the cracks" in regular middle and high schools. As a group, these students were considered by counselors at greatest risk for dropping out (Aron, 2006).

This study presented research into the constant, chaotic, and important role of the school leader in working with students at risk. The study specifically recorded and sought to understand the daily activities of the principal. The results provided insight into what issues are regularly addressed in a school trying to motivate, educate, and graduate students. It also provided food for thought about the extent to which the current focus on student academic performance seems suitable for highly at risk students. The goal of this study was to follow and record the actual activities of a principal at an alternative school to understand whether "best practices" and instructional leadership emphasized at traditional schools served as an appropriate model in this setting.

Statement of the Problem

As a group, alternative schools are designed for students who fail classes, are behind in credits, have a history of inappropriate classroom behaviors, are often emotionally fragile, and in need of additional social and academic tools to function constructively in school (Aron, 2003; Wald and Martinez, 2003). Alternative schools often utilized unusual strategies to engage students. They balanced accountability standards with needs for basic remediation, personal engagement, project-oriented learning, and real-world job-oriented content (National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices [NGA Center for Best Practices], 2001).

According to Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom (2004), there can be no great increase in student achievement without the guidance of an effective school leader. Successful education programs typically have effective leaders guiding their schools (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). While successful principals primarily focus on instructional issues that target student academic improvement, alternative site principals face at-risk students who are often disengaged with education (Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2001; Leone & Drakeford, 1999; Schorr, 1997). These principals not only need to be adept at working with unenthusiastic students, but be able to guide the teachers who work directly with difficult students, often taking leadership roles (Aron, 2006; Leone & Drakeford, 1999; Schorr, 1997. Alternative school teachers are often given flexibility to adapt and experiment with instructional strategies and content to connect with students at their levels of interest and ability (Aron, 2006; Lange & Sletten, 2002).

Alternative school autonomy and flexibility changes the role of the site leader. Since these schools often have small student populations, principals often work with fewer administrational staff, taking on assistant principal and dean duties. Alternative school students are often undertaking accelerated courses to make up credits while learning remedial skills needed to pass courses, adding pressure to students who often lack practice at handling school stresses. As a result of this dynamic environment, leaders must constantly assess student behavior, identify potential learning obstacles, recognize social conflicts, and otherwise minimize problems and maintain order in their school (Sachetta, 2001). In addition, these principals often need to communicate with parents, teachers, and outside authorities (from court officials to social workers) to keep everyone informed and ask for support to improve student academic and behavioral performance

(Hallinger & Hausman, 1993). As a result of these diverse roles, alternative school leaders perform varied daily administrative duties and respond to constantly developing issues and incidents (Valentine, Clark, Hackmann, & Petzko, 2003).

In addition to school site duties, alternative school principals often must sell their programs (and the associated increased costs) to their district overseers, the school board, and the community at large. As showcases, these schools frequently have visitors: invited educators, current and prospective parents, district officials, university researchers, grant funders, and local media. These walkthroughs are often led by the principal. While these take more time out of his day, they also provide a platform to form partnerships with and support for the program (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993; Hausman, Crow, & Sperry, 2000).

In summary, leaders of alternative schools often need to deal with a variety of issues outside the regular purview of principals in more traditional settings. Alternative schools, by definition, usually serve students requiring very intensive and individualized instruction. Teachers may confront a host of problems beyond those common to most public schools. Because alternative settings usually serve small student populations, the site leaders do without support administrators, often carrying the burden of administration nearly alone. In addition to running the school and working with students, the site often serves as an example for school redesign, and the principal must not only welcome a variety of onlookers and visitors, but also advocate and defend school procedures, cost, and efforts to the district, parents, and community.

Significance of Study

To improve academic performance, many researchers recommend that at least 1/3 of a building leaders' time should focus directly on instructional oversight (Arnold, Perry,

Watson, Minatra, & Schwartz, 2006; Buntrock, 2008). A prevailing criticism of alternative schools has been that they act as warehouses or playgrounds, graduating unprepared students, and not ensuring that students meet standards for career and college readiness (Aron, 2006; Kim & Taylor, 2008). Since the site leader has a pivotal role in ensuring academic rigor, it is important to understand how alternative school principals' actions impact student achievement. (Arnold et al., 2006; Nettles & Herrington, 2007).

This study specifically examined one alternative school and one principal that worked in an alternative setting to offer an in-depth examination of his daily routine, his instructional leadership duties, and other responsibilities facing this site leader. This in itself provided meaningful data about one alternative school leader's activities and duties. In addition, it offered topics for discussion and further research about how alternative programs actually function. While not generalizable to other alternative schools, it offered specific examples as evidence that suggest special instructional issues addressed by the principal for this student population, provided data about teacher-principal interactions, and offered some glimpse into whether this school simply acted as a holding pen for students or if it provided differentiated instruction that was meaningful for students previously disengaged from school.

Background of Study

Description of School. School for Success (SFS) is located in a Kentucky school district with several traditional high schools and another alternative school tailored for students with behavioral problems (School for Success, 2012). For several years, the district has realized the need to help students falling through the cracks and in danger of dropping out of traditional high schools. They sought to initiate a school that would

engage students and meet their needs by offering specialized instruction, including strong relationship-building, small class sizes, personalized attention, project-based learning, and a focus on citizenship and employability skills. The school's model for learning stated that as its teachers build strong interpersonal relationships with students, the students will become engaged with school, and this will lead to academic success (Shepperson et al., 2010). The SFS just began its third year of operation with a population of 140 students (Principal of School for Success, personal communication, August 21, 2011), continuing to develop its focus on employability skills, ongoing classroom management, individual mentoring, and respect and citizenship (Shepperson et al., 2010). Teachers continued to intentionally build relationships with their students to help them overcome learning and personal obstacles (Principal of School for Success, personal communication, May 5, 2010).

Student interaction and obstacles to learning. Often, students in alternative programs live in conditions that do not support education, hinder learning, and require outside help to achieve academic success (Roderick & Camburn, 1999; Ruiz de Velasco, Austin, Dixon, Johnson, McLaughlin, & Perez, 2008; Wald & Martinez, 2003). One aspect of alternative programs is their focus on socio-emotional caring and growth that takes place as a result of additional services and skill training including school counseling, access to social service programs, teaching of conflict resolution strategies, and ongoing positive adult-student relationships (Marzano, 2000; Raywid, 1994).

Alternative school principals spent a considerable amount of their time interacting with students, watching behavior, and catching signs of potential problems (Mitchell & Castle, 2005; O'Donnell & White, 2005; Sachetta, 2001). Through frequent

conversations with students, alternative school leaders identify student obstacles to learning and use school support systems to mitigate these (Littky & Grabelle, 2004). In addition to working on social and emotional issues, these site leaders must also effectively communicate with teachers and students to ensure quality learning and student achievement (Aron, 2006; Duke & Salmonowicz, 2010).

Advocate for school. Principals of alternative programs often spend countless hours creating partnerships in their community with outside educational and support agencies to maximize the learning of their students (Aron, 2006). These extra activities take time and reduce time for instructional oversight and guidance; however, because additional services are often needed, advocacy and fund raising are necessary in order to secure district approval, outside funding, and community support for their existing programs and raise money to offer additional services to their students (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993; Hausman et al., 2000).

Parental Communication. All school principals attempt to improve parental school involvement. Phone calls, conferences, orientations, and even home visits are particularly important for households without strong attachments to school or a history of bad relations between school and home, as is often the case with students in alternative school settings (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Gold, Simon, & Brown, 2005). Reducing barriers between school and homes can benefit students: by increasing access to resources or improving coordination of efforts to improve academic success between teachers and parents, all of which can ultimately improve academic achievement (Cuddapah, Masci, Smallwood, & Holland, 2008; National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE], 1996).

Varied Leadership Duties. Alternative program leaders often serve in numerous school roles to compensate for the lack of administrational staff in their building (Sachetta, 2001; Valentine et al., 2003). They frequently perform the duties of an assistant principal, academic dean, counselor, instructional coach for teachers, and other personnel (Archer, 2004; Aron, 2003; Eisner, 2002; Goodwin, 2010). Not only do they perform administration duties, they complete tasks that arise unexpectedly during the day that don't fit another person's job description (Valentine et al., 2003). Therefore, they often perform numerous tasks at the same time and serve in different roles based on the present circumstances and the audience around them at that particular moment (Marzano et al., 2005; McIver, Kearns, Lyons, & Sussman. 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory study was to provide first-hand information about one school leader's work with at-risk students, their teachers, and the daily activities of a school dedicated to relationship-building and engagement of students in a school purportedly designed to meet the needs of highly at-risk 7-12th grade students. The goal of the study was to provide detailed information about the activities of the principal, and specifically how he functioned as an instructional leader. The character of this school provided insight into whether (a) instructional guidance differed at a school that used real-world and experiential strategies to engage students; (b) students often socially and emotionally vulnerable took up the principal's time for behavior and discipline issues; (c) communications and fostering of teachers wer nontraditional; (d) the principal was excessively occupied with advocacy, fundraising, or defending the school to district

officials, parents, and the public; and (e) because of fewer administrators, the principal was occupied with managerial and bureaucratic responsibilities.

Research Questions

The research used the following questions to guide this study:

1. Does the alternative program principal focus more time on management or instruction when measured by the Time Task Analysis™ instrument?
2. Do the instructional categories within the Time Task Analysis™ instrument correspond to the principal's actual actions, specifically a) conducting observations and walkthroughs, b) working on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, c) working with parents and the community, and d) engaging directly with students?
3. What other activities does the principal perform that are outside those outlined in the Time/Task Analysis™?

Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this research was to record and interpret the SFS principal's duties by exploring the minute-by-minute actions of his daily routine. The goal was to understand what the principal actually did to guide instruction, and the degree to which other duties interfered with that. Specifically, during regular school days in the fall semester of 2012, the researcher: 1) shadowed the principal's actions during two working school days; 2) where possible, correlated the actual activities of the alternative program principal with instructional leadership categories outlined in the oft-used Time/Task Analysis™ instrument developed by the Vanderbilt Assessment for Leadership in Education. 3) The researcher asked follow up questions to the principal about reasons

behind his actions. 4) The researcher observed and wrote notes on the specific actions of the principal throughout the day in order to describe specific actions. 5) Clarifications and member checks were conducted after initial analysis to ensure correctness and clarity in categorizing and developing themes around the principal's daily activities.

The research resulted in records of principal actions and interaction with teachers, school staff, parents, district officials, students, parents, and whomever else he worked with during a regular school day. The study also explored how and to what extent this alternative program leader functioned inside and outside of the school; whether this alternative school principal had instructional leadership roles that were different from what research recommended for traditional principals; and how the principal defined his instructional leadership duties compared to those outlined in the Time/Task Analysis™ instrument. By calibrating to the existing tool and conducting additional analysis of principal activities, the research provided not only a discussion of instructional leadership, but also insight into the actual daily actions of this principal of an alternative school.

Data Collection: Observation. Observation occurred over two separate school days, each a different day of the week in an attempt to collect as varied a sample of activities as possible. The researcher didn't observe on days when the principal was scheduled to be out of the building or when the daily schedule was highly unusual.

Data Collection: Activity and time tracking. The researcher recorded the principal's actions every fifteen minutes according to the checklist of the Time/Task Analysis™ tool, but also used a more naturalistic approach to taking notes of his

activities. The ongoing observation and note taking provided more detail of actions, including those that didn't appear under the checklist.

Data Collection: Interviews. To improve interpretation and understanding of the findings from the observations, the researcher planned to interview the principal so that he could respond to the activities of the day and how he perceived his role as instructional leader. Brief interviews were planned to occur at the end of each of the two days of observation if the researcher deemed them necessary. Also, an additional session was scheduled with the principal to cover preliminary findings, gather the principal's perspectives, and conduct member checks for accuracy of interpretation. However, the additional interview was optional if the researcher held numerous questions about the principal's actions and needed a greater amount of time for clarification.

Instrumentation. The researcher utilized the instrument Time/Task Analysis™ developed by the Vanderbilt Assessment for Leadership in Education™ (Vanderbilt Assessment for Leadership in Education [Val-Ed], 2010). To ensure its validity and reliability, the instrument has been tested over nine years, in nine states, and thirty-seven districts affiliated with the Wallace Foundation. The tool measures the amount of time that a principal spends on instructional, management, or personal responsibilities (Wallace Foundation, 2009).

Analysis: Activity frequencies. The researcher used a frequency analysis for the activities listed in the Time/Task Analysis™ checklist to answer research questions 1 and 2.

Analysis: Activity categorization. The researcher recorded and categorized activities that the principal performed during the observations. Descriptive statistics and

frequency analyses were used to measure the time spent in different activity categories to answer research question 2. Also, the researcher conducted qualitative analysis, including first and second cycle coding of observation notes, researcher analytical memos, and principal responses from interviews. The researcher placed the information into primary codes based on categories provided by the instrument's checklist. Then the researcher used thematic codes that emerge from the data to expand beyond the instrument list to answer research question 3.

Analysis: Principal perceptions. The principal's perceptions provided additional insight into the description and categorization of activities; therefore, the researcher incorporated findings from the interviews to enhance understanding of the principal's actions, especially as they related to the specific setting of an alternative school, and these were incorporated into the results for research question 2.

Analysis: Principal activity and alternative school settings. The researcher combined both quantitative and qualitative findings to answer research question 3, about the extent to which the Time/Task Analysis™ tool failed to adequately encompass the variety of activities undertaken by the principal. Descriptive and categorical analyses from the frequency analyses, observations, and interviews provided insight into the actual actions of the principal.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in the study. Definitions pertained to schools and education:

1. Academic achievement - level of attainment or proficiency in relation to an academic standard measure of performance, or, educational or scholastic success in bringing about a desired end (Education.com, 2011).

2. Alternative education program – district controlled facility designed to provide services to at-risk populations with unique needs (Kentucky Department of Education. *Action plan for alternative education*. February, 2009).

3. Analytic memo – a brief note during the coding process to allow ideas to emerge to explain possible relationships in the data (Saldana, 2009)

4. Assessment – the process of using a test or informal process to measure the level of student achievement (Kentucky Department of Education, 2011).

5. Behavioral referral – a form that records student incidents that disrupt the learning process in the classroom and results in negative consequences for the student.

6. Coding – "assigning a shorthand designation to various aspects of data for easy future retrieval of specific pieces of data" (Merriam, 2009, p. 173).

7. Credit recovery – an instructional program that allows students the opportunity to earn credits needed for graduation (Raywid, 1994).

8. Dropout – a student who was enrolled at any time during the previous school year who is not enrolled at the beginning of the current school year and who has not completed school (Stillwell, 2009).

9. Instructional leadership – the practices of principals that promote and support teaching and learning (Ewan-Adkins, 2002).

10. Observation – "firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest where it occurs rather than a secondhand account of the world obtained in an interview" (Merriam, 2009, p. 117).

11. Socio-emotional – the quality of an individual's personality, emotions, and relationships with others in school that leads to student success.

12. Student success – the act of learning information and skills and completing coursework that will prepare a student for subsequent classes and/or their chosen career (Kentucky Department of Education, 2011).

13. Time management – the act of intentionally taking control over time spent on activities to increase efficiency.

14. Time/Task Analysis™ - an assessment tool that measures the quality of time management practices by principals (Wallace Foundation, 2009).

15. Walkthroughs – the act of visiting a classroom for at least 10 minutes to look for instructional best practices even when not part of a formal summative assessment and providing teacher with positive, informal feedback about the visit (Kaplan & Owings, 2001, p. 70).

Time Line

In fall 2011, the researcher conducted two days of observations at SFS and interviewed the principal. The researcher then analyzed the frequency data, observation field notes, and interpreted the ongoing interviews using various descriptive quantitative and qualitative methods including frequency analysis and cycles of coding. Member checks and initial analyses were completed during the fall semester. Final write up, thesis completion and approval were completed during spring 2012.

Summary

Literature suggested that principals need to focus on instruction to ensure student gains (Macan, 1994; Orlikowsky and Yates, 2002). The guidance and actions of the leader is considered to be one of the most important influences on student success (Marzano et al., 2005). This must be especially true for alternative school principals who work with under-motivated and at-risk students. Yet, alternative principals also must handle numerous responsibilities different from those in traditional schools, often with less administrative support, and while serving a challenging student population who face numerous learning obstacles (Aron, 2006; Sachetta, 2001; Valentine et al., 2003).

Chapter one introduced the study of a principal of an alternative school initiated by a district in central Kentucky to reduce dropout rates and help unsuccessful students achieve. Alternative programs have become a common solution to meet the needs of failing students (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; D'Angelo & Zemanick, 2009; McKee & Conner, 2007; Raywid, 1994). They are generally characterized by flexibility, autonomy, and small size designed to better target students with a history of poor attendance, discipline referrals, failing grades, and overall lack of engagement at school. School for Success uses strategies typical of other alternative education programs in an attempt to engage students and improve academic performance that includes: building strong relationships, instructing students in small classes, providing individualized attention, and using practical curriculum grounded in real life (Cornell and Clarke, 1999; Katz, 1994; Katz & Chard, 1998; Shepperson et al., 2010).

Chapter one outlined the study purpose, research questions, and overall design of the research that took place in late fall 2011. The study incorporated two days of

observations of the principal, additional interviews, and framed time and activities using the Time/Task Analysis™ instrument, often used in schools to measure instructional leadership time management. The goals of this study were not only to measure principal instructional leadership, but more specifically to define what activities differentiated the instructional leadership duties and objectives of an alternative school principal from those of more traditional secondary schools.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews scholarly literature about alternative programs, reasons for their development, program characteristics, and the role of principals in these institutions. First, the literature review will focus on policy including a discussion of federal and state policies that encourage and monitor alternative programs. Second, categories of alternative education programs will be presented. Third, student needs and reasons behind district support of alternative education programs, their curriculum, and instructional goals will be discussed. Fourth, the roles of school leaders, currently accepted standards for assessing effective leadership, and job responsibilities of alternative school principals will be outlined. Finally, a detailed description of School for Success and its principal, the focus of this investigation, will be presented.

