

A HEURISTIC NARRATIVE INQUIRY ON THE CONCEPTUALIZATION AND  
CULTIVATION OF RELATIONAL TRUST BETWEEN SECONDARY  
TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

A DISSERTATION IN  
Curriculum and Instruction  
and  
Educational Leadership, Policy & Foundations

Presented to the Faculty of the University  
of Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by  
STEPHEN J. MOORE

BS.Ed. Missouri State University, 2008  
MS.Ed. Missouri State University, 2010

Kansas City, Missouri  
2020

A HEURISTIC NARRATIVE INQUIRY ON THE CONCEPTUALIZATION AND  
CULTIVATION OF RELATIONAL TRUST BETWEEN SECONDARY  
TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Stephen J. Moore, Candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree

University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2020

ABSTRACT

The interactions of teachers and administrators may not account for as much time as the interactions between teachers and students, but there is great potential value in examining this relationship and examining its machinery. Of particular interest to this study were the stories teachers told about relational trust between teachers and administrators. Research exists that implies a strong connection between trust and performance in an organizational space (Cook, Murphy, & Hunt, 2000; Kraft, Marinell & Shen-Wei Yee, 2016; Lawson et al., 2017; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a). Sallee's (2014) work shows correlations between the principal-teacher relationship and teacher self-efficacy. This heuristic narrative inquiry enlivens and deepens the conversations about organizational trust in schools through its elicited teacher narratives, which shed light on the lived experiences of eight participants in one large, Midwestern, suburban high school, who share their "secret," "sacred," and "cover" stories and co-author an ethnographic portrait of their experience with the researcher. These stories are contextualized in the researcher's own narrative frame, which layers his own

personal meaning amidst their voices and storied truths about their relationships with administration.

Using these teacher narratives along with site-based descriptive statistical measures on teacher principal trust, this study deepens the understanding of how trust—the “soft tissue” of an organization (Wilcox, Lawson, & Angelis, 2015, p. 28)—thickens or thins through a heuristic narrative inquiry. The unit of analysis for this study is teacher stories of relational trust. The narrative themes which emerged from these teacher stories include: (1) Role Rapport Harmony; (2) Eleemosynary Presence; (3) Ecology of Excellence; and (4) Authoring Invitational Space. The work of this dissertation offers perspective for educational leadership about how they are perceived, seen, and valued from the perspective of a school with average teacher-principal trust, high trust in colleagues, and average trust in students, according to Hoy and Tschannen-Moran’s (2007) Omnibus T-Scale. My decision to use a cartoon ethnograph as a representation of lived experience increases the accessibility of teachers’ voices through their stories about their relationship with their principals.

## APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, have examined a dissertation titled “A Heuristic Narrative Inquiry on the Conceptualization and Cultivation of Relational Trust between Secondary Teachers and Administrators,” presented by Stephen J. Moore, candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

### Supervisory Committee

Loyce Caruthers, Ph.D., Committee Chair  
Professor of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Foundations

Candace Schlein, Ph.D., Co-Chair  
Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instructional Leadership

Shirley Marie McCarther, Ed.D.  
Associate Professor of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Foundations

Donna M. Davis, Ph.D.  
Professor of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Foundations

Carolyn Barber, Ph.D.  
Professor, Educational Leadership, Policy, and Foundations

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	ix
LIST OF TABLES .....	x
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	xi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Problem Statement .....	1
Purpose of the Study .....	5
Research Questions and Interdisciplinarity .....	7
Theoretical Framework .....	8
Overview of Methodology .....	19
Significance of the Study .....	26
Conclusion and Next Steps .....	29
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	30
Trust in Schools .....	32
The Teacher-Principal Relationship .....	43
Organizational Climate .....	57
The Trust-Improvement Connection.....	69
Summary .....	79
3. METHODOLOGY .....	80
Rationale for Qualitative Research .....	81
Design of the Study.....	91

Data Sources .....	93
Data Collection and Analysis.....	100
The Role of the Researcher.....	104
Implementation of Data Sources.....	105
Limitations Including Validity, Reliability, and Ethical Considerations.....	112
4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	119
The Heuristic Inquiry.....	128
Data Collection .....	131
Participant Profiles.....	134
Narrative Inquiry 3-D Space Analysis.....	182
Relationship of Themes to Research Questions and Sub-questions .....	194
Conclusion .....	201
5. IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS.....	203
Qualitative Research Traditions and Study Design .....	205
Implications for Practice.....	206
Recommendations for Future Research Needs .....	211
Conclusion .....	212
Final Reflections .....	214
Appendix	
A. TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE: THE OMNIBUS T-SCALE .....	217
B. INTERVIEW GUIDE .....	218
C. MEMBER CHECKING EMAIL .....	221