Alternative Programs and Policies

Some of the earliest alternative schools emerged in the 1960s and 1970s through the Freedom School Movement that focused on education based on student individual needs. These schools sought to provide a quality educational experience for students, often minority, who were overlooked by traditional schools (Lange and Sletten, 2002). These schools largely did not endure, however, as alternative school purpose shifted focus to discipline and/or remediation (Aron, 2003). In the 1980s, the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and *A Nation Prepared* (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986) criticized American

schools and demanded more standardized academic instruction. At the same time that educators adopted curricula designed to prepare students for post-secondary education and increased high-stakes testing as evidence of successful learning, there was a call to reduce violence and remove from schools those students with discipline problems (Aron, 2003; 2006). These changes resulted in increased alienation of students not bound for college or those who did not fit in mainstream schools (Leone and Drakeford, 1999).

Public alternative education programs became a popular mechanism for credit recovery and to otherwise channel and graduate struggling students (Aron, 2003; Carver & Lewis, 2010). Alternative or continuation schools continue as a means for district to address under-achieving, at-risk, or students who do not otherwise function within mainstream high schools. Over the last decade, alternative schools have become politically popular as a way to offer choice and meet the needs of a broad range of students through specifically designed innovative programs and increasingly autonomous school structure (NGA Center for Best Practices, 2001; Race to the Top Executive Summary [RTES], 2009; Smith and Thomases 2001). Raywid (1994) wrote that, "many of the reforms currently pursued in traditional schools—downsizing the high school, pursuing a focus or theme, students and teacher choice, making the school a community, empowering staff, active learner engagement, authentic assessment—are practices that alternative schools pioneered" (p. 26).

Race to the Top federal policies. The United States Department of Education and the Race to the Top (RTTT) program created a pool of $4.35 billion available for states willing to adopt common national standards and new educational frameworks for student success (RTES, 2009). The new requirements stated that alternative programs

often meet needs of specific populations of students, lower dropout rates, and boost student achievement. Currently, numerous states have responded to RTTT initiatives by creating alternative programs largely oriented to meeting the needs of at-risk student populations (Jobs for the Future [JFF], 2009; Race to the Top Fund, 2010). While RTTT conjures up images of high-performing charter schools and innovative instruction, alternative programs are often endorsed by legislation for their strategies for remediation, alternative scheduling, and accelerated learning that reduced dropout and increased graduation rates of otherwise floundering students (Aron, 2006; Lehr, Tan, & Ysseldyke, 2009).

No Child Left Behind. Changes in The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provided incentives for local districts to target and improve low-performing schools. The act intensified accountability systems, required scientifically proven methods of instruction, and pushed for more school choice (NCLB, 2001). The legislation created programs to better identify learning problems of low-performing students, provided assistance for schools not meeting performance benchmarks, required schools to hire "highly qualified" teachers, and allowed students in low-performing schools to transfer to better ones (Aron, 2006). NCLB policies focused educational reforms on instructional strategies especially to improve scores for low-performing students and supported alternative school structures to improve graduation rates (Aron, 2003).

Kentucky state alternative school policy. In 1990, Kentucky passed the Kentucky Education Reform Act that established a new accountability system for the state's public schools. Under the new system, they enacted six goals (University of Kentucky, 2012) that schools must adopt:

1. Expect a high level of achievement of all students.
2. Develop students' ability in six cognitive areas.
3. Increase students' rate of school attendance.
4. Reduce their students' dropout and retention rate.
5. Reduce physical and mental health barriers to learning.
6. Be measured on the proportion of students who make a successful transition to work, postsecondary education and the military.

The state provided funding and legislation for each district to create an A-5 program which is "a district-operated and district-controlled facility designed to provide services to at-risk populations with unique needs" (Kentucky Department for Education, 2009, p. 1). The state authorized districts to offer "any preventive, developmental, corrective, supportive services or treatment provided to a student who is at risk of school failure, is at risk of participation in violent behavior or juvenile crime, or has been expelled from the school district" (KRS 158.44, (2), (1)). The state legislation empowered districts to create alternative programs specific to their district needs and purposes instead of requiring any one model (Lehr et al., 2009).

Types of Alternative Schools

District-sponsored alternative schools were generally designed to meet both academic and social needs of students, typically with innovative or flexible structures,

and focus on highly differentiated instruction to meet individual student needs (Smink, 2001; D'Angelo & Zemanick, 2009; Hess Jr., 2003; McKee & Conner, 2007; Raywid, 1994). Carver and Lewis's (2010) report for the National Center for Education Statistics discovered that 10,300 district sponsored alternative programs were operating during the 2007-2008 school year, the majority of them housed within traditional high schools.

District structures and purposes. Alternative programs are often implemented to target students that failed or are falling behind in high school. Educators develop alternative education programs to improve student performance including grades, school attendance, and completion rates. They also desire reductions in disruptive behaviors and suspensions by improving their students' sense of self (NASBE, 1996). These programs are often placed within existing schools or developed under a separate roof. No matter their location, these programs usually center on credit recovery with the use of computerized curriculum and other instructional support. Programs held in separate buildings are often more complete, and include environments that support physical and psychological safety, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, positive social norms, opportunities for skill building, and integration of family and school through personalized attention and small class size (NGA Center for Best Practices, 2001; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2001, Smith and Thomases, 2001). Alternative schools often allow students to earn high school diplomas, general education diplomas (GED), or occupational certifications (Aron, 2006).

Raywid's Typology. Raywid (1994) organized alternative programs into three major categories, labeled Type I, II, and III. Type I alternative programs offered students a full-year opportunity to recover credits, graduate, and learn using curriculum tailored

for their needs. These schools generally had small class sizes, emphasized interpersonal relationships between teachers and students, focused on employability skills, and were housed separately or within existing schools (Appalachia Educational Laboratory [AEL], 1998). According to Aron (2006) this was the most common type of alternative program used by districts across the country for their versatility to meet the academic needs of students (Hair, Ling, & Cochran, 2003).

Type II alternative programs focused on containing and reforming students with disruptive behavioral problems. Students were often referred to these programs by their home schools, although some volunteered to enroll based on parental choice or previous experiences in traditional schools. These schools generally implemented strict discipline codes, and students took core courses, meeting academic requirements. Once students completed the program or demonstrated appropriate behaviors, they were often released and allowed to return to their home school (AEL, 1998; Raywid, 1994). According to Raywid (1994), Type II programs were found to be less effective academically, and have been reduced in number throughout the country.

Type III schools offered short-term counseling programs focused on students with socio-emotional problems. Again, students were referred by their home schools, but attended voluntarily and were allowed to leave at any time. These programs taught students how to overcome learning obstacles and function more effectively in school. Because of shorter time frame and lack of focus on academics, these programs were not found to be highly effective in ensuring credit recovery, graduation, or academic achievement.

Typical alternative schools have different purposes that impact academic and socio-emotional outcome. Overall, most alternative programs only partially emphasized academics, while also concentrating on other needs of students. Yet, Raywid noted that her research found that programs with a focus on academics, of at least two year duration, were often very effective in recovering credits and graduating students (AEL, 1998; Aron, 2006; Raywid, 1994).

The Need for Alternative Programs

Wald and Martinez (2003) found that the majority of students who attended alternative schools were not on the path to complete high school for a combination of educational and personal reasons. While a disproportionate percentage of alternative program attendees came from minority populations and low socio-economic homes, reasons to attend included personal circumstances, difficulties with school, learning disabilities, and obligations that precluded attendance in traditional school settings.

Demographic characteristics. Students who attend alternative schools are often labeled as at-risk because they engage in dangerous activities or live in an environment that limits their potential for future success (Aron, 2003). The students often have low socioeconomic status or come from Non-English speaking home. Girls may be pregnant or mothers. Boys may also be parents, belong to gangs, or work to support families. These students are often from minority ethnic or cultural groups, and usually from families whose members have not graduated or have had little positive experience with school (Orfield, Losen, Swanson, & Wald, 2004; Roderick & Camburn, 1999; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008; Wells, 1990).

Personal factors. Aron (2003) suggested that candidates for alternative programs often transitioned to adult life before finishing high school. They may be parents, already in the criminal justice system, or involved in the child welfare system. Wells (1990) suggested that these students often came from dysfunctional or high stress home lives, suffer abuse or neglect, or with absent or inadequate parental involvement. Sometimes these youngsters fell behind in part because of high mobility, inconsistent school attendance, and low academic expectations from family members.

Attachment to school. These students often are detached from school due to frequent truancy or absenteeism, a negative attitude towards school, low academic ability, lack of school friends, intervals of illness or sickness, low self-efficacy, lack of participation in school and classroom activities, and social conflicts with other students including bullying (Aron, 2006; Wald and Martinez, 2003; Wells, 1990).

Educational needs. Potential candidates for alternative programs were often passive or even hostile about school due to negative experiences, seemingly irrelevant curriculum, learning difficulties, ineffective discipline systems, or perpetual low expectations from teachers (Wells, 1990). While many students arrived with learning disabilities, schools often fail to respond to learning needs or motivate otherwise competent students.

Studies showed that students who score below grade level rarely make up lost academic ground, often feel isolated, and are most likely to drop out (Roderick & Camburn, 1999; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008). Whether placed with the more academically adept or in remedial courses, these students receive little attention in regular classrooms, often become frustrated, feel disconnected to school, and contemplate

dropping out (Austin, Dixon, Bailey, & Berliner, 2008). These students are likely to have been retained repeatedly, and have significant gaps in skill sets. Yet, schools often do not have special programs or resources sufficient to cater to their specific learning deficiencies (Aron, 2003; Roderick & Camburn, 1999).

Because the type of student and range of needs vary, there is little agreement about how best to organize learning in alternative schools. Generally, it is agreed that standardized instruction fails to engage these hard to reach students. Some suggest that students might be engaged by the use of more updated technology. Others argue for curriculum oriented around career awareness and employability skills. Many believe that experiential or real-life learning is a means to engage. Others recommend instruction that emphasizes basic skills usable after graduation (Aron, 2003, 2006; RTES, 2009).

Alternative School Curriculum and Climate

Type I alternative programs generally enroll students for an entire school year and implement innovative curricula that may incorporate project-based learning, and authentic learning assessments in order to build employability skills, and recover credits (JFF, 2009; Leone and Drakeford, 1999). The climate relies on small class sizes, strong interpersonal relationships between students and teachers, and a caring atmosphere. Their instructional strategies are designed with student needs in mind and to foster a strong sense of school community. Teachers model appropriate, respectful behavior and clearly outline expectations for students (Schorr, 1997). These schools often focus on jobs or careers, attract potential dropouts, and are located in a building outside of school during the day or after school hours (AEL, 1998; Raywid, 1994).

Socio-emotional growth. Students in alternative programs often face socio-emotional obstacles to wellness. As a result, these students often need active support systems to help them overcome personal turbulence and obstacles that hinder them before they achieve academically (Littky & Grabelle, 2004). Therefore, alternative programs often provide counseling, access to social service programs, training in conflict resolution strategies, child day care, shelter/foster homes, and other help to students (Raywid, 1994; Marzano, 2000).

Interpersonal relationships. Alternative programs often focus on the development of meaningful relationships between faculty and students through the passion and willingness of teachers to instruct these types of students (Lehr & Lange, 2003; Raywid, 1994). Teachers obtain appropriate certifications to instruct their content and hold high expectations for students despite deficiencies in their skill sets. Teachers attend numerous professional development opportunities that hone their repertoire of teaching strategies and enjoy using creativity to make lessons more engaging (Aron, 2006, NCLB, 2001; RTES, 2009) Also, their instructional strategies develop student interpersonal and conflict resolution skills (Aron, 2003; NASBE, 1996).

Culture of empowerment. Alternative school structures often enable site leaders and staff to make instructional, budget, and staffing decisions without undue bureaucratic procedures (Lange & Sletton, 2002; Schorr, 1997; Thakur, 2010). Leaders often have greater freedom in choosing instructional staff than in traditional settings. In addition, alternative school leaders often lead schools in unauthoritarian ways, empowering staff to collectively make decisions on how to work with students, request professional

development opportunities, and collaborate on instruction (Aron, 2006; Lange and Sletten, 2002; Leone & Drakeford, 1999; Raywid, 1994).

Community association. Alternative programs are often characterized by close parental and community ties. School leaders inform the parents of potential students that enrollment requires more parental participation than simply attending conferences; parents are expected to help tutor and attend occasional seminars that the school offers (Aron, 2006; NASBE, 1996). Alternative programs proactively interact with their community and local educational district and maintain enrollment and support from them (Hausman et al., 2000). School leaders develop numerous relationships within the community to obtain possible resources to engage students and authenticate the curriculum (Aron, 2006). Also, school leaders and teachers partner with agencies that provide services that the school doesn't offer due to financial or logistical reasons (Coalition for Juvenile Justice 2001; Lange and Sletten, 2002; National Center on Education and the Economy [NCEE], 1998; Thakur, 2010). Teachers incorporate field trips, invite guest speakers from various industries, and expose students to possible careers to grasp their attention. School leaders and teachers manage numerous fundraisers to subsidize the cost of these learning experiences and post-secondary opportunities after graduation for students without financial support from home (Aron, 2003; NASBE, 1996).

Project based learning. Alternative programs implement project-based learning opportunities that teach students how to become productive members of society. Their curriculum builds upon students' prior knowledge by collaborations with community resources (Katz, 1994; Katz & Chard, 1998). Teachers select projects that fit in the

context of their school and allow students to work at their own pace. Also, the projects enable students to practice skills such as time management, problem solving, creativity, and responsibility (Wurdinger & Rudolph, 2009). Cornell and Clarke (1999) found that project based learning benefited lower performing students since they used their hands and developed skills necessary to finish the project. Also, their study noted that teachers spend additional time in lesson preparation, but that students store knowledge quicker in their long-term memory if it is relevant to them (Cornell & Clarke, 1999).

Academic Achievement. Alternative programs often were implemented to combat dropout rates (Arnold et al., 2006; D'Angelo & Zemanick, 2009; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; McKee & Conner, 2007; Raywid, 1994). These programs often consider their graduation rates as their main measure or indicator of success. They help students make up credits and often utilize curricula centered on essential skills for future job and education opportunities (AEL, 1998; Aron, 2003; Raywid, 1994). Measures of program effectiveness center on improved attendance rates, better grades, reductions in violent incidents or suspensions, and higher graduation rates (Aron, 2006; Lange & Sletton, 2002; NASBE, 1996).

Accountability and criticisms. Critics of alternative education schools argue that while individualized learning and quality teacher-student relationships are useful, too often alternative schools are not held to the same academic standards as other traditional schools (Kim & Taylor, 2008; Lehr et al., 2009; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008). Critics state that alternative programs don't adequately decrease learning gaps, fail to instruct students to proficiency levels, or satisfy accountability requirements indicated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 or the recent Race to the Top federal legislation (Aron,

2006; Evans, 2009; NCLB, 2001; RTES, 2009). Alternative programs often use computers to offer accelerated or proficiency-level curriculum that focuses on credit recovery. These curricula often lack rigor and may not equip students with the skills necessary to succeed after graduation (JFF, 2009; Kim & Taylor, 2008; Lehr et al., 2009). This suggests that alternative schools open the way for opportunity, but may not provide equal access to high level learning or college and career readiness (NGA Center for Best Practices, 2001).

Empirical evidence supporting alternative programs. Few studies examined the benefits of alternative programs using strong empirical data (Aron, 2003; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008). Research explored the numerous advantages of alternative programs and the financial savings associated with a student that doesn't drop out (Arnold et al., 2006; D'Angelo & Zemanick, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2008; McKee & Conner, 2007; Raywid, 1994). Educators have noted that students who attend alternative programs result in higher attendance rates, fewer discipline behavioral referrals or acts of violence, increased graduation rates, improved self-image, greater level of conflict resolution skills, improved knowledge of basic skills, and heightened career awareness and college readiness skills for life after high school (Aron, 2006; Lange & Sletten, 2002; NASBE, 1996).

In California, several continuation (alternative) schools boasted slightly higher pass rates on the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) than their respective feeder schools (Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008). Also, the financial impact of one student that chooses to graduate instead of dropping out earns over 260,000 dollars more in his/her lifetime. Besides the additional income students earn from graduating high

school, benefits extend to an increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for our country, reduced cost in Medicaid and healthcare costs for the uninsured, and reduction in crime-related costs (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2008).

Alternative School Leadership Duties

Alternative programs are usually managed by a director or principal who may face additional responsibilities than traditional school principals due to fewer administration staff and increased responsibilities related to meeting the individual needs of students (Sachetta, 2001; Valentine et al., 2003). They built programs that enable teachers to help students remove social, emotional, and academic obstacles to learning (Marzano, 2000; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008; Wald and Martinez, 2003). They built a school culture that provided teachers with freedom and power and valued their opinion in every school decision (Aron, 2006). They spent countless hours selling their school to potential students, parents, district educators, and guests (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993). They designed curriculum that met a wide range of student needs and sometimes included project-based learning (Wurdinger, Haar, Hugg, & Bezon, 2007), credit recovery options (JFF, 2009; Raywid, 1994), and a focus on positive reinforcements (Kim and Taylor, 2008; Richardson & Griffin, 1994).

Principals may spend the majority of their day on managerial rather than instruction-related tasks, even though the central focus of their job should be instruction (Archer, 2004). Therefore, researchers studied the amount of time spent on instruction that maximizes instructional gains and the types of actions that influence instructional activities (Marzano, 2000; Wallace Foundation, 2009; Goodwin, 2010). Eisner found that leaders should focus a minimum of 1/3 of their time on instructional activities (2002).

Marzano suggested that leaders maximize the amount of time allocated for instruction in classrooms from their daily routine due to its impact on student learning (2000). McIver et al. found that some leaders should abandon their managerial tasks since instructional duties outweigh them in importance (2009).

Facing obstacles to student learning. Alternative program principals work under tremendous pressure due to the characteristics of the students that they instruct and daily encounter. Their student population consists of individuals in the juvenile court and welfare systems, unmarried mothers, students with high absenteeism rates, students often suspended or possibly expelled from other schools, racially concentrated, and adolescents that frequently move (Aron, 2003; Orfield et al., 2004; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008; Wald and Martinez, 2003). Alternative leaders often encounter academic difficulties with their students in addition to the personal and family obstacles (Roderick & Camburn, 1999). Students may be behind in grade level, accustomed to remedial classes, ignored by teachers, disconnected from school, and may not be fluent in English (Austin, Dixon, Bailey, & Berliner, 2008).

Principals develop innovative programs and personalize curriculum to create a framework of support for students (Littky & Grabelle, 2004; Sachetta, 2001). They implement programs that meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of their student population (Marzano, 2000). They know that there is an overlap between the personal and academic problems of students, and they constantly teach students how to resolve conflict (Goodwin, 2010) before learning occurs. They model expectations for students (Condren, 2002; Mitchell & Castle, 2005) and mold young adolescent's behaviors by using positive incentives (Richardson & Griffin, 1994; Sachetta, 2001). They provide

consistent feedback and praise to students in the classroom, hallway, and other venues (Mitchell & Castle, 2005; O'Donnell & White, 2005) and create a caring relationship for students that traditional schools often didn't engage (Kim and Taylor, 2008). Also, they frequently converse with their staff and students and assess possible discipline problems or positive incidents relevant to their students (Sachetta, 2001).

Project-based learning activities and assessment. Not every alternative program implements project-based learning activities into their curriculum due to the needs of their students (Wurdinger & Rudolph, 2009). When principals assess teaching methods and project-based learning projects, they encounter obstacles from traditional accountability systems. Current federal policies place greater value on standardized tests than demonstration of student knowledge obtained by project-based learning (NCLB, 2001). Also, principals may assess these types of assignments more critically due to observing less interaction among teachers and students due to the level of student engagement (Wurdinger et al., 2007). Therefore, alternative program leaders approve classroom projects that demonstrate student learning and are connected to instructional standards (Katz & Chard, 1998).

Literature on Successful and Innovative School Leadership

According to Leithwood et al. (2004), there could be no great increase in student achievement without the guidance of an effective leader. Successful education programs typically share one common leadership characteristic: they have an effective leader guiding their school (Marzano et al., 2005). Effective principals perform numerous tasks that other principals complete, but the manner of the leader's actions determines the effectiveness of their school. The practices of innovative schools contribute to their initial

impact on student learning, but gains slowly diminish in time due to a school's reliance on conventional approaches (Giles and Hargreaves, 2006; Fashola & Slavin, 1998; Tubin, 2009).

School leaders implement 21st century skills in their schools, yet are challenged to integrate this curriculum with the traditional style of standardized testing (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; NCLB, 2001; Schlecty, 2001). Brown found that schools conformed to traditional instructional methods in fear that they wouldn't meet state and federal accountability goals (2007). However, effective school leaders implement innovative and research-based instructional methods that teach their students skills for the future: critical thinking skills, adaptability, creativity, and media literacy skills (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008).

Learning experiences. Innovative leaders create learning experiences that expose students to authentic tasks and require them to interact with multiple elements of their environment to solve problems (Huber & Breen, 2007; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). Effective instructional methods require students to continually learn from a variety of sources as opposed to a finite list of academic knowledge (National Education Association [NEA], 2010). Teachers create safe learning environments for students, respond quickly to deficiencies in student learning (Rofes & Stulberg, 2004), emphasize critical thinking skills, and encourage students to answer problems using the resources and stimuli around them (Huber & Breen, 2007; NEA, 2010).

Relationships with staff. Leaders that develop strong relationships with staff create cultures characterized by increased innovation among faculty, willingness of teachers to try new ideas, and teachers more supportive of change (Moolenaar, Daly, & Sleegers, 2010). Leaders don't stifle creativity, but develop an environment for teachers to try new ideas without fear of rejection or losing support from administration (Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, & Strange, 2002). Their schools maintain a constant continuum of shared ideas, information, and opportunities to discuss and practice among faculty (Frank, Zhao, & Borman, 2004; Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003; Storey & Salaman, 2005).

Student data and school culture. Principals review student data from the previous year's standardized tests, achievement data, and student and teacher feedback with input from other professionals (Alexander-Smith, Rice, Johnson, Fournier, & Brass, 2001). They assess the learning conditions of their building and determine areas that if altered, would impact student learning. They study their culture, review student data, identify their school's core problems (Duke & Salmonowicz, 2010), and examine the faculty misconceptions of their students and parents. Also, they use the data to build curriculum for summer enrichment programs. (Hollins, 1996; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2007; Senge, 1994).

Parents and community. Principals spend a considerable amount of time building relationships in the community of their school (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Gold et al., 2005). They participate in or organize programs that develop trust with the parents and guardians of their students. They open their school at orientation for incoming students to tour the school, meet their future teachers, and provide parents with information about school resources. The experience builds self-confidence with students

and informs them of strategies that will enable them to be successful in high school (Cuddapah et al., 2008).

Standards for Assessing Successful Leadership

Educational research focused on identifying behaviors and tasks of successful school leaders (Marzano e al., 2005; Murphy, 2005; Wallace Foundation, 2009) and resulted in a set of standards that defines quality school leaders (Goodwin, 2010; Southern Regional Educational Board, 2010; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). Despite the lack of research on successful alternative education leadership (Sachetta, 2001; Aron, 2003), alternative program leaders are able to pull from the research of quality school leaders and emulate their behaviors (Aron, 2006). Alternative leaders use these standards to assess their performance and strengths, identify areas for improvement, and maximize their time.

Southern Regional Educational Board's critical success factors. The Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) worked with educators and developed 13 Critical Success Factors (CSFs) that characterize principals successful in increasing achievement of at-risk students. SREB (2010) defined three core competencies of effective leaders:

1. A comprehensive understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to student achievement (p.2), achieved through focusing on student achievement, developing a culture of high expectations; and designing a standards-based instructional system.
2. The "ability to work with teachers and others to design and implement continuous student improvement" (p. 2) by creating a caring

environment, implementing data-based improvement, communicating, and involving parents.

3. "Effective principals have the ability to provide the necessary support for staff to carry out sound school, curriculum and instructional practices" (p. 2) because they initiate and manage change, provide professional development, offer innovating resources, and stay abreast of effective practices.

Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning findings. The Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) published a report on factors that improve student achievement for students in all settings, yet eliminated popular approaches that possess little effect on student improvement (Goodwin, 2010). They built a framework consisting of five areas that can change the odds for student success:

1. "Challenging, engaging, and intentional instruction", depends on high expectations for students (Hattie, 2009), meaningful relationships (Kleinfield, 1972), and the use of a wide variety of research based-teaching methods (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).
2. Curricular pathways to success achieved through personalized (Littky & Grabelle, 2004) and challenging (Matthews, 2007) learning opportunities for every student.
3. Whole-child student supports that depend on meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of students by providing scaffolding (Marzano, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) where they need support.

4. High-performance school cultures achieved through optimal learning opportunities in every class (McRel, 2005).
5. Data-driven, "high reliability" systems that depend on data collection procedures that ensure optimal learning opportunities for students and quick response to student failures (McKinsey & Company, 2007; Waters & Marzano, 2006).

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium's (ISLLC) Standards. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium's (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders defined the roles of effective principals (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012) and developed The ISLLC Standards from research of successful schools and the actions of leaders of these schools (Murphy, 2005). The standards state that educational leaders promote the success of all students by "facilitating a shared vision; promoting a school culture and instructional program focused on growth for staff and students; attending to management and day-to-day operations; building relationships with families and the larger community; acting in a fair and ethical manner; and responding to and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context" (Catano & Stronge, 2006, p. 384). Forty states used these standards for principal assessment and Kentucky used them as an assessment tool to measure the quality of their principals (Browne-Ferrigno & Fusarelli, 2005).

Application of standards for alternative leaders. Alternative leaders use the research from the standards for assessing successful leadership to create new school-wide practices or build upon or justify the existing practices in their school (Aron, 2006; Lange & Sletten, 2002). All of the standards stated that schools develop a challenging

curriculum based on instructional standards (Matthews, 2007), train teachers how to use research-based instructional practices in the classroom (Marzano et al., 2001), and create a school-wide culture that holds high expectations for students (Hattie, 2009). The school meets students' needs quickly through an assessment system that monitors student performance (McKinsey & Company, 2007; Waters & Marzano, 2006), personalizes instruction (Littky & Grabelle, 2004), and offers meaningful relationships. Principals assess their performance based on these standards and use them as a tool that provides direction for their school (Browne-Ferrigno & Fusarelli, 2005).

Effective School Leaders and Managing Time and Tasks

Copland stated that principals that successfully handle all the responsibilities of their job possess super powers (2001). Studies revealed that principals' frustrations with a perceived lack of time and added pressures grew substantially due to increased obligations of reporting, data assessment, and interaction within and outside the school (McIver et al., 2009; Pounder and Crow 2005; Valentine et al., 2003; Wallace Foundation, 2009).

Time management theories. By the 19th century, industrialized nations measured days by "manufacturer's time" or the number of hours spent on the job (Gay, 2004). During the Industrial Revolution, companies focused on methods that increased production levels and F.W. Taylor introduced the concept of "scientific management" that measured workers' performance using observable data and scientific techniques (Taylor, 1911). In the 1960's, time management theories shifted, and company owners empowered their workers to increase productivity instead of rearranging their workers' practices (Drucker, 1966, 1977).

Building upon this movement, researchers examined how individuals that managed their time wisely benefited the profitability and efficiency of their organization (Kotter, 1982). Future studies then examined how individuals that implement specific practices or change aspects of their behavior increase their control over time (Covey, Merrill, & Merrill, 1994). Recent research on productivity shifted from how employees change their behaviors to how employees might alter their perceptions of their control over time (Macan, Shahani, Dipboye, & Phillips, 1990). Covey et al. (1994) further introduced practical strategies such as checklists, goal setting, and time logs that improve employee control over time. The productivity of corporations that have trained staff frequently in time management systems has increased as employees assumed greater personal responsibility (Bailyn, 1993; Lakein, 1991).

Criticisms of time management theories. Perlow (1999) questioned whether individuals improve productivity through individual changed behavior. He suggested that entire organizations achieve meaningful change through collectively implementing time management techniques (Brooks and Mullins, 1989; Covey, 1989; Covey et al., 1994; Griessman, 1994; Jones, 1993). However, time management theories and practices vary in definition and research suffers from inconsistent credibility (King, Winett, & Lovett, 1986; Orlikowsky & Yates, 2002; Peeters and Rutte, 2005) and small sample sizes (Hall & Hursh, 1982; Hanel, Martin, & Koop, 1982).

Time management practices for current leaders. Research suggested that certain practices improve leaders' management of time (Byrne, 2008; Cronk, 1987; Stevens, 1984). These practices included: 1) monitoring time on task through record-keeping and logging in intervals of 15-20 minutes 2) establishing priorities; 3)

performing priority tasks during morning or high energy times; 4) setting goals for the next day; 5) eliminating activities that waste time; 6) delegating tasks to others; 7) reducing distractions; 8) using a written agenda for meeting; 9) scheduling for unexpected events; and 10) only performing tasks that improve job performance.

Time management practices and principals. Time management supporters proposed that their theories are applicable to educators (Covey et al., 1994) since they offer practical solutions that organize and prioritize the duties of a principal. Also, they mentioned that principals could use their theories to reduce stress and build in time for possible disruptions (Cronk, 1987; Byrne, 2008). However, time management theories didn't account for the volume of unexpected and immediate duties that arise from school leadership. Principals noted that they oversee complex organizations and are in charge of "stuff that walks through the door", describing the unexpected incidents that they deal with daily (Valentine et al., 2003). This problem particularly hinders principals of alternative programs since they often have less administration staff (Aron & Zweig, 2003).

School for Success

School for Success (SFS) is located in a Kentucky school district with several traditional high schools and an alternative school tailored for students with behavioral problems (SFS, 2012). The district created School for Success since it needed a school that would target potential dropouts in their traditional high schools, alter students' perceptions of education, offer students a curriculum that would meet their needs, and support them until graduation (Principal of School for Success, personal communication, May 5, 2010). School for Success is a combination of a Type I and III alternative

programs since it offers students a full-year program, is housed in a separate building, serves students from traditional high schools, implements an employability matrix for discipline and to teach citizenship skills, targets students with socio-emotional problems, teaches students how to overcome learning problems, and students voluntarily choose when to return to their home school (AEL, 1998; SFS, 2012).

The school's philosophy reflects the characteristics of a Type I and III school according to Raywid's typology since it forges strong relationships with students in hopes that it leads to engagement and student achievement (1994). Yet, they enable students to overcome learning deficiencies by teaching them how to overcome their academic, family, and community problems (AEL, 1998; Shepperson et al., 2010). Their school's model for learning states that as leaders and teachers build close relationships with students, the students engage themselves in the learning process, and it results in student achievement (Shepperson et al., 2010). Their theory of learning appears in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. The School for Success's Theory of Progressive Success

District policy. Numerous districts responded to the US Department of Education's Race to the Top and The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 legislation and constructed alternative programs that target students in danger of dropping out (Lehr & Lange, 2003; NCLB, 2001; RTES, 2009). The district's goal for SFS desires that students

earn the necessary credits at SFS and return back to their home school for graduation with career and college readiness skills. SFS uses seven "connections" to guide students' learning and the course offerings at the school. They want students to connect to self, other students, teachers, their future, technology, the community, and the real world (SFS, 2012). The principal designed the school building with the district's financial backing, developed the initial curriculum, and hired the teachers that he desired (Principal of School for Success, personal communication, May 5, 2010; Shepperson et al., 2010).

Description of teachers. SFS has eighteen teachers including six that are new to the school in 2011-2012. Of the six new teachers, five of them have previous experience, and one is entirely new to teaching. Thirteen teachers in their building have worked with alternative students before, possess strong interpersonal skills, develop relationships with students easily, and desire more power than mainstream schools allow in the development of school policies. The school offers English, mathematics, science, and social studies full-time and art and physical education part-time. Also, they allow students to take non-traditional courses such as boxing, cosmetology, and yoga.

Their schedule builds in time for field trips, guest speakers, and time to work on school projects every week. Their classes are limited to about fifteen students in a class to maximize learning and opportunities for teacher-student interaction (Shepperson et al., 2010). Also, the school offers students the chance to build exhibits in their museum to showcase previous school projects and current information that the students are learning.

Description of students. School for Success started its third year of operation with a population of 140 students ranging from 7th - 12th grades. Twenty-two percent of the students participate in special education services, eighty-five percent of the students

qualify for free/reduced lunch, and thirty-three percent of the students come from a minority background (Principal of School for Success, personal communication, August 21, 2011). The students are described as students that went unnoticed and were disconnected from their traditional schools (SFS, 2012; Shepperson et al., 2010).

Description of principal. The principal for SFS attended Georgetown College as a pre-med major and even attended medical school at the University of Kentucky, but decided that his calling was teaching. He earned his teaching certificate at Eastern Kentucky University and a master's in science education from Columbia University in New York. He was a thirteen year veteran of teaching science at a middle school in the same county before being hired as the school's program administrator. He recently earned his certificate to become a principal and previously led his school on a provisional certificate.

He has a background of problem solving and designing curriculum that meets the specific needs of at-risk students. He uses his love of science and project-based learning to incorporate everyday objects into lessons and connect students' learning experiences to the real world. As a teacher, he once used old car motors to create a revolving solar system and built an eight foot tall volcano that erupted household chemicals. He stated that "Instead of taking a field trip to the science museum in Louisville, we created a science museum" (Principal of School for Success citation, Beach, 2009, p. 1). He builds connections to the community and sells the mission of the school to parents, students, and citizens through the quality of his public relations skills and zeal for the school (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2005). The principal believes that meaningful teacher-student

relationships lead to student engagement and student achievement (Principal of School for Success, personal communication, May 5, 2010).

Project based-learning. SFS builds strong interpersonal relationships with students and meets their needs through the use of project-based learning assignments and small-classroom sizes. Also, they incorporate employability skills into daily lessons and use a special classroom management tool that develops citizenship skills (Shepperson et al., 2010). An example of their nontraditional approach to instruction is White Tiger Wednesdays, a day that connects student learning experiences from the classroom to their community. It occurs every other Wednesday, and students rotate on projects to build their school's museum, paint their school library, plant a Christmas tree farm, visit colleges, and attend field trips, etc.

Summary of Literature Review

Alternative programs and schools are becoming an increasingly common educational mechanism to help districts meet federal and state requirements to reduce dropout rates. However, critics question the level of rigor in alternative programs and their accountability of providing a quality education (Kim & Taylor, 2008). Students who attend often struggle with socio-emotional issues, academic problems, and personal life stories that have placed them seriously behind and disenfranchised with school (Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008). Alternative programs empower students, build relationships with them, and enable them to remove problems that pose barriers to their learning (Lehr & Lange, 2003).