D. INTERPRETIVE CODE FREQUENCY TABLE.....	222
REFERENCE LIST.....	223
VITA.....	251

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Jill's Comic 1 .....	139
2. Jill's Comic 2 .....	142
3. Sergio's Comic 1 .....	147
4. Sergio's Comic 2 .....	150
5. Susan's Comic 1 .....	153
6. Susan's Comic 2 .....	155
7. Linda's Comic 1 .....	158
8. Linda's Comic 2 .....	161
9. Gina's Comic 1 .....	163
10. Gina's Comic 2 .....	166
11. Marcy's Comic 1 .....	168
12. Marcy's Comic 2 .....	170
13. Bella's Comic 1 .....	173
14. Bella's Comic 2 .....	175
15. Amanda's Comic 1 .....	179
16. Amanda's Comic 2 .....	180
17. Linda's Comic 3 .....	197
18. Gina's Comic 3 .....	197
19. Amanda's Comic 3 .....	198



## TABLES

Table	Page
1. Study Participants .....	108
2. Overall Subscale Scores for Oleander Heights High School.....	108
3. Item Results for Oleander Heights Teachers on Teacher-Principal Trust .....	111
4. Data Collection Timeline .....	120
5. Presence of Themes and Interpretive Codes in Participant Narratives.....	135
6. 3-D Narrative Analysis of Themes .....	189

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 2013, I ran my first (and so far, only) full marathon. It took a near full-time commitment to training to be sure I was ready when the day came. Even though I had prepared as well as I could, when the day came, I would not have survived without the support of two fellow runners. One was the inspiration for my race and my chief encourager, Zac Chase. The second was a runner we met around mile 18 who we teamed up with to stay mentally sharp. The last six miles of that race was literally the hardest physical test I have ever been through. My body gave everything it had to give, and there were still two more miles to go. It took longer than a respectable amount of time to finish, but finishing in earnest was my only goal.

Finishing this Ph.D. has put me on a similar path in terms of the challenge and emotional strain. I am currently approaching those last two or three miles and struggling with feeling like I have nothing left in the tank at all. I have walked a few laps and taken miles off (because kids, full time job, you know), but my goal has always been to complete the degree and use everything I am learning to making myself a better educator.

Like my marathon, this race has only been possible because of the people supporting me at home and at school. My wife is an ever-present reminder to me of what matters and why I am doing this. She has kicked my butt when I have needed it and held my hand more than a few times, too. My advisor has always been understanding, kind, helpful, and present, which, considering what I have heard about other Ph.D. committee chairs in the world, is phenomenal. I am thankful for her and the rest of my incredible committee of women. My parents have been there every time I have needed a last second sitter so I could write, and of course, they instilled in me the drive and determination to work toward such a goal in the

first place. I am thankful for all of these wonderful people who have believed in, loved, and prayed for me.

While these are the two hardest singular things I have ever done, they pale in comparison to many other challenges life presents people. These are literally first-world, self-imposed, self-bettering challenges. I chose them. I paid for them willingly and their completion has conferred respect upon me. If you are a person who has suffered, survived, or been terrorized by abuse, poverty, racist infrastructure, or oppressive societal forces, every day has been a marathon for you, every conversation and mental routine a dissertation; yet there is no ceremony for you when you cross the finish line or credential yourself with another day of persevering.