Leaders in these settings must not only fulfill the daily duties of principals, but also ensure that the special needs of students, many of whom have deficiencies in skill

sets, are met. They spend countless hours each day building a positive framework of support for students with socio-emotional obstacles to ensure that their problems don't prevent them from learning (Littky & Grabelle, 2004). They instill instructional practices in their pedagogy to provide evidence of rigor to outside critics and that will lead to student success (Aron, 2006). They serve numerous roles in their school and community as they attempt to create partnerships with outside agencies and secure ample funding to maximize the learning opportunities of their students and recruit new students to their school (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993; Hausman et al., 2000). One way to accurately assess exactly what is prioritized and what activities the school leader undertakes is by monitoring, describing, and measuring time-on-task.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter explores how the researcher used a timed check list instrument to record activities, make observation notations, analyze actions and time management, and interpret the daily activities of the SFS principal. The chapter explains the goals, design, methodology, quantitative and qualitative data that was collected, and analysis and interpretation processes. In addition, the researcher presented the background of the well-established measurement instrument, the Val-Ed's Time/Task Analysis™. The research resulted in a single case study of the activities and perspectives of a principal as he spent two days working with staff, students, district administration, parents, and community members at a 7th-12th grade alternative school in central Kentucky. While not generalizable to a larger population, a detailed study of this kind revealed details about leading an alternative school and suggested important perspectives or nuances about this and other schools of similar nature. In addition, the study provided interesting discussion regarding the suitability of the Val-Ed Time/Task Analysis™ instrument for monitoring principal tasks in a school reported to focus on highly experiential, staff and student led learning activities.

Research Purpose

The purpose of action research is to address a "specific problem within a specific setting" (Merriam, 2009, p.4) and this study explored an alternative program leader's time spent and the nature of his actions performed. Therefore, the researcher used

qualitative methods since they provided him with rich description about the phenomenon that he studied. A qualitative study allowed the researcher to determine how an instructional focus was "constructed by human beings as they engaged with the world they are interpreting" (Crotty, 1998, 42-43). The data consisted of an abundance of words and allowed him to interpret the data and search for emergent themes that arose from the findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The researcher used an existing instrument, the Time/Task Analysis™, to help him focus on the leader's actions and duties related to instruction (Wallace Foundation, 2009). The tool referenced activities that leaders performed and an existing protocol on how to use it during observations. The researcher used the categories suggested by the instrument and followed its protocol to increase the validity and reliability of the study.

An advantage of using observations was the ability to record factual information while the phenomenon was occurring, yet the researcher recorded reflective comments as well (Saldana, 2009). Analytic memoing allowed the researcher to record "feelings, reactions, hunches, initial interpretations, speculations, and working hypotheses (Merriam, 2009, P. 131). The data was coded based on the observation notations and samples of analytic memoing. The interpretation of the leader's daily activities verified the level of relevancy of the categories suggested by the instrument. The findings helped define the alternative program leader's daily activities and illuminated discrepancies between them and traditional duties performed by leaders of traditional schools.

Research Questions

The research used the following questions to guide this study:

1. Does the alternative program principal focus more time on management or instruction when measured by the Time Task Analysis™ instrument?
2. Do the instructional categories within the Time Task Analysis™ instrument correspond to the principal's actual actions, specifically a) conducting observations and walkthroughs, b) working on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, c) working with parents and the community, and d) engaging directly with students?
3. What other activities does the principal perform that are outside those outlined in the Time/Task Analysis™?

Methodology

The researcher used a single subject study design with a mixed methods approach to describe the principal actions (instructional, managerial, and personal) using a check list instrument, and also compared the findings from the check list with actual observations. The mixed methods approach allowed the researcher to benefit from the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative aspect provided him with a rich description about the actions of the subject through observations and enabled him to search for themes that arose from the findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009). The quantitative aspect allowed him to use descriptive statistics collected from the Time/Task Analysis™ instrument and to focus on the leader's actions and duties related to instruction (Wallace Foundation, 2009).

Population

The alternative school principal for the School for Success was the single subject of the study. A single subject study allowed the researcher to "get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly could" (Bromley, 1986, p. 23) and provided insight into the activities and thinking of the principal. The researcher provided the reader with valuable information from the researcher's narrative descriptions (Stake, 2005) though he was careful to avoid generalizations due to the limited size and scope of the study (Merriam, 2009). However, the subject led a school that acted as a model for the district and neighboring districts (Principal of School for Success, personal communication, May 5, 2010), and the results supplied pertinent information about expectations and future development of alternative education programs.

Data Collection

Measuring principal activities. The researcher used a timed check list instrument to record the nature of the activities (instructional, management, and personal activities) that an alternative program leader performed every fifteen minutes for a period of two days. The instrument broke the instructional, managerial, and personal tasks into fifteen categories: student supervision; work with students; employee supervision; office work/prep; walkthrough; feedback; parents/guardians; decision making committees/groups/meetings; district: meetings, supervisors, others; external: officials, others; modeling/teaching; professional development; observations; celebrations; and planning, curriculum, assessment. The researcher didn't focus on the tasks that were considered personal or managerial, but only ones characterized as instructional.

The researcher observed the principal two days, Tuesday, November 22 and Tuesday, November 29 during fall 2011. He intended to schedule them in one week, but disruptions arose and forced the observations to fall over a span of two weeks. The researcher used the check list during observations to record descriptors of managerial or instructional tasks that were observed behaviors of the principal, on paper every fifteen minutes (Turnbull, Haslam, Arcaira, Riley, Sinclair, & Coleman, 2009). The tool provided a snapshot of the principal's actions to determine if he spent the majority of his time on instructional responsibilities (National SAM Innovation Project, 2010).

Observation. During the observation, the researcher recorded the principal's actions every five minutes and the amount of time spent on the task. However, he left space on the paper to fill in the missing details once the observation concluded (Merriam, 2009; National SAM Innovation Project, 2010). The researcher recorded the action performed by the principal on the checklist and wrote observation notations during the remaining time of the five minute interval. The researcher collected additional data by compiling analytical memos during the observation. This type of writing included assumptions about the data and trends and ideas that he analyzed later. The timed check list and observation notations provided the researcher with a rich description that Merriam (2009) described as "complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated" (p. 43).

Questioning and interviewing. The researcher spent a few minutes at the end of the day or after an incident to seek clarification of the principal's actions and recorded the principal's explanations categorizing or defending his actions (Merriam, 2009).

Details of the Instrument

The Wallace Foundation created the principal assessment tool that was used in the study. The Wallace Foundation provided money for Vanderbilt University to develop an assessment tool, the Vanderbilt Assessment of Education in Leadership (Val-Ed) that took three years and numerous research locations to develop (Wallace Foundation, 2009). The instrument was tested on several schools and districts to ensure its validity and reliability and used the ISLLC Standards as its benchmark for scoring. The tool measured the quality of mentoring relationships and time management practices of principals. For this study, the researcher used the Time/Task Analysis™ assessment tool of the VAL-ED assessment package (Wallace Foundation, 2009).

Time/Task Analysis™ assessment tool. An important feature of the VAL-ED assessment tool was the Time/Task Analysis™. This program required a researcher to observe a principal for a period of five days and to record the amount of time that they spent on instructional, management, or personal responsibilities. The tool provided the researcher with "descriptors", managerial or instructional tasks that were observed behaviors of the principal (Turnbull et. al., 2009). The data enabled the principal to identify the amount of time and what period of the day that he spent on instructional leadership to increase his instructional focus. Also, it allowed him to set goals for how much time he wanted to dedicate to instruction and actions that enhanced their school's instruction.

Categories of Principal's Actions according to instrument.

Management

1) Instructional leadership

2) Student discipline and engagement

a. Student Supervision (ex: Cafeteria, lunchroom, hallway)

b. Student Discipline (ex: Behavior management)

3) Security and administration

a. Office Work/Prep (ex: Copying or searching for materials, setting agenda, working at computer)

b. Building Management(ex: Maintenance and safety, personnel not instructional)

c. Decision making committees/groups/meetings (ex: SBDM meetings, formal and
informal advisory groups)

d. District: meetings, supervisors, others (ex: meeting with district personnel involving building issues)

e. External: officials, others (ex: Fire marshal, child protective services, community groups)

f. Celebrations (ex: Adult focused, non-instructional, non-instructional with students including a student birthday)

g. Employee Supervision (ex: Monitoring or working with classified staff, non-instructional work with certified staff)

h. Employee Discipline (ex: Direction tied to contract, work rules, warning)

4) Parent and community interaction

a. Parents/Guardians (ex: student attendance/illness, non- instructionally focused)

Instruction

1) Instructional Leadership

   a. Walkthrough (ex: moving from room to room: appears to be observing, taking or notes, monitoring climate in rooms and public places)

   b. Employee Supervision (ex: direction about instruction)

   c. Feedback (ex: Giving instructional feedback on lesson, unit, PD, etc; giving instructional coaching)

   d. Modeling/teaching (ex: teacher needs to be in room observing)

   e. Professional development (ex: formal PD presentation, participation)

   f. Observations (ex: observing instruction, 15 minutes or longer, appears to be taking notes)

   g. Celebrations (ex: student or adult focused; directly tied to instruction or assessment)

   h. Planning, curriculum, assessment (ex: meetings with individuals or groups: specific to instruction, studying curriculum or assessment documents)

2) Student Discipline and Engagement

   a. Student Supervision (ex: in-classroom instructional assistance, simply supervising students while instruction is in process or students are working)

   b. Work with students (ex: one-on-one or in a small group – talk is directly related to learning)

3) Security and Administration

a. Office Work/ prep (ex: Reviewing lesson plans, preparing instructional feedback, evaluations, etc., working with test data, preparing for an instructionally focused meeting)

b. Decision making committees/groups/meetings (ex: Instructional discussions, receiving feedback on curriculum, instruction and/or assessment issues)

c. District: meetings, supervisors, others (ex: Topic/discussion directly tied to instruction, assessment, curriculum, content)

4) Parent and Community Interaction

a. Parents/guardians (ex: Conversations regarding instruction)

Personal

1) Personal (ex: Lunch or restroom breaks, errands for personal business, personal phone calls)

Use of instrument in previous studies. The Time/Task Analysis™ tool has been used over nine years now, in nine states, and thirty-seven districts affiliated with the Wallace Foundation. It was used as a tool in the School Administration Manager project to explore how principals could spend more time on instructional tasks than managerial, thus supporting its validity for this similar study (Wallace Foundation, 2009). The tool has been used successfully by the states of Delaware, Georgia and Massachusetts in their Race to the Top proposals (National SAM Innovation Project, 2010). The Wallace Foundation has tested the tool with numerous schools through web-based support and training sessions throughout nine states. The Wallace Foundation granted any educator

permission to use the tool for free of charge and provided a link to download the program (Wallace Foundation, 2009).

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the tool's fifteen minute-interval findings using descriptive statistics and Microsoft Excel. He inputted the quantitative frequencies of tasks performed by the principal into a spreadsheet, ran descriptive statistics on it, and used the data to create tables and charts. He examined the data to see if the principal's time was differentiated across the five areas of instructional leadership mentioned in research question 2. Also, the researcher performed frequency analysis of the principal's instructional actions to see if they occurred less due to the characteristics of students associated with an alternative school.

Finally, the researcher used coding strategies to analyze the data. The first level of codes came from the check list guide and secondary codes emerged from themes that were discovered from the data. The researcher mixed and matched codes during the second cycle to implement the most relevant codes for the data that answered research question 3. The coding strategies allowed the researcher to spot trends in the principal's actions and to explore perceptions of the participants (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). Then the researcher performed a member check (phone or in person) after the second cycle of coding with the School for Success principal to ask for clarification on any unclear points.

Data Interpretation

The researcher used a two-cycle coding system consisting of an exploratory coding strategy in the first cycle to explore the data and sort it into groups. He coded the

analytic memoing notes and observation notations to provide meaning (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The researcher used the provisional coding system in the first cycle since a "start list" of codes were provided in the Time/Task Analysis™ instrument and were based on previous research and literature (Miles and Hubermann, 1994, p. 58). Val-Ed developed these categories (instructional, managerial, and personal) due to their previous research using the Time Task Analysis™ instrument (Wallace Foundation, 2009). This coding system allowed the researcher to connect themes from the principal's instructional actions and how they influenced student learning and activities in his school.

Saldana (2009) recommended using a provisional coding system for qualitative studies that built upon previous research or used similar instrument tools as previous studies. However, there were precautions to using a provisional code system. The researcher not only analyzed possible codes from the check list's predetermined categories, but searched for possible trends using the themes that emerged from the reflection and observational notes (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Also, the researcher examined the relevancy of the codes to ensure that there were not more appropriate codes to use (Saldana, 2009). In the second cycle, "more refined coding systems were developed and applied" to construct meaning (Saldana, 2009, p. 11). The researcher built upon the first coding system by analyzing the data to see if codes emerged from the data that suggested patterns in the principal's actions.

The researcher used thematic coding in the second cycle to search for "explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identified an emergent theme" (Miles & Hubermann, 1994, p. 69). Also, thematic codes were useful for identifying themes, explanations, and organization of human relationships from the data (Miles &

Hubermann, 1994). The researcher used the first cycle's codes to assign them a thematic code that identified an emerging theme (Saldana, 2009). Then the researcher searched the data for phrases, actions, or words that signified a relationship in the data between the thematic codes (Miles & Hubermann, 1994). To understand why themes were emerging from the data or their relationship to the principal's actions, the researcher identified the "what" and "how" questions behind the principal's behaviors (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997, p. 196) and their impact on his student population's learning.

Member Check. Once the researcher finished the second cycle of coding, he planned on performing a member check (phone or in person) with the School for Success principal to ask for clarification on any unclear points. The researcher provided the principal with the Time/Task Analysis™ results and notes from the analytic memoing to see how he responded or added clarification to the notes.

Time Line

The researcher observed the principal of School for Success for two days, Tuesday, November 22, and Tuesday, November 29 in fall 2011. Both days were instructional days without any unusual interruptions in the schedule. He performed descriptive analysis on the frequencies of tasks in winter 2011. The researcher used provisional codes in winter 2011 and implemented a second round of thematic coding in that same time period. Then the researcher allowed the principal and committee to view the notes to clarify actions and provide triangulation. The additional observation helped triangulate the data and minimized the researcher bias. The researcher analyzed the data using descriptive statistics and Val Ed's Time/Task Analysis™ program and wrote a report on the findings in spring 2012.

Summary

This chapter explored how the researcher used a timed check list instrument to record activities, make observation notations, analyze actions and time management, and interpret the daily activities of the SFS principal. The chapter explained the descriptive and qualitative design of the study, how the research used Val-Ed's Time/Task Analysis™ to interpret the daily instructional activities of the principal, and to examine how that data reflected the unique duties of running an alternative program. Also, this section explained how descriptive analysis of "codes" of instrumentation verified the relevancy of codes found in the instrument and identified patterns in the field notes. The research questions were stated and they described the characteristics of the single subject population.

The elements of the methodology were explained and included a check list for activities, observation notations of the principal actions, analytical memoing, and descriptive analysis. Also, it included an in-depth interpretation based on observation notations that were organized into codes. The data collection procedures were examined including the instrument and it stated why Microsoft Excel was used to perform data analysis. Then the data interpretation included two cycles of qualitative coding that were used with member check to provide triangulation for the data. Finally, the timeline for the study was examined with the completion dates for fieldwork, data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, and the final revision of the report.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

This research project investigated the use of a timed check list instrument to record the details of a principal's actions while on the job. Additional observation and analysis provided interpretation of these daily activities, specifically around principal duties to manage the school, lead instruction, and provide other support to teachers, students, the district, and the community. Findings from both the check list and more naturalistic observations are presented in this chapter and provide a snapshot of how this leader of an alternative school spends his work days.

The research used the following questions to guide this study:

1. Does the alternative program principal focus more time on management or instruction when measured by the Time Task Analysis™ instrument?
2. Do the instructional categories within the Time Task Analysis™ instrument correspond to the principal's actual actions, specifically a) conducting observations and walkthroughs, b) working on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, c) working with parents and the community, and d) engaging directly with students?
3. What other activities does the principal perform that are outside those outlined in the Time/Task Analysis™?

This single subject study focuses on the activities of one principal as he goes through two days working with staff, students, district administration, parents, and

community members at a 7th-12th grade alternative school in central Kentucky. Though not generalizable to a larger population, a detailed study of this nature reveals the specialized nature of a leader in an alternative school and may provide important perspectives for leadership in nontraditional schools, overall. The study also identified some limitations and provided specific grounds for discussion regarding the suitability of the Time/Task Analysis™ instrument for monitoring all principals, especially in schools that have structures and functions outside those normally found in more traditional settings.

Data Collection

Setting. The study was conducted at the School for Success (SFS), an alternative education school for students who have not been in traditional middle and high schools. At the time of the study, the school enrolled 140 students. Most of the observation took place at SFS although the researcher accompanied the principal off campus to a meeting at a nearby traditional high school. The research took place on November Tuesday, 22 and Thursday, 29, 2011. These days were selected because they offered regular class periods and school activities, compared to some early release and special mentoring activities built into the school schedule. Observations occurred from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm each day. Besides a few minutes for personal or confidential meetings, the researcher shadowed the principal's movements the entire time. Because of the small student population, experiential and real world instructional emphasis, and focus on socio-emotional wellness of students, it was anticipated that the principal's duties would, to some extent, be different than that for a large more traditional school. It was anticipated

that the extent of the difference and the value of the instrument to record those variations would become apparent as the research developed.

Time/Task Analysis™ Instrument Check List. The instrument divides a principal's time into three major categories: management, instruction, and personal. Following recommendations for use, the researcher checked actual activity on the list provided by the instrument in 15 minute intervals. Particular focus was paid to instructional subcategories that include tasks that specifically influence student instruction in the classroom, at home, or on school accountability tests. These subcategories include: a) observations and walkthroughs; b) curriculum, instruction, and assessment; c) parents and community; and d) engaging directly with students. Within these subcategories, specific actions are listed as: 1) student supervision; 2) work with students; 3) employee supervision; 4) office work; 5) walkthrough; 6) feedback; 7) district: meetings, supervisors, others; 8) parents; 9) decision making groups; 10) modeling/teaching; 11) professional development; 12) planning, curriculum, assessment; 13) observation; and 14) celebration. Care was taken to follow the guidelines of the tool to better differentiate management and instructional activities. At the end of two day, a total of 66 actions were noted as a result of the 15 minute interval notations.

Management categories concentrate on tasks that are not instructional in nature, specifically geared to security and administration. Specific listed items include: 1) student supervision; 2) work with students; 3) employee supervision; 4) office work; 5) district: meetings, supervisors, others; 6) parents; 7) decision making groups; 8) external: officials; and 9) celebration. Some of these categories are not exclusive to instruction or management, for example celebration. Often, the researcher found that management

categories such as security often included components that were clearly instructional. Every attempt was made to accurately code or jointly code these instances for as accurate of a description of the true nature of any action taking place at the 15 minute intervals. Since the focus of this study was instructional leadership rather than management, analysis and interpretation focused on delving deeper into the nature of instructional activities and management actions were generally left with initial coding and count with no additional analysis.

Personal category duties in the Time/Task Analysis™ instrument very specifically related to the principal's personal life rather than the operation or leadership of the school. These included personal phone calls, non-business lunch, and other such activities.

Naturalistic Observations. The naturalistic observations provided input about how the tasks of an alternative principal differed from those of a traditional principal. The researcher took additional notes on principal activities that fell outside those listed in the instrument. In addition to checking the appropriate descriptor on the instrument check list, the researcher jotted down specific details of the action on an observation form. For each observation, he described the physical setting of where the task took place, the roles of each individual involved in the action (principal, teacher, student, other), the principal's description to the researcher, and subtle factors (unplanned and nonverbal) of the task. In addition to the description of the action, the researcher wrote descriptive and reflective phrases in an observer memo column on the observation form. These were used later for interpretation of the actions taking place and to provide additional context and

analytical memoing to enrich the details of the observation process (Merriam, 2009; National SAM Innovation Project, 2010).

Tasks and actions that did not align with the Time/Task Analysis™ instrument descriptors were listed under a category entitled not recognized on the check list sheet. In these cases, special care was taken to record the specific action, other participants, subtle features, and the principal's own clarification and description of the activity as it was narrated to the researcher immediately afterwards. In addition, the research included a brief observation or question in the observer notes to remind him why the task stuck out as special.

Ongoing Narrative with Principal. It is a natural habit of the principal to constantly narrate his actions to visitors, researchers, and others who come to see the school in action. This process provided an open dialogue for clarifying questions to be immediately asked, detailed his precise movements when they weren't easily observed, and explained his motivation for performing any task. On several occasions, he summarized the details of his actions to the researcher and allowed time for clarifying questions. After a confidential meeting with a student or adult, the principal would debrief the researcher on the details of the meeting and the rationale for the privacy of the meeting. On a couple of occasions, he showed the researcher the screen of his cell phone to view the texts that he was writing or reading from others. The principal's explanations were noted on the observational form under a section entitled principal's description. This was to allow a clear differentiation from the researcher's own notes of principal actions under a section labeled principal.

Secondary Interviews and Member Checking. The researcher originally planned to interview the principal at the end of each day for clarification of his tasks and to act as an additional member check for clarification to the researcher of preliminary conclusions or descriptions (Merriam, 2009). The principal's constant narration, however, precluded that from being necessary; therefore, no close-of-day interviews were held either day. Any additional checking of facts or data verification took place in the data analysis phase.

Data Management, Analysis, and Interpretation

This project involved several segments of observational data being collected simultaneously. In order to ensure accurate analysis, interpretation, and reflection on the data, the researcher looked at each type of data separately and then triangulated descriptive findings to reach results. The process included a process of transcribing a total of 12 pages of hand written fieldnotes, and using Excel spreadsheet operations to organize and statistically analyze distributions of Time/Task Analysis™ descriptors of activities. In addition, the researcher used commonly held qualitative practice to code all transcription through two cycles and use analytic memoing to reflect and define patterns (Merriam, 2009).

Principal activities were identified and counted every 15 minutes for a total of 66 intervals over two days using the instrument's check list of actions that are laid out in overarching categories (instructional, management, and personal), more specifically identified in the list of descriptors (student supervision; work with students; employee supervision; office work; walkthrough; feedback; district: meetings, supervisors, others; parents; decision making groups; modeling/teaching; professional development;

planning, curriculum, assessment; observation; and celebration), and detailed using more open-ended naturalistic observation. The result was a precise recording of actions that could generate more detailed analysis, with a total of 33 observational forms completed each day.

Frequency of Time/Task Analysis™ Descriptors of Activities. Microsoft Excel spreadsheets were used to display and quantify the checklist notations of the 66 observational form entries. This allowed for an initial count of the number of instructional, managerial, and personal activities that were noted over the two days. Additional analysis was undertaken with those tasks in order to ensure accurate identification within categories, and in some cases placement within more than one category. Frequency analyses indicated the general spread of activities. More detailed qualitative analysis provided greater detail and insight into the nature of these activities.

Time/Task Analysis™ of Instructional Activities. The researcher analyzed how often the principal performed instructional actions that fell under the instrument's four main instructional categories of 1) observations and walkthroughs; 2) curriculum, instruction, and assessment; 3) parents and community; and 4) engaging directly with students. The research found that fourteen of the principal's 15 observed instructional actions fell into one of these four categories. In Microsoft Excel, the check list's fourteen instructional actions were organized within the instrument's four main groups of instructional categories and a frequency analysis was run to determine the extent to which the principal spent instructional time on any major category.

Changes in the Original Instrument. The researcher renamed and reorganized a couple of categories in the original instrument to better align duties that fell under the instructional categories mentioned in Research Question #2 and to provide a more accurate description of the duties in the categories. The instrument originally named the observations and walkthroughs category as instructional leadership, but the researcher renamed it observations and walkthroughs to more clearly identify the actions that composed it, including walkthroughs, employee supervision, feedback, observations, modeling/teaching, and celebrations. Also, the instructional category security and administration was renamed curriculum, instruction, and assessment, to make it more descriptive. It included the duties decision-making groups, Office work, professional development, planning, curriculum, assessment, and district meetings, as they related to instructional themes.

One action entitled external: officials referred to meeting with child services or other officials, and it remained as a management duty because it did not relate directly to instructional leadership. One item was difficult to place accurately as either managerial or instructional. Within the descriptor of parents and community, the instrument didn't consider work in the community to be an instructional action compared to working with parents. The instrument viewed it as a management type of activity; therefore, the category didn't classify any action with community partnerships as instructional though the name community appeared in the title of the category. The instrument's final instructional category was called "engaging directly with students" and consisted of the following two actions: 1) student supervision and 2) work with students. If the instrument didn't classify an observed action as instructional, the researcher didn't label it as

instructional according to the instrument's checklist, but rather classified it in the category as "Not Recognized".

Observation Field Notes. In the field, the researcher recorded notations about the setting, activities, participants, and nature of actions undertaken by the principal. As defined by Merriam (2009), these descriptive notations provide a rich "complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated" (p. 43). Details gained from the naturalistic observations helped the researcher to classify instructional or management actions according to their respective category in the check list. They also offered information beyond what identification of actions with a check list could provide. The additional data also were used to identify tasks that didn't align with the instrument check list, identifying missing categories of activities.

Qualitative Interpretations, Reflections, and Coding. Following qualitative fieldwork procedures, the researcher reviewed the raw data and composed a 12 page reflection, specifically pinpointing principal actions that were not easily recognized by the instrument's check list. He found that these were most often activities not routinely performed in traditional high schools, and added credibility to the inclusion of data that did not align with the instrument task lists. This process aided analysis by helping identify patterns of activities outside those considered by the instrument.

Other analytic memoing aided the researcher who wrote one word phrases to describe the principal's tasks regardless if they existed on the check list. The reflection, observational entries, and interesting ideas from the analytical memos provided numerous words that described the principal's tasks. Then the researcher read through the phrases and circled the ones that were performed frequently by the principal, key word or phrases

that he used repeatedly, tasks critical to the success of his school, and typical actions of a traditional high school principal. The previous analytical process of detailing the principal's tasks, composing analytical memos, writing a reflection, and creating one-word phrases enabled the researcher to create possible codes to further analyze the data, spot trends in the principal's actions, and explore perceptions of the participants (Bogden & Biklen, 2007).

First Cycle of Coding. Two cycles of coding transcribed field notes were undertaken. The primary purpose of coding was to recognize patterns outside of those identified in the instrument. The coding system also provided additional meaning to the 66 observational entries and the 12 page reflection. In the first cycle coding, the researcher chose provisional coding, a predetermined set of codes system since the instrument already provided a "start list" of codes (tasks classified as instructional, management, or personal) in the Time/Task Analysis™ instrument that were based on previous research and literature (Miles and Hubermann, 1994, p. 58; Wallace Foundation, 2009). This coding system indicated how themes from the principal's instructional tasks influenced student learning and activities in his school. Also, previous research (Saldana, 2009) suggested the use of a provisional system when a qualitative study built upon previous research or used an instrument from a previous study.

The researcher didn't use codes from the instrument only for the first cycle coding due to its reliance on predetermined categories (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). That may have led to his overlooking important trends in the data that emerged from the observational entries or reflection of analytical memoing (Saldana, 2009). An additional 20 themes' codes were found through coding and organized according to the following

three categories: tasks unique to the principal of an alternative education program, instructional tasks found in the instrument's check list, and managerial tasks found in the instrument's list.

The themes from the category "actions unique to the principal of an alternative education program" consisted of: 1) activity with shadow; 2) application process; 3) education dialogues; 4) empowering others; 5) meeting outsiders; 6) communicating to students with technology; 7) non-verbal empowering; 8) spreading SFS vision; and 9) community partnerships. The themes from the category "instructional actions found in the instrument's check list" consisted of: 1) planning, curriculum, assessment; 2) work with students; 3) monitoring instruction (changed the name to walkthrough); 4) office work (could be instructional or management); and 5) modeling. The themes from the category "managerial actions found in the instrument's check list" consisted of: 1) maintenance/safety; 2) supervision; and 3) discipline. A greater proportion of codes were selected that arose from the observational forms due to the number of intervals that the principal performed a task that wasn't recognized by the instrument's checklist.

The code "activity with shadow" referred to tasks that the principal conducted with a shadow observing him for a research or leadership program. A visitor shadowed him for the duration of the first day of research for a leadership program. The principal informed the researcher that when the district hired him, he agreed to allow numerous shadows to observe his activities to develop their leadership qualities. Also, he stopped his work several times to answer the shadow's questions about the school or issues pertaining to leadership or the current state of education.

The code called application process described the principal's tasks when he explained the school's application process for enrollment with other educators or parents, offered a rationale why a certain student wasn't selected for enrollment, or informed others that the school wasn't accepting any new students due to overcapacity. On the first day of research, a man that had already graduated from a traditional high school came to the School for Success for a second time to see if he could enroll there. The principal met with him and informed him that he wasn't eligible for enrollment due to already obtaining his high school diploma. Another example of this code was when the principal explained their application process to another district educator who recommended one of his/her students for enrollment. During another occasion, the action occurred during the principal's afternoon conversation with his secretary when she informed him of a missed call concerning questions about the application process.

The code called education dialogues represented discussions of how current methods of instruction and educational practices prevented educators from meeting the academic needs of students and methods to solve this problem. The principal entered these types of conversations frequently when guests, shadows, or possible educational partners met with him. The shadow and principal discussed how the shadow felt that the direction of the state educational system restricted him from teaching material that engaged his students. Another example of this code was when the principal brought up this issue with a potential post-secondary partner about how current trends in education coerced teachers to care more about state standardized test scores than the welfare of their students. Another example of this task was when the principal answered questions from

another post-secondary professor about his rationale for structuring School for Success completely differently from traditional schools.

The code “empowering others” referred to how the principal encouraged staff to develop strengths in instructional matters or to pursue the attainment of new traits that would improve themselves, encouraged them verbally, or considered their input in decisions. One example was how he offered suggestions and encouragement for an employee that expressed difficulty in teaching a lesson in which she lacked the content knowledge and confidence to teach it effectively. On another occasion, he carefully considered the feelings, temperaments, and possible work load of teachers when designing course offerings for the next semester. Another incident was when he developed a teacher to become a leader and suggested possible paths for her to get into administration.

The code “meeting outsiders” referred to how he met with or entertained guests or visitors from the community and other educational institutions. These visits lasted a couple of hours or less as opposed to his interaction with shadows. One example was when he met with two gentlemen from a post-secondary institution about forming a possible partnership for their teacher education program. During another occasion, he discussed a previous collaboration involving School for Success students and graduate education students with the post-secondary professor in charge of the program. Another example was a meeting with a post-secondary professor and their conversation of a future research project at School for Success that would produce data to impact student learning.

The code “improving communication and learning using technology” involved communicating to students or improving student learning through the use of technology.

On one occasion, the principal demonstrated a school employability matrix to a visitor by showing her an application on his phone that a teacher designed. Another example is when the principal performed hallway supervision and texted a student to find out the details of his absence. An additional example was when he texted a district educator about a student's status in court proceedings while performing supervision duties in the hallway.

The code "non-verbal empowering" consisted of tasks when the principal encouraged staff and students through the use of non-verbal methods such as smiling, hugs, pats on the back, eye contact, and enthusiasm expressed through body language. On the first day of research, the principal had just returned from a three day absence from the school and knew that numerous teachers were sick that week as well. On one of his first walkthroughs that morning, the principal walked through the school, hugged several students that he encountered, and patted teachers on the back while checking on them. Around lunch time that day, the principal supervised the grounds of the school, occasionally looking into windows. Once the teachers and students noticed him, they exchanged smiles and waves energetically. On both days of research, the principal demonstrated his approval and confidence in his secretary through the use of frequent smiling while talking, positive body language movements with the use of his hands, and his body language when he listened intently to her comments.

The code "spreading school for success vision" demonstrated the principal's tasks that shared the vision of the school and its innovative instructional practices with others. In one instance, the principal shared ideas on how he continuously spreads the vision of School for Success to other schools and empowers them so that they would try new

approaches with instruction. On another occasion, the principal informed the shadow observing him how to craft a vision for his leadership style and develop instructional techniques to pursue it. He shared with the shadow how these techniques enabled him to obtain the job with the district at School for Success. Another example of this task was when the principal described his vision of the school and its innovative practices in a meeting with a possible post-secondary partner.

The code "community partnerships" referred to tasks that created or maintained partnerships in the community that supported instruction. During one incident, the principal contacted a Christmas tree nursery about starting a tree farm on the school's property that the students would maintain as part of their curriculum. On the first day of the research, the principal emailed several community leaders to create a partnership with the school and to get them into his building for a future program. An additional example of this code was when the principal contacted several community groups to schedule a meeting to discuss how they could collaborate with students.

The code "planning, curriculum, assessment" described tasks that involved planning or making decisions about instructional offerings, student learning, and subjects related to assessments. One of the principal's first tasks when he returned from a three-day absence was to meet with the Administrative Dean and plan new approaches of dealing with student difficulties in learning. On the first day of research, the principal met with guidance counselors to plan course offerings for the next semester. For each possible class, they considered student demand for it, its impact on student learning, and teacher preference. Another example of this code was when the principal contacted two teachers about applying for a grant to start a new instructional program at school.

The code “work with students” included tasks that involved working instructionally with students one on one and supervising their learning while instruction occurred. An example of this code was when the principal met a female student with learning and social difficulties and he offered her several practical strategies to overcome her anxiety and participate in class. During lunch, he ate with another student and asked him about his grades and progress on a school-wide project. He asked the student if he could come in over the upcoming break to finish the project. Another occasion of this code was when the principal asked a student what she was learning and assisted her with a math problem.

The code “monitoring instruction” referred to how the principal observed instruction in the classrooms for short intervals of time though not a formal observation and provided the teacher with informal feedback on the visit. (Kaplan & Owings, 2001, p. 70). The instrument titled it a walkthrough, but the researcher didn’t use the term since the visits to the classroom were less than a thirty seconds and the principal didn’t collect data on the visits. On the first day of research, the principal walked through several classrooms in a five-minute period, observing instruction as he travelled from room to room. Later that day, he supervised the outside grounds of the schools and peered into windows to observe student learning. He observed over half of the classes using that method. On another occasion, he checked on a substitute teacher to ascertain if she had any difficulties in teaching the lesson and if she needed any help.

The code “office work” described instructional tasks performed in his office that involved working with data or documents. He spent considerable time reading and responding to emails about instructional partnerships. He emailed the staff on one

occasion about how to incorporate the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) in their daily activities and content. During another occasion, he examined test data, printed off test taking strategies, and looked through a standardized assessment book for a boy that was homebound. Also, he met with his secretary in his office about the budget for future instructional trips.

The code "modeling" referred to tasks when the principal demonstrated how to teach a concept to another teacher or modeled appropriate behaviors for students. The principal modeled a lesson on how to compare independent and dependent variables for a teacher that lacked content knowledge in science. The principal used his background in science to relate the content to the student's interests and connect it to the lesson. On another occasion, the principal modeled appropriate hallway behaviors for a student that was misbehaving in the hallway. Instead of disciplining the student, he used the incident to model the correct behavior and allow the student to demonstrate it. Also, the principal modeled picking up trash everywhere he went in the hope that students would duplicate his behavior. He performed this action regularly, knowing the students saw him frequently supervising the grounds every day through the windows and in the hallways.