I dedicate this achievement in scholarship and academic effort to people in those positions of less privilege. I dedicate this dissertation to my two children, whom I hope to inspire and urge to never stop learning. I dedicate this to my parents, who raised me to value education and work for those who are less fortunate and voiceless. I dedicate this to the following people who were instrumental in putting me on this path through references, support, and encouragement: Paul Oh, Margaret Weaver, Manuel Herrera, Kristin Howard, Kim Finch, Becky Gallagher, Robin Steffen, and all of my friends at the National Writing Project, but especially my dear friend Scot Squires, whose influence is alive in my writing. I dedicate this entire journey to my loving, infinitely patient, and incredible wife, Eva. Without her, none of this would have been imaginable, much less possible.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In U.S. schools, the leadership structures of nearly every school shares some of the same core hierarchical features: There are students, parents, and stakeholders on the client side of education, and there are teachers and principals on the instructional and managerial side. The fact that teacher-principal relationships play an important role in the school's organizational culture and success is clearly established (Blasé & Blasé, 1997; Edgeron, Kritsonis, & Herrington, 2006; Moye, Henkin, & Egley, 2005; Nicklaus & Ebmeier, 1999; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Walker, Kutsyruba, & Noonan, 2011). Teachers who have professionally enabling principal relationships report a stronger sense of capacity and collective efficacy (Cosner, 2009; Hoy, 1992). Drake (1992) demonstrated that through the characterization and examination of such relationships, many organizational insights may surface about instructional expectations, willingness to take risks (Walker et al., 2011), and—of primary interest for this study—relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

#### **Problem Statement**

Zucker's (1986) definition of trust focuses on how hard it is to notice trust until it is absent, stating that trust is so engrained in the social fabric of our common expectations that it is easily missed until breached. The problem under study was how teachers and principals, namely building-level principals and assistant principals, each conceptualize trust in a professional context. Understanding the breakdown, maintenance, or building up of trust in a school culture is of vital importance to the proper and effective functioning of a school organization (Cosner, 2009). Teacher practice and implementation of administrative goals can be impacted by a thickening or thinning of trust in schools (Louis, 2007; Wahlstrom &

Louis, 2008). The issue of trust in schools has been studied to a moderate degree, but with a slowly expanding consistency since Halpin and Croft's (1963) study on the "personality" of schools, which they found tended to relate to openness, "leadership flow," and preoccupation for an achievement focus versus autonomy.

Halpin and Croft's (1963) development of the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) in that study was built upon later by Hoy and Tarter (1997), when it was expanded and deepened into the Organizational Health Index (OHI) for schools. Originally, the OCDQ, which was used in over a thousand elementary (and some junior high) schools between 1962 and 1972, was a questionnaire intended to capture teacher and principal responses on 64 items related to the health of the "morale" and the school's "personality" (Halpin & Croft, 1963). Items used by the instrument included ones such as "teachers ask nonsensical questions in faculty meetings" and "the principal talks a great deal." In their original study of 70 elementary schools, Halpin and Croft interviewed teachers in small groups for 30 minutes and then used a factor analysis to determine their dispositions and characterizations of leadership. The study determined school climate exists, according to their analysis, on a continuum of openness or closed-ness generally and more fine-tuning of the instrumentation was needed. Hayes's 1973 study reappraised the climate tool and meta-analyzed the results of over 12,000 responses, determining ultimately that there was a great deal of value in its items, even if some needed to be more finely tuned to their dimensions.

The idea of collegiality as a factor of teacher professionalism and intrapersonal health in schools was continued in various studies for the next decade (Hoy, Hannum, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998; Hoy & Sabo, 1998; Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2002) until eventually the OCDQ and OHI were transformed into a more robust tool by Hoy and

Tschannen-Moran (2007), the Omnibus T-Scale (OTS). Items from these established instruments were used in Wahlstrom and Louis's 2008 study, which looked at a wide variety of variables related to the experience of principal leadership, including trust and shared leadership. Particularly in Wahlstrom and Louis's (2008) study, teacher climate and professional community was found to intersect with trust in the principal by way of shared responsibilities and leadership. Hoy, Hannum, and Tschannen-Moran (1998) made connections between organizational health and several other factors, including openness and student achievement.

The aim of this study is two-fold: first, a way to characterize how teachers make meaning of their school cultures through the forging of their administrative relationships; and second, a qualitative departure from the useful but limited quantitative measurements of relational trust in schools, such as those revealed by the Omnibus T-Scale. Many who have worked in this area suggest an increase in qualitative work on trust in schools (Edgeron et al., 2006; Louis, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015; Sallee, 2014, and Walker, et al., 2011). The research indicates there is value in capturing the stories of teachers positioned to explore this dynamic and discussing what possible threads there may be connecting the professional lives of these two educational roles. Louis (2007) implied there is a need to go beyond spontaneous interview responses, and her study probed directly about stories of trust. Such stories show there can be a sense of worry about intra-departmental ripples and opportunities for miscommunication—what Clandinin and colleagues (2006) call “bumping.” This study was carried out, at least in part, in an effort to identify and address these “bumping places” in teachers’ lives, which it did.