The code "maintenance/safety" referred to tasks that involved checking the safety of the school grounds or handling the repair of equipment. On the first day of the research, the principal examined the hallways and removal of ceiling tiles to ensure that the dust wasn't abundant. Another example of this code was when the principal called a maintenance man to check if it would be safe to place an automobile in their science museum as an exhibit. He was worried that the weight of the car might break the floor. On the second day of the research, they performed a fire drill and the principal observed

students as they exited the building. A final example of this code was when the principal examined the reports of a school lockdown conducted by the district.

The code "supervision" referred to the principal's tasks that observed the actions of students to ensure that they were safe and not harming one another or themselves. The principal examined the school's outside grounds multiple times to prevent students from smoking. On one occasion, he travelled to the math department to observe the behavior of students and a particular class since the school had lost a math teacher the previous year. He reminded students of how that they should behave and made himself visible. Another example of this code was how he supervised the students in the hallways during class changes to make sure that they weren't late. Also, he supervised the movements of students during the fire drill.

The code "discipline" referred to how the principal managed student behavior and challenged students to assume responsibility for their actions. On one occasion, he asked a student to come to the hallway that was misbehaving during a class change earlier that day. The principal reminded the young man his expectations for him and challenged him to be a good role model for the younger students. Another example of this code was when the principal sent a student home that would not quit acting up in class and the hallways. He used the opportunity to teach her how to internalize her unacceptable behavior and state how she could correct it. On the first day of research, the principal examined the consequences for students' misbehaving and explored future consequences for disciplinary infractions.

Second Cycle of Coding. For the second round of coding, the researcher implemented "more refined coding systems" to construct meaning (Saldana, 2009, p. 11).

The researcher built upon the first coding system by analyzing the data to see if codes emerged from the data that suggested patterns in the principal's actions. A thematic coding system was implemented in the second cycle to search for codes that "identified an emergent theme", explanations, and organization of human relationships (Miles & Hubermann, 1994, p. 69). The researcher probed through the first cycle codes in the 66 observational forms and searched for emerging themes that were instructional in nature, not recognized by the instrument's check list of instructional actions, and ones that occurred often (Saldana, 2009). Then he chose themes from this list that separated the principal's tasks from traditional high schools and that were key to the success of his school (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). Seven-second cycle codes emerged and were titled: 1) community partnerships; 2) employee morale; 3) spreading the vision of School for Success; 4) education dialogues; 5) student projects; 6) improving communication and learning using technology; and 7) application process.

The code "community partnerships" represented tasks that created or maintained community partnerships that supported instruction. On the first day of research, the principal read an email from a partnership with a post-secondary professor and his class. The students at School for Success delivered a presentation to the professor's class, and the professor emailed the principal about the outstanding quality of the presentation. Another example of this code was when the principal discovered a company grant for his school and emailed a group of teachers the details of the grant to hear their input about the opportunity. An additional example of this code was when the principal travelled to a district traditional high school to help them create a prototype of School for Success in their own building.

The code “employee morale” indicated when he encouraged staff verbally, challenged them to pursue the attainment of new traits that would improve themselves personally and instructionally, and considered their input when making decisions. One of the principal’s first tasks after returning from a three-day absence was to walk through the building and check on his teachers’ well-being. He particularly focused on teachers that had been sick the past couple of days while he was absent. A second example of this code was when he emailed his staff to thank them for their hard work and tell them that he appreciated their numerous contributions to their students and school. Also, he encouraged a staff member to attempt a new task though she admitted that she had never been successful in the past. Despite her response, he encouraged her and informed her that he believed she could complete the task.

The code of “spreading the vision of School for Success” represented tasks that shared the vision of School for Success and its innovative instructional practices to others. A fellow district administrator asked the principal about the possibility of a student’s enrolling in School for Success for that semester, and the principal told them that the school was full. However, the principal suggested how the other traditional high school could create a program like School for Success in their own building. Another example occurred when the principal showcased one of the school’s instructional practices with a post-secondary professor and how the methods could benefit other schools. The principal cited research and provided examples of how the technique benefitted his population. Finally, the principal was in a meeting at a local high school and shared his vision of how their school’s structure and implementation of instructional practices improved student learning.

The code “education dialogues” represented discussions of how current methods of instruction and educational practices prevented educators from meeting the academic needs of students and included conversations about possible solutions to current methodologies. On the first day of research, the principal talked with his shadow about the limitations of teaching due to its current policies and standardized accountability system. Another example of this task was when the principal explained how current instructional practices were widening the gap with American public school students and how they could lessen its effect. A final example of this code was when the principal discussed the negative, unintended consequences of present educational policies with a post-secondary professor and how to change current trends to avoid those consequences.

The code “student projects” represented discussions with students about project-based learning or actions that showcased student projects to visitors. During lunch on the first day, the principal discussed a boy’s project and what goals he needed to establish to finish it in a timely manner. He helped the boy find other students to help him complete the project as well. Another example of this code was when he helped a student break his student project into smaller, more manageable steps and suggested advice on how to display it. The principal provided the student with tangible steps to ensure the completion of his project. A final example of this code was when the principal enthusiastically showcased a former student project, a gazebo, to his shadow while walking around the outside school grounds.

The code “improving communication and learning using technology” represented electronic forms of communications with students or actions that improved student learning through the use of technology. On the first day of the research, the principal

stopped his walkthrough to respond to an earlier text from the court system about a student. During another occasion, the principal replied to students' texts about school issues. His inbox was full of texts from students about academic and other topics. An additional example of this code was when the principal emailed two staff members about a possible grant and forwarded them the document with the requirements to apply.

The code "application process" represented tasks that handled the process of accepting students into school. One example was when the principal met with his secretary to discuss a local guidance counselor's message concerning the possibility of a student's enrolling at School for Success. On another occasion, the principal explained the importance of the application process for a local high school to develop in their prototype of the School for Success. He suggested that the application piece built buy-in for potential students and demonstrated their intensity of desire to learn and be successful. A final example of this code was when he explained the application process step by step to a local guidance counselor and informed her that the school was full for the following year.

Then the researcher created two spreadsheets (one for the twenty-first cycle codes and one for the seven-second cycle codes) in Microsoft Excel displaying the time of the observational entries on the row headings and the code titles as column headings. Then he entered the frequencies of the two cycles of codes into their respective Excel worksheet according to the time that they occurred. Then a frequency analysis was performed on how often the principal performed activities not recognized by the instrument.

Analytic Memoing. In addition to the two cycles of coding, the researcher analyzed his analytical memos that he wrote while completing observational forms and the reflection at the conclusion of his observations. The notes from the analytical memos proved useful because they provided meaning throughout the coding process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) and highlighted possible relationships and ideas in the data (Saldana, 2009). The analytical memos from the observational entries noted how the principal 1) frequently multi-tasked in his communications and actions, 2) considered the needs of his employees before his own well-being, 3) showcased student projects with every opportunity, 4) changed his tone when talking about the present direction and assessment of education, 5) conversed with students about non-academic matters and quickly transitioned to their learning, 6) spent little time in the office after being gone for three days, 7) performed numerous walkthroughs, 8) was confident in his abilities and calm during problems, 9) used every second to teach or inspire students, teachers, and other adults, 10) focused on being proactive, 11) wanted others to know he is approachable and present despite his amount of time in meetings, 12) promoted his school and practical instructional strategies to other educators, 13) was aware of criticisms and research of his students and wanted to increase rigor, 14) valued his relationship with his secretary, 15) peered in windows from the outside to view student learning, 16) frequently had a shadow observing his actions, and 17) constantly looked for others with whom to partner to support or showcase student learning. The memos noticed how the students and teachers 1) were unaffected by guests interacting with them or in the building and 2) the principal observing them from the outside of the building through the window.

The researcher explored and combined these observations as headings in the reflection at the conclusion of the two days of observation. The headings for the reflection were: 1) shadows, 2) work ethic, 3) leadership, 4) hallway supervision, 5) direction of School for Success, 6) innovative, 7) application process, 8) planting School for Success "seeds", and 9) partnerships. The headings weren't exhaustive though and included other categories of information despite not having a formal heading. Several points reappeared consistently in the reflection: how often do guests visit the school and what actions does the principal perform that traditional high school principals don't perform?

Ongoing Narrative with Principal. The researcher examined the observational form entries to compare the principal's description or explanation of his tasks against the researcher's perspective of the same actions. He ensured that all of the principal's actions were classified in the correct instructional category on the check list or labeled as not recognized by the instrument. Then he reviewed the principal's description of the tasks not recognized by the instrument to better classify them according to a code or new category.

Interviews and Member Checking. Clarifications and member checks were conducted through email and phone with the principal after the second cycle of coding. The principal was provided with the Time/Task Analysis™ results and notes from the analytic memoing to see how he would respond or add clarification. This step of the member check stage was to ensure correctness and clarity in categorizing and developing themes around the principal's daily activities due to the subjective nature of the instrument. Also, the researcher used the opportunity to support initial findings by asking

deeper questions to ascertain the nature of the principal's actions. There weren't any major changes though since his constant narration provided during the observations enabled the researcher to correctly identify his action according to the timed check list.

Results

The researcher used a timed check list to record the principal's tasks every 15 minutes, totaling 66 entries over two days of research. During any observational entry, the researcher recorded multiple tasks that the principal performed and whether the actions were primarily instructional, management, or personal. The researcher then reread the instrument guidelines to better classify the action according to the correct instrument category (Turnbull et. al., 2009). In addition, field notes, analytical memos, notes from the principal's narratives of activities and responses to questions were taken into account before finally placing an action into a category. Based on these final placements, a distribution analysis was completed in order to measure the frequency in which different actions took place over the two days.

Findings to Research Question One. Analysis was conducted to examine the amount of time that the principal spent on instructional tasks. The amount of time spent on instructional, management, or both tasks was examined to understand how the principal spent his time. The researcher included only instructional actions that were recognized by the instrument's instructional categories for this analysis and placed them in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequency Analysis of Amount of Principal's Time Spent on Instructional, Management, Personal, and Not Recognized by Instrument Tasks

Event Type	Frequency Count	Event Type Percentage[a]
Instructional	**57**	**37.2**
Observations and Walkthroughs	21	13.7
Walkthroughs	10	6.5
Employee Supervision	8	5.2
Feedback	0	0.0
Observation	2	1.3
Modeling/Teaching	1	0.7
Celebration	0	0.0
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	24	15.7
Decision Making Groups	1	1.7
Office Work	0	0.0
Professional Development	0	0.0
Planning, Curriculum, Assessment	11	7.2
District: Meetings & Supervisors	12	7.8
Engaging Directly with Students	12	7.8
Work with Students	8	5.2
Student Supervision	4	2.6
Parents and Community	0	0.0
Parents	0	0.0
Management	**33**	**21.6**
Security and Administration	25	16.3
Office Work	6	3.9
Decision Making Groups	4	2.6
District: Meetings & Supervisors	4	2.6
External: Officers	5	3.3
Celebration	1	0.7
Employee Supervision	5	3.3
Engaging Directly with Students	8	5.2
Work with Students	0	0.0
Student Supervision	8	5.2
Parents and Community	0	0.0
Parents	0	0.0
Personal	**0**	**0.0**
Not Recognized by Checklist	**63**	**41.2**
Community Partnerships	19	12.4

Table 1 (continued)

Event Type	Frequency Count	Event Type Percentage[a]
Sharing the Vision of School	14	9.6
Employee Morale	11	7.2
Education Dialogues	8	5.2
Application Process	6	3.9
Student Projects	4	2.6
Improving Communication and Learning using Technology	1	0.7

N = 153

Findings to Research Question Two. The next analysis explored Research Question #2 by analyzing the amount of time that the principal spent on the instrument's four main instructional categories of 1) observations and walkthroughs; 2) curriculum, instruction, and assessment; 3) parents and community; and 4) engaging directly with students. The instrument didn't recognize all of the principal's actions as instructional though, particularly those that dealt with the community (it didn't categorize meetings with external agencies or community organizations as instructional), and it led to large incidents of tasks not recognized by the instrument. This information appears in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency Analysis of Amount of Principal's Total Time Spent on Individual Tasks According to Instrument's Four Instructional Categories

Instructional Category	Frequency Count	Event Type Percentage[a]
Instructional	**57**	**37.2**
Observations and Walkthroughs	**21**	**13.7**
Walkthroughs	10	6.5
Employee Supervision	8	5.2
Feedback	0	0.0
Observation	2	1.3
Modeling/Teaching	1	0.7
Celebration	0	0.0

Table 2 (continued)

Instructional Category	Frequency Count	Event Type Percentage[a]
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	**24**	**15.7**
Decision Making Groups	1	0.7
Office Work	0	0.0
Professional Development	0	0.0
Planning, Curriculum, Assessment	11	7.2
District: Meetings & Supervisors	12	7.8
Engaging Directly with Students	**12**	**7.8**
Work with Students	8	5.2
Student Supervision	4	2.6
Parents and Community	**0**	**0.0**
Parents	0	0.0

N = 153

Figure 2 demonstrates the data in Table 2, indicating the percentage of the principal's total time that he performed an instructional task in the Time/Task Analysis™ over the course of the research.

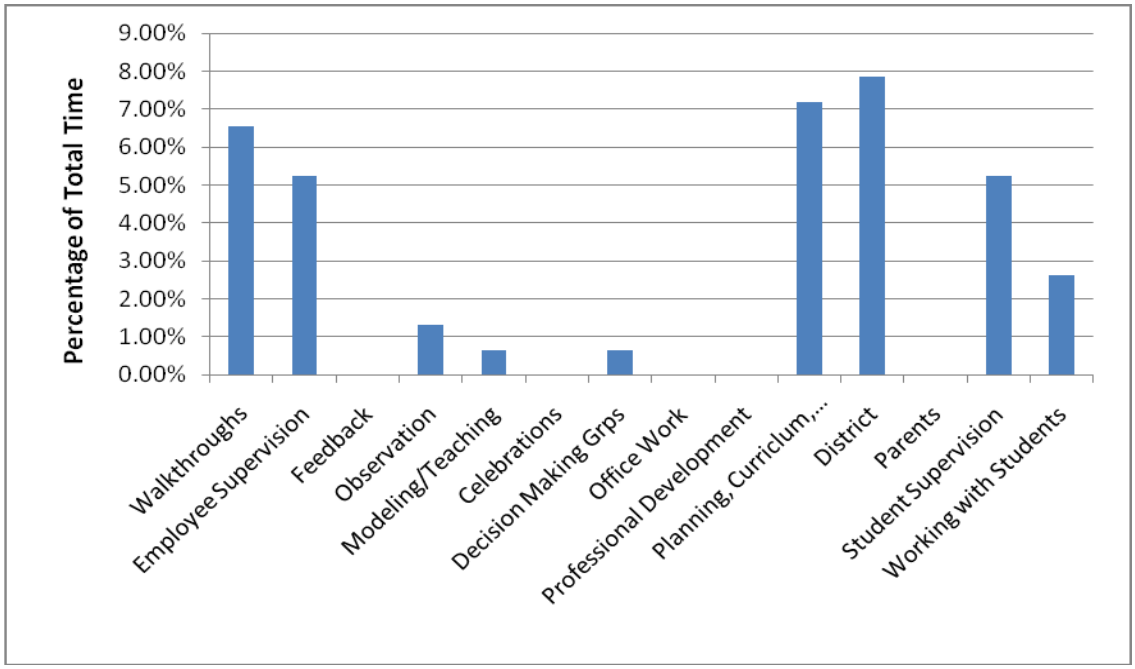

Figure 2. Time/Task Analysis™ Checklist's Instructional Actions Performed
Note: n= 153.

Findings to Research Question Three. In order to answer Research Question #3, the researcher performed two cycles of coding to analyze the data (using a provisional coding system on the first cycle and a thematic system for the second cycle) and read the instrument's descriptors of observed principal actions to align his perceptions of instructional actions according to the instrument. Then he studied the 66 observational entries with coding marks, his analytical memoing notes, and his reflection of the research to review the principal's actions that were instructional, but not recognized by a category in the instrument. His second cycle of coding highlighted six actions that weren't recognized by the instrument: 1) community partnerships; 2) spreading the vision of School for Success; 3) education dialogues; 4) student projects; 5) improving communication and learning using technology; and 6) application process.

Table 3 displays how often these actions occurred out of the 66 observational entries. The principal performed tasks according to the code "community partnerships" and 19 times or 12.4% of the time. He executed actions according to the category "spreading the vision of School for Success" 14 times or 9.2% of the time. His tasks fell under the category "employee morale" 11 times or 7.2 % of the time. His tasks fell under the code "education dialogues" 8 times or 5.2% of the time. He performed actions according to the code "application process" 6 times or 3.9% of the time. He demonstrated tasks under the code "student projects" 4 times or 2.6% of the time. His actions characterized the code "improving communication and student learning using technology" 1 time or 0.7 % of the time.

Table 3

. Frequency Analysis of Amount of Principal's Time Spent on Actions Not Recognized by Time/Task Analysis™ Check List

Code	Frequency Count	Code Type Percentage[a]
Not Recognized	**63**	**41.2**
Community Partnerships	**19**	**12.4**
Forming new partnership	15	9.8
Existing project or partnership	4	2.6
Sharing the Vision of School	**14**	**9.2**
Sharing to spread to other schools	7	4.6
Clarifying details	7	4.6
Employee Morale	**11**	**7.2**
Verbal or non-verbal encouraging	7	4.6
Considering employee input in decision-making process	2	1.3
Motivating employee to improve themselves	2	1.3
Education Dialogues	**8**	**5.2**
Current problems in education	6	3.9
Solutions to current problems	2	1.3
Application Process	**6**	**3.9**
Communicating to prospective student	1	0.7
Communicating with district educator	5	3.3
Student Projects	**4**	**2.6**
Showcasing project	3	2.0
Asking student about details	1	0.7
Improving Communication and Learning using Technology	**1**	**0.7**
Texting students	1	0.7

a. N = 153

Figure 3 is a bar chart showing the frequency of each action performed that wasn't recognized by the instrument. The two largest concentrations of his time dealt with outsiders in attempts to create partnerships or share the vision of his school.

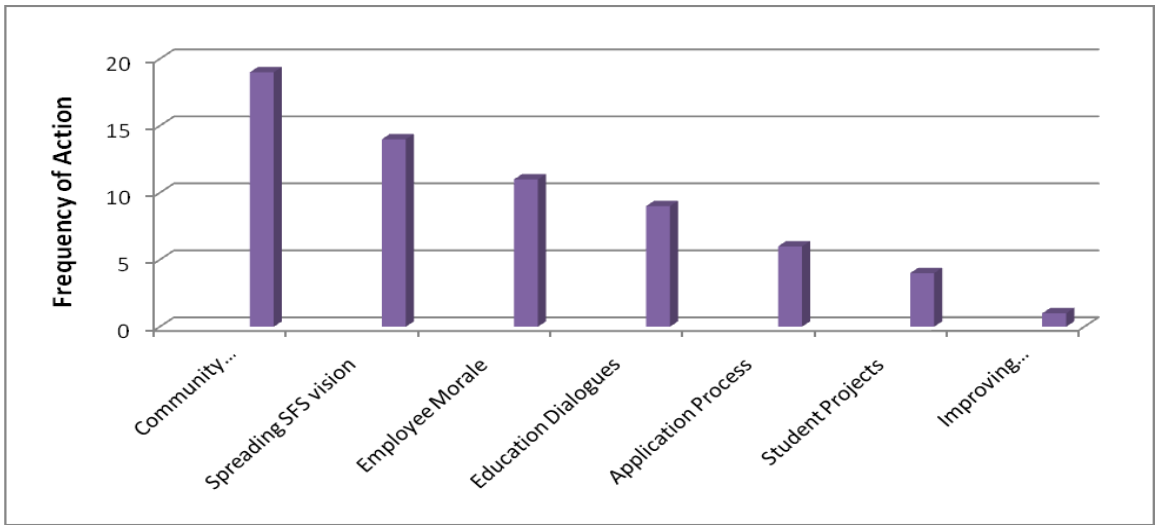

Figure 3. Frequency of Principal's Actions Not Recognized by Instrument
Note: n = 63.

The researcher examined how often the principal multi-tasked (performed more than one action according to instrument) during an observational entry in Table 4. He examined each of the sixty-six observational entries to see how many tasks the principal was performing. The principal performed tasks labeled as instructional, management, personal, or not recognized by the instrument for sixty-six intervals, ranging from one to five tasks simultaneously, and a mean of 2.3 tasks.

Table 4

Percentage of Intervals that Principal Multi-Tasked During an Observational Entry

Amount of Tasks Performed	Frequency Count	Event Type Percentage[a]
One Task Only	17	25.8
More than One Task	49	74.2

a. N = 66

In Table 5, the researcher further analyzed the principal's multi-tasking by the amount of actions that he performed during an entry (1-5) and the types of actions that he performed

(instructional, management, personal, not recognized by instrument, or a combination of the four categories).

Table 5

. Percentage of 66 Intervals that Principal Multi-Tasked During an Observational Entry According to Types of Tasks Performed

Type of Task Performed	Frequency Count	Event Type Percentage[a]
Instructional Only	**12**	**18.1**
1 Instructional Task	7	10.6
Obs. and Walk.	2	3.0
C.I.A.	4	6.0
Students	1	1.5
2 Instructional Tasks	3	4.5
2 C.I.A	1	1.5
1 Obs. and Walk. & 1 C.I.A.	1	1.5
1Obs. and Walk. & 1 Students	1	1.5
3 Instructional Tasks	2	3.0
2 Obs. and Walk. & 1 Students	1	1.5
1 Obs., 1 C.I.A., & 1 Students	1	1.5
Management Only	**8**	**12.1**
1 Management Task	7	10.6
1 Students	2	3.0
1 Security	5	7.6
2 Management Tasks	1	1.5
1 Students & 1 Security	1	1.5
Not Recognized Only	**9**	**13.6**
1 Not Recognized Task	3	4.5
1Community	2	3.0
1 Application	1	1.5
2 Not Recognized Tasks	4	6.1
1 Community & 1 Projects	1	1.5
1 Community & 1 Dialogue	1	1.5
1 Community & Vision	2	3.0
3 Not Recognized Tasks	2	3.0
1 Community, 1 Vision, & 1 Dialogue	2	3.0
Instructional and Management	**8**	**12.1**

Table 5 (continued)

Type of Task Performed	Frequency Count	Event Type Percentage[a]
1 Instructional and 1 Management	6	9.0
1 Obs. and Walk. & 1 Students	2	3.0
1 C.I.A. & 1 Students	1	1.5
1 C.I.A. & 1 Security	2	3.0
1 Students and 1 Security	1	1.5
1 Instructional and 2 Management	1	1.5
1 Obs. and Walk. & 2 Security	1	1.5
2 Instructional and 1 Management	1	1.5
1 Obs. and Walk., 1 Students, & 1 Security	1	1.5
Instructional and Not Recognized	**15**	**22.7**
1 Instructional and 1 Not Recognized	4	6.0
1 C.I.A. and 1 Vision	2	3.0
1 C.I.A. and 1Morale	2	3.0
1 Instructional and 2 Not Recognized	1	1.5
1 C.I.A., 1 Community, & 1 Vision	1	1.5
1 Instructional and 3 Not Recognized	4	6.1
1 C.I.A., 1 Community, 1 Vision, & 1 Dialogue	1	1.5
1 C.I.A., 1 Community, 1 Vision, & 1 Application	2	1.5
1 C.I.A., 1 Community, 1 Vision, & 1Projects	1	1.5
1 Instructional and 4 NR	1	1.5
1 C.I.A., 1 Community, 1 Vision, 1Dialogue, & 1 Application	1	1.5
2 Instructional and 1 NR	1	1.5
1 Obs. and Walk., 1 Students, & 1 Morale	1	1.5
3 Instructional and 1 NR	3	4.5
2 Obs. and Walk, 1 Students, & 1Morale	3	4.5
3 Instructional and 2 NR	1	1.5
2 Obs. and Walk, 1 Students, 1 Technology, & 1 Morale	1	1.5
Management and Not Recognized	**9**	**13.6**
1 Management and 1 NR	6	9.0

Table 5 (continued)

Type of Task Performed	Frequency Count	Event Type Percentage[a]
1 Security and 1 Community	2	3.0
1 Security and 1 Application	1	1.5
1 Security and 1Morale	3	4.5
1 Management and 2 NR	3	4.5
1 Security, 1 Community, & 1 Dialogue	3	4.5
Instructional, Management, and Not Recognized	**5**	**7.6**
1 Instructional, 1 Management, and 1 NR	3	4.5
1 Students, 1 Students, & 1 Projects	1	1.5
1 C.I.A., 1 Security, & 1 Vision	1	1.5
1 C.I.A., 1 Security, & 1 Morale	1	1.5
1 Instructional, 1 Management, & 2 NR	1	1.5
1 C.I.A., 1 Security, 1 Application and 1 Vision	1	1.5
I Instructional, 2 Management, & 1 NR	1	1.5
1 Obs. and Walk, 1 Students and 1 Security, & 1 Projects	1	1.5

Note. a. N = 66. Obs. and Walk. = Observations and Walkthroughs. C.I.A. = Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. Students = Engaging Directly with Students. Security = Security and Administration. Community = Community Partnerships. Application = Application Process. Projects = Student Projects. Dialogue = Education Dialogues. Vision = Spreading School for Success Vision. Morale = Employee Morale. Technology = Improving Communication and learning using technology.

Results Summary

Frequency of Time/Task Analysis™ Descriptors. Based on findings, many of the principal's activities could not be aligned with the Time/Task Analysis™ check list instrument. The findings indicated that the principal spent 37.2% of his time on instruction- related tasks, distributed among the categories listed in Research Question #2 as 13.7% in observations and walkthroughs; 15.7% in curriculum, instruction, and assessment; 0% in parents and community, and 7.8% in engaging directly with students. He spent 21.6% of his time on management tasks and the instrument didn't recognize 41.2% of his tasks.

Naturalistic Observations Outside Checklist. Frequency analysis based on the Time/Task Analysis™ check list instrument, however, was insufficient to describe the full scale of activity undertaken by the principal at this alternative education school. In fact, during observation and subsequent analysis, the research noted 49 occasions of multiple tasking or 74% of the time, related to the principal's complex role as instructional leader. Also, there were 63 occasions that the principal performed an action not recognized by the instrument that consisted of the following actions: 1) community partnerships, 2) employee morale, 3) spreading the vision of School for Success, 4) education dialogues, 5) student projects, 6) improving communication and learning using technology, and 7) application process.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Complexity of Principal's Duties

Findings indicated that the principal's duties were more complex than those recorded solely by the instrument. In part, this was because the principal's duties were fast paced and not accurately reflected in 15 minute intervals. In part, it was because the principal multi-tasked throughout the day, making it difficult to record single tasks when multiple tasks, both instructional and managerial, were taking place simultaneously. Additionally, this principal had a personal trait of taking any situation as a teachable moment when working with students, teachers, school visitor, or the public at large. The multifaceted nature of the principal's daily activities was enhanced by the reality that, like all principals, unforeseen problems and situations always arose.

Overlapping of Instructional and Management Domains. Small school principals served in numerous roles to compensate for the lack of administrative staff in their building (Sachetta, 2001; Valentine et al., 2003). These duties included those that might otherwise be performed by assistant principals, counselors, or other personnel (Archer, 2004; Aron, 2003; Eisner, 2002; Goodwin, 2010; Hallinger & Hausman, 1993). This diversity made distinction between instructional and managerial roles difficult. As a result, this study found that the principal spent far more time than the recommended one third of their day on instruction, often because lines were blurred between management duties, such as student behavior issues, and instructional leadership (Marzano et al., 2005;

McIver et al., 2009). Perhaps this was a compliment that the principal so easily took any opportunity to reach and teach to students.

Insensitivity of Instrument to Demonstrate Complexity of Actions. The Vanderbilt Assessment for Leadership in Education™ developed the Time/Task Analysis™ instrument as a tool to measure the amount of time each day that a principal spends on instructional actions compared to management or personal tasks (Val-Ed, 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2009). The time management instrument was tested on several schools to test for validity and reliability and uses the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium's Standards for School Leaders (ISLLC) Standards as its benchmark for scoring (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012; Wallace Foundation, 2009). Despite the validity of the instrument's design, the complex nature of the principal's daily work was not captured by the check list approach of the instrument. In the case of this alternative school leader, it seems apparent that his focus was on instructional related tasks sometimes at the same time he was completing managerial duties, and working on socialization and emotional stability of the student. The ability to capture the rich details of the principal's routine necessitated the qualitative rich description conducted in addition to the instrument's check list approach.

There were times that the principal's actions couldn't be categorized by any item on the instrument because the varied duties of this alternative school leader were not reflected as traditional principal duties on the check list. For example, he met with community agencies or post-secondary institutions numerous times to plan or manage instructional programs. While these were defined as instructional activities by the research, they were not specifically listed as instructional on the instrument.

Multi-tasking. Leaders of alternative education programs served a population of students that often required emotional support, assistance with difficult home situations, or other guidance as needed. These roles were not easily separated into categories, and this merging of intents was not easily reflected in a check list approach.

The data indicated that the principal spent 68% or the majority of his time performing multiple (two actions or more) types of actions (instructional, management, or not recognized by the Time/Task Analysis™) during the observational entries. He simultaneously performed three actions of various natures during 33% of his time. His ability to multi-task during the day enabled him to focus his energies on instructional issues that impacted student achievement in addition to responding to issues involving student behavior, teachers, community partners, and parents (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993; Sachetta, 2001; Valentine et al., 2003). Also, his routine of multi-tasking allowed him to transform any action into an instructional one (Arnold et al., 2006; Buntrock, 2008).

Another example of multi-tasking was when the principal monitored the hallways to ensure that students were safe, he checked the ceiling tiles to examine the district's progress of removing them, he gazed into the windows of classroom doors to observe student learning, and checked on teachers that had been absent. He intentionally performed all of these management and instructional actions in a ten-second interval knowing that his actions influenced student success (Marzano et al., 2005).

Intentional Methods of Meeting Students' Needs. Another theme that emerged in the study was the numerous methods that principals of nontraditional schools implemented to engage their students instructionally, behaviorally, and to energize their

teachers (Aron, 2006; Catano & Stronge, 2006; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008). The principal served in numerous unconventional roles and used innovative strategies to meet his students' social and emotional needs to build the foundation for future academic achievement (D'Angelo & Zemanick, 2009; Littky & Grabelle, 2004). He used everyday situations to model the school's expectations for students and appropriate conflict resolution strategies (Goodwin, 2010; Mitchell & Castle, 2005). Also, he developed a school culture that valued innovation and personal and professional growth of his staff (Catano & Stronge, 2006; Moolenaar et al., 2010).

Nontraditional Nature of Principal Duties and School Functions. Alternative education programs often served students that were unsuccessful in traditional high schools (Balfanz & Legters, 2004), lived in conditions that do not support learning required outside help to achieve academic success (Roderick & Camburn, 1999; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008; Wald & Martinez, 2003), and possessed unique academic and social needs (D'Angelo & Zemanick, 2009; McKee & Conner, 2007; Raywid, 1994). As a result, principals of alternative education programs developed innovative programs, flexible schedules, and personalized curriculum to create a framework of success for students (Littky & Grabelle, 2004; Sachetta, 2001) and to meet the academic, emotional, and social needs of their student population (Marzano, 2000). Since alternative settings usually served small student populations, the principals lacked other support administrators, and carried the burden of their duties nearly alone (Valentine et al., 2003). Also, principals performed duties unique to alternative settings that include selling their programs to the community and district to secure funding and support, entertaining a variety of guests since they are an example of school redesign, and to create partnerships

with outside groups or agencies that will maximize student learning for their school (Coalition for Juvenile Justice 2001; Hallinger & Hausman, 1993; Hausman et al., 2000; Lange and Sletten, 2002; NCEE, 1998; Thakur, 2010).

The School for Success principal's actions throughout the research mirrored the literature's descriptions of leaders of alternative education programs. He spent an abundant amount of time dealing with students, listening to their social and personal barriers to learning, and matching available school or community resources to enable them to succeed. On one occasion, he recommended that a counselor contact an external agency to help a student with home issues so that the student could return to class without missing instruction (Roderick & Camburn, 1999; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008; Wald & Martinez, 2003). He led a meeting to plan academic interventions for struggling students by referencing input from teachers and data from previous tests and their current grades. He repeatedly evaluated options based on their ability to meet students' needs instead of the cost or the amount of effort to implement it (Alexander-Smith et al., 2001; Duke & Salmonowicz, 2010). When they encountered a disagreement or others sought to use interventions characteristic of traditional high schools, he reminded them that their methods must encompass each student's individual needs to ensure academic rigor as opposed to traditional schools' uniform approaches (Arnold et al., 2006; Land & Sletton, 1999; Nettles & Herrington, 2007).

The principal frequently entertained visitors from the district's leadership program and other educators that wanted to view the school's distinctive design (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993). The visits and ensuing dialogues about the current direction of education consumed the principal's time (he met with a community partner

12% of his time, spread the vision of the school 10% of the time, and discussed the status of education 5% of the time), but they allowed him to develop partnerships that would impact student learning (Hausman et al., 2000). Due to the school's limited enrollment, the principal sold the school's vision to other schools' administrators and staff, hoping that School for Success' ideas and practices would ripple to other schools. There was an influx of visitors from post-secondary institutions, district schools, and community agencies, but the principal tailored special collaborations and projects between the groups that would benefit both parties (Aron, 2006). One post-secondary institution wanted to expose their current graduate education students to the school through practicum experiences. Instead of allowing the graduate students to observe instruction as traditional partnerships exist, the principal suggested that his students create presentations for the graduate students detailing important topics in education from the perspective of students. The results of the partnership exceeded both groups' expectations and vastly impacted the students' learning at School for Success (Littky & Grabelle, 2004; Sachetta, 2001).

Teachable Moments. Previous research stated that students who attend alternative schools are often labeled as "at-risk" because they engage in dangerous activities or live in an environment that limits their potential for future success (Aron, 2003). These students often did not fit in traditional high schools (Leone and Drakeford, 1999), weren't on the path to graduate (Wald and Martinez, 2003), and were hostile or passive towards school (Wells, 1990). Therefore, alternative education leaders spent a considerable amount of time interacting with their students (Mitchell & Castle, 2005; O'Donnell & White, 2005; Sachetta, 2001) and enabling them to overcome learning

deficiencies by teaching them how to overcome their academic, family, and community problems (AEL, 1998; Littky & Grabelle, 2004; Shepperson et al., 2010).

The data demonstrated that the principal spent 8% of his time engaging directly with students in the hallways and classrooms in teachable moments. On one occasion, he noticed that an older student was misbehaving in the hallway with a younger student. Instead of disciplining the older student or yelling at him, the principal modeled the school's expectations for student behavior in the hallway (Condren, 2002; Mitchell & Castle, 2005), asked the student to demonstrate the behavior, praised the student for his successful display of the correct behavior (Mitchell & Castle, 2005; O'Donnell & White, 2005), and then asked the boy to set an example for the younger students by his actions. On another occasion, another administrator informed the principal of a classroom incident involving a student that regularly met with the principal about behavioral issues. The principal used the opportunity to teach the young student how to resolve conflict (Goodwin, 2010), asked the student why she was in trouble, and modeled possible options for her to respond next time if she encountered a similar situation, and reminded her of the school's resources for support (Littky & Grabelle, 2004; Sachetta, 2001). The principal's response helped mold the student's future behaviors by offering positive incentives (Richardson & Griffin, 1994) in the form of a caring relationship with the student and offering positive feedback.