While my initial intent was to explore communication, as I read the existing literature, I found that relational trust was really what I was concerned with, more than organizational communication, though that is a part of it. The spaces between teachers on equal footing is of concern, but principals, too, are concerned with the ways their communication is received and their messages and motives are interpreted as Walker et al. (2011) wrote. Before explaining that trust for principals (and, it is implied, other principals) is a “fragile necessity,” Walker, Kutsyuruba, and Noonan (2008) wrote, “the importance and pervasiveness of trust (or its betrayal or absence) are implicit in our every effort to establish communities of learners and generative settings for the expression of our shared educational ambitions” (p. 1).

In Louis’s 2007 study, which was based on interviews and focus group data, there was not a perception by the research team that school leaders in low trust environments were less honest or concerned about teachers and school improvement than those in the high trust districts. All of them believed that they worked hard to create a good climate for [the current initiative of the time] with all its emphasis on feedback, trust, and teamwork and could point to evidence that they tried to create an appropriate vision for their school and teacher involvement. (p. 19)

School leaders must understand the implication of Louis’s (2007) study that they should “be ruthless in scrutinizing how their own behavior and context are interpreted by others” (p. 19).

One key point of Louis’s (2007) study was that early on in the implementation of an institutional change, school leaders must understand the perception of “process integrity” at every stage. If any portion of a system-wide decision is viewed by a significant cohort of teachers or stakeholders to be a secretive or “back room deal,” then it must be addressed until suspicions are dealt with fully and trust re-brokered/mended (p. 19).

Creating trust is not a science, but this study points to three variables that may warrant further investigation as significant enhancers of trust: (1) perceived influence over how decisions are made; (2) a sense that decision makers take stakeholder interests into account; and (3) an agreed upon and objective measure of the effects or outcomes of implemented decisions. (p. 20)

The stories of principals is a key component that even the largest of studies on trust in schools, such as that of Bryk and Schneider (2003), did not fully explore (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). These aspects of trust in schools are expanded upon in greater detail in Chapter 2's review of literature.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to explore the stories teachers tell about relational trust and its role in the facilitation of interdependent relationships with principals. A major aim was how trust develops and is mitigated or strengthened in teacher-principal relationships for secondary educators in one large school district in a Midwestern city. There is a great deal of work on trust in organizational contexts both in education and beyond, but there is a dearth of work in the area of distrust specifically (Louis, 2007). While this has been absent in previous studies, it is a theme this study examined during the thematic coding process. For this study, the teacher-principal relationship was defined as a bond that is professionally enabling, collegial, and facilitative. "Relational trust" was understood using Bryk and Schneider's (2003) three-level theory for school contexts, and a modified version of Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's "Omnibus T-Scale" (2007) was utilized to provide a supplementary quantitative context for the qualitative data. Of particular interest to this study was the exploration of how the formation of trust relates to hierarchical structures of power in schools, particularly the dynamic between school leaders and teachers.



The unit of analysis for this study was teacher stories of relational trust. Of note in their examination were the intersections and overlappings of perceptions of trust elements between teachers and principals as they related to the professional culture and hierarchical structure of the school environment. Teachers and principals as well as other school leaders in administrative roles, including central office personnel who have a say in policy, training, and professional development, were the focus of this study. The theoretical traditions of heuristic inquiry, a form of phenomenology, and narrative inquiry were the qualitative design elements of the study.

Heuristic inquiry was appropriate for this study because of the personal nature of the phenomenon being examined. The experience of the researcher contributed a substantial portion of meaning to the research questions in the context of the participants and their data. Flood (2010) remarked on the value of “inner subjectivity” in the use of a phenomenological inquiry (p. 7). Patton (2002a) described “intense personal interest” in subject and phenomena (p. 107), and Creswell (2008) outlined why a pragmatic approach is needed. Because I believed in grounding this work in personal experience, Moustakas’ (1994) heuristic inquiry model was most fitting. In order to best capture the lived experiences of this study’s participants, a narrative inquiry modality was employed.

Narrative inquiry allows the researcher to closely examine the lived experience of participants and acknowledge and value both their role and the role of the researcher as a narrator in an ongoing and meaningful story with structure from which themes can be withdrawn and co-authored (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Clandinin et al. (2006); and Connelly and Clandinin (1999) engaged in scholarship focused on capturing the thinking of teachers as opposed to their skills, characteristics, or methods.

Their work represented a key shift in our understanding of teachers as “holders and makers of knowledge” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 1). Their aim to more clearly define teachers’ “personal practical knowledge” and “rhythms” of their teaching provides a meaningfully deep and rich narrative context through which to better understand schools, schooling, and students (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 315). This study aimed to explore the three-dimensional inquiry space using the lamp of teacher stories to light the way.

This study captured the perspectives of educational agents on one side of the leadership divide in an attempt to illustrate where overlaps and gaps in understanding of relational trust lay in one school. “Research has addressed how individual actors should behave to build trust, but not how to rebuild it when it had eroded” (Louis, 2007, p. 20). Trust should be viewed as a bridge between the transactional components of school leadership and the transformational ones. Many studies have shown quantitatively that trust between teachers and principals and within groups of teachers is a topic of concern for leaders, policymakers, boards of education, and instructional professionals alike (Ärlestig, 2007, 2008; Blasé & Blasé, 1997; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). However, the need for more extensive and deep qualitative work has been established on this topic (Edgerson et al., 2006; Walker et al., 2011). Of particular interest beyond the quantitative measures of the OTS are the stories of teachers. Their narratives, in the context of my own experiences, provide a richly layered temporal, social, and situational frame of lived and told story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

### **Research Questions and Interdisciplinarity**

1. How do teachers characterize trusting professional relationships?
  - a. What stories do teachers tell about interactions with their principals?

- b. How do teachers respond to different metaphorical depictions of principal-teacher relationships?
2. What does it mean for teachers to develop trust in a professional context with principals?
- a. What meanings do teachers attach to the development of relational trust with principals?
  - b. What do teachers think are factors that impact trust in the school context?

This study was designed to address multiple disciplines of scholarly work. Its dimensions included educational leadership as well as curriculum and instruction. The interdisciplinarity of this study was intended to draw meaning regarding relational trust between school administrators and teachers and building a climate of trust for the growth and development of teachers. Participant stories may contain the potential for impact on teacher practice, including instruction, curriculum planning, and implementation of organizational changes.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This phase of the research began with Bell's (2005) idea that researchers benefit greatly from using "an explanatory device which explains either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied, the key factors, constructs or variables, and the presumed relationships among them" (p. 103). This notion of the theoretical framework informed not only my thinking, but the unfolding and emergent design of the entire process. Exploring what Miles and Huberman (1994) identified as "conceptual" rather than theoretical provided me with an established starting point and place to return to throughout my inquiry as I referred back to the core components of my work, incorporating educational leadership and

curriculum to explore the stories teachers tell about relational trust and its role in the facilitation of interdependent relationships with principals. Maxwell (2005) stated that the theoretical framework was “the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research” (p. 33). As Miles and Huberman (1994) explained, this framework should clearly delineate “the main things to be studied—key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them” (p. 18) in graphic or narrative format. In addition, it is helpful to remember that Maxwell (2013) asserts there is a conceptual nature to theoretical frameworks such as this one, contextualized by the positionality of the researcher, who is, himself, an instrument (Patton, 2015).

Overall, my study is informed by and works in concert with that of Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999). On a grand, general scale, the idea of trust in schools that applies to my work is best characterized first by Bryk and Schneider’s three-level theory of trust which cements the concept firmly into the realm of socio-political value. Their notions that trust relates to the discernment of others’ interests, the consideration of institutionalized role dynamics within the school, and the consequences of trust in and related to authority are seriously considered here.

In constructing this theoretical framework, I was influenced by Patton’s (2002a) description of what well-designed qualitative research can do: “open up a world to the reader through rich, detailed, and concrete descriptions of people and places” (p. 438). Researchers all bring assumptions with themselves to the work being done, and in that regard, I was no different. As a teacher, I see the work of this study as something rooted first in my own experiences. I consider the foundation of a school’s organizational culture to be the ways that the leadership structure functions and is understood by those involved; in other words, the

ways that teachers and principals interact, the exact things they choose to say, write, and do for one another within the context of their roles helps to shape the essence of what makes a school tick. I have seen the negative effects on students and teachers of school cultures that are not closely examined by leadership or thought