Student Projects and Programs. Alternative programs serve a student population that are in danger of falling "through the cracks" in traditional middle and high schools and considered by counselors as the greatest risk of dropping out (Aron, 2006). These students sometimes lived in conditions that hinder their learning (Roderick

& Camburn, 1999; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008), felt disconnected to school and friends, and struggled academically due to the gaps in their skill sets and lack of confidence in themselves (Wald and Martinez, 2003; Wells, 1990). Therefore, principals of alternative programs must implement curriculum that engages students, provides remediation, builds upon their skill sets for future employment, provides a safe learning environment, and meets federal and state accountability standards (Aron, 2006; Rofes & Stulberg, 2004). Also, they develop programs that enable students to overcome personal factors and obstacles that hinder their academic achievement by offering counseling, teaching conflict resolution strategies, and developing positive adult-student relationships (Littky & Grabelle, 2004; Marzano, 2000; Raywid, 1994). In addition, principals must create programs that negate other educators' criticism that alternative schools graduate unprepared students by watering down learning targets (Kim and Taylor, 2008).

Principals of alternative schools often use project-based learning as a component of their curriculum since it builds upon students' prior knowledge by collaborations with community resources (Katz, 1994; Katz & Chard, 1998), enables students to practice skills such as time management, creativity, and responsibility (Cornell and Clarke, 1999; Wurdinger & Rudolph, 2009), benefits lower performing students since they use their hands and develop skills necessary to finish the project (Cornell and Clarke, 1999), exposes students to authentic tasks and requires them to interact with multiple elements of their environment to solve problems (Huber & Breen, 2007; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; NEA, 2010; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). However, principals must ensure that the projects meet standards for career and college readiness (Aron, 2006; Kim & Taylor, 2008) and focus on instruction to guarantee student gains (Macan, 1994; Orlikowsky and

Yates, 2002). Also, principals must proactively interact with their community and local district to obtain possible funding and new resources to engage students (Coalition for Juvenile Justice 2001; Lange and Sletten, 2002; NCEE, 1998; Thakur, 2010) since innovative schools slowly gravitate towards conventional approaches of instruction over time (Giles and Hargreaves, 2006; Fashola & Slavin, 1998; Tubin, 2009).

School for Success' curriculum consisted of numerous projects and community collaborations in different classes. Also, students worked together to design exhibits for a school museum that would showcase their learning. The principal of School for Success frequently interacted with students in the hallways and classrooms, asking them about their project for the museum. He almost always greeted them, talked about a non-academic issue, and then would transition the conversation to details about their project. He ate lunch with a student in the cafeteria and found out that the student needed assistance to finish his project. The principal spent the next couple of hours recruiting other students to help the earlier student finish his project. Also, the principal had several meetings with a student about his project for the museum. The student wanted to place a car in the museum to show how an engine and the internal parts of a car worked, but the principal was concerned if the weight of the car would be too heavy for the floor. The principal talked to a maintenance man at the district office and found that the floor couldn't support the weight of the car. Then the principal informed the student of the bad news, but presented the option of using a portion of the car for the exhibit and suggested people that the student could contact for more details. The principal informed the student that he would check on his progress in a couple of days, but wanted the student to have

time to explore possible solutions for his project (Huber & Breen, 2007; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; NEA, 2010; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008).

In addition to asking students about their projects, the principal spent a vast amount of his schedule lining up resources for student projects or searching for new projects to implement. He informed a post-secondary professor how when the school first opened, teachers used projects with great zeal and engaged the students. But as time passed, there was a tendency for the same teachers to resort back to conventional styles of teaching (Giles and Hargreaves, 2006; Fashola & Slavin, 1998; Tubin, 2009). Therefore, he constantly looked for new community partners or resources to incorporate into the curriculum to engage students (Coalition for Juvenile Justice 2001; Lange and Sletten, 2002; NCEE, 1998 Thakur, 2010). The principal was already planning a future partnership with a local nursery to grow trees on the school property.

Employee Morale. Alternative education program principals rely heavily on the zeal and willingness of their teachers to develop meaningful relationships with students and to instruct them at high levels despite deficiencies in their students' skill sets (Lehr & Lange, 2003; Raywid, 1994). Teachers frequently help students remove a myriad of social, emotional, and academic obstacles to learning (Marzano, 2000; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008; Wald and Martinez, 2003). Teachers often attend numerous professional development sessions to learn techniques to engage their population (NCLB, 2001; RTES, 2009) and sharpen their repertoire of teaching strategies that build upon the students' interests and abilities (Aron, 2006; Greg, 2002; Land & Sletton, 1999). Therefore, principals cultivate a school culture with teachers that values innovation (Moolenaar et al., 2010), the implementation of new ideas without fear of rejection or

loss of support (Mumford et al., 2002), and a community that promotes growth of students and staff (Catano & Stronge, 2006)

These findings characterized the principal's actions and how he spent time improving employee morale and his school's culture. Despite returning from a three-day absence, the principal pushed his own desires aside to walk into each of his teacher's classroom and examine their well-being. He emailed his staff that morning to thank them for their hard work and how the school operated seamlessly in his absence due to the staff's empowered decision making (Lange and Sletten, 2002; Leone & Drakeford, 1999). The principal frequently complimented staff on their strengths and provided them with opportunities to grow (Catano & Stronge, 2006). He modeled a lesson for a teacher that struggled with a concept and provided constructive criticism on how she could improve it. His actions emphasized that their school culture supported each other and allowed ideas to transition effortlessly on a constant continuum among staff without fear of rejection (Frank et al., 2004; Mumford et al., 2002; Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003; Storey & Salaman, 2005). Also, the principal considered teacher input when planning future course offerings, and his comments reflected a deeper knowledge of their needs, likes, and chemistry working with other staff (Aron, 2006; Raywid, 1994).

Recommendations. The findings from the research project created future questions to be explored. First, the researcher would like to conduct the research again, yet monitor the principal for a longer period of time such as five days or more to see if that altered the findings. The researcher wondered if a longer interval of time for observation would evenly distribute the amount of time that the principal spent on the four main instructional areas or raise the percentage of time spent in areas such as

working with parents. Second, it would be interesting to conduct the research again, yet expand the instrument to include tasks discovered by the two rounds of coding and actions more conducive to the leader of an alternative education program. The goal would be to add several common duties (community partnerships, selling vision) of alternative leaders to minimize the number of times that the leader performed an action that wasn't recognized by the instrument. Third, it would be beneficial to include an area on the instrument that allowed descriptions of the principal's actions to ascertain their nature as instructional, management, or personal instead of checking the item on a list in a short time span. Fourth, it would be interesting to perform the research on a traditional high school principal to identify the amount of time that he/she spends on instructional actions, if he/she performs actions that are not recognized by the instrument, and how their duties compare to a leader of an alternative education program. It could show if there is a difference in the principals' actions and how they each spend their time performing instructional and management actions.

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APPENDICE A:

School Observation Rubric

Table 6

School Observation Rubric

ATTACHMENT A: SCHOOL OBSERVATION RUBRIC		
Time:	Notes	Observer Memo
Physical Setting		
Event Type	Instructional O Management O Personal O Out of Building O	
Instructional Type	Student Supervision O Work With Students O Employee Supervision O Office Work O Walkthrough O Feedback O Parents O Decision Making Grps O District: Meetings External: Officials O Modeling/Teaching O Professional Development O Observation O Celebration O Planning, Curr., Assessment O Not Recognized O _____	
Description of Activity Principal		
Teacher(s) Role		
Student(s) Role		
Other(s) Role		
Principal's Description		
Subtle Factors (unplanned, nonverbal, what's not happening)		

Source: Based on Merriam, 1998, p.97-98; Standards-focused project-based learning rubric (http://wvde.state.wv.us/instruction/observation-form.hml)

APPENDICE B:

Time/Task Analysis™ Tool

Time/Task Analysis™ Tool

Time/Task Analysis™ Checklist

This menu screen shows the Time/Task Analysis™ Checklist from the Time Track Program™. It displays the Timed Event Entry (Figure 5) that allows the user to enter a new duty on the instrument's checklist. First, the user selects the Event Type (instructional, management, or personal) and then they select the duty's Instructional or Management type under Instructional Type.

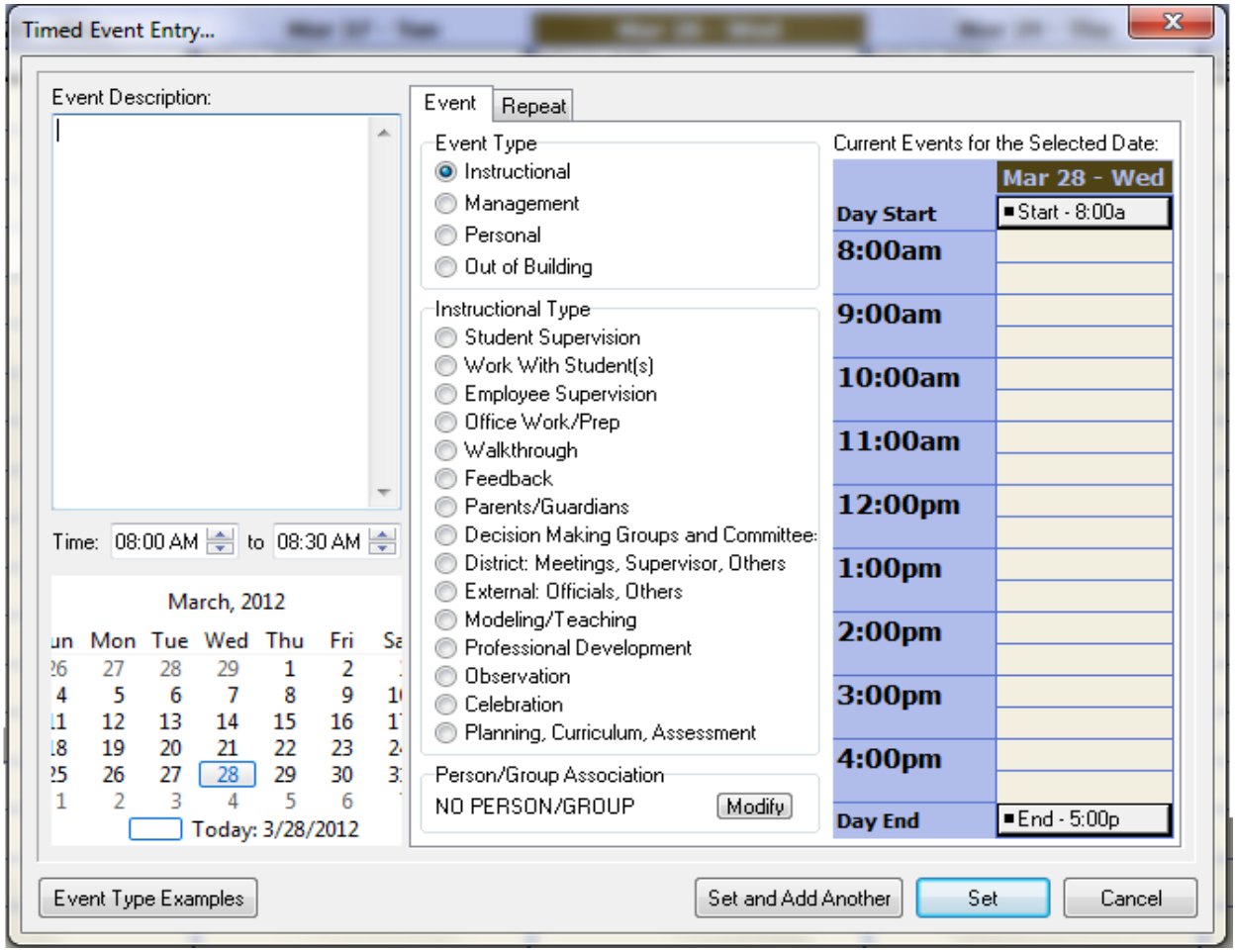

Figure 4. Timed Event Entry on Time/Task Analysis™
Source: National SAM Innovation Project. (2010). Jefferson County Public Schools. Retrieved April 21, 2011 from http://timetrack.jefferson.kyschools.us/.

Figure 5 illustrates the Calendar View on the instrument and how the principal's activities are recorded and displayed. Table 7 provides descriptors of the principal's actions according to the instrument.

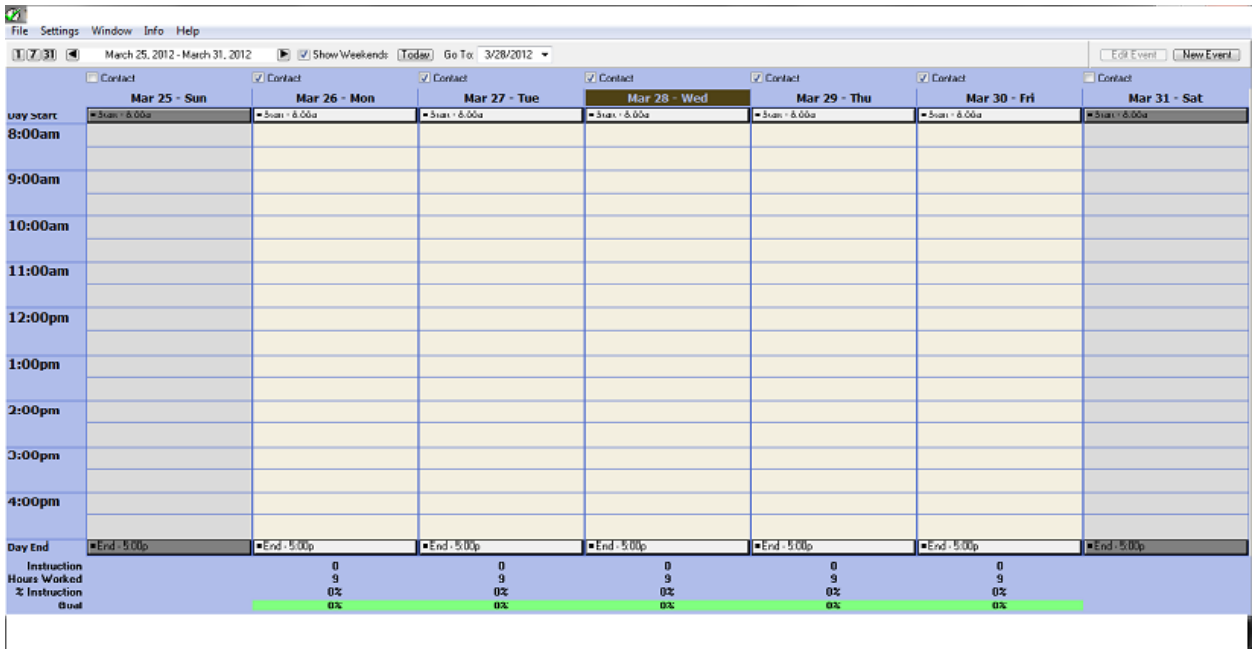

Figure 5. Calendar View on Time/Task Analysis™
Source: National SAM Innovation Project. (2010). Jefferson County Public Schools. Retrieved April 21, 2011 from http://timetrack.jefferson.kyschools.us/.

Table 7

Sample Descriptors of Principal Duties

MANAGEMENT	A Few EXAMPLES
a. student supervision	• cafeteria, lunchroom, hallway
b. student discipline	• behavior management
c. employee supervision	• monitoring or working with classified staff—secretaries, instructional assistants, clerks, custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, etc. • **non-**instructional work with certified staff
d. Employee discipline	• Direction tied to contract, work rules, warning
e. Office work/prep	• Copying or searching for materials • Setting agenda, working at computer • Working with SAM
f. Building management	• Maintenance and safety • personnel **not** instructional

Table 7 (continued)

g. Parents/guardians	• Student attendance/illness • **Non-**instructionally focused
h. Decision making committees, groups, meetings	• Site based committees, meetings • Formal and informal decision making and advisory discussions with students or adult
i. District: meetings, supervisors, others	• Meeting with district personnel regarding building issues
j. External: officials, others	• Fire marshal, child protective services, community groups
k. Celebrations	• Adult focused, **non-**instructional • **Non-**instructional w/students (example: birthday)
2. INSTRUCTION	A Few EXAMPLES
a. Student supervision	• In-classroom instructional assistance, simply supervising students while instruction is in process or students are working
b. Work with student(s)	• One-on-one or in small group—talk is directly related to learning
c. Employee supervision	• Direction about instruction
d. Office work/prep	• Reviewing lesson plans • Preparing instructional feedback, evaluations, etc. • Working with test data, preparing for an instructionally focused meeting
e. Walkthrough	• Moving from room to room: appears to be observing, taking data or notes • Monitoring climate in rooms and public places
f. Feedback	• Giving instructional feedback on lesson, unit, PD, etc. • Giving instructional coaching
g. Parents/guardians	• Conversations regarding instruction
h. Decision making groups, committees, meetings	• Instructional discussions • Receiving feedback on curriculum, instruction and/or assessment issues
i. District: meetings, supervisor, others	• Topic/discussion directly tied to instruction, assessment, curriculum, content
j. External: officials, others	• Topic/discussion directly tied to instruction, assessment, curriculum, content
k. Modeling/teaching	• Teacher needs to be in room observing
l. Professional development	• Formal PD presentation, participation

Table 7 (continued)

m. Observation	• Observing instruction, 15 minutes or longer, appears to be taking notes
n. Celebration	• Student or adult focused: directly tied to instruction or achievement
o. Planning, curriculum, assessment	• Meetings with individuals or groups: specific to instruction • Studying curriculum or assessment documents
3. PERSONAL	• lunch or restroom breaks • errands for personal business • personal phone calls

Source: National SAM Innovation Project. (2010). Jefferson County Public Schools. Retrieved April 21, 2011 from http://timetrack.jefferson.kyschools.us/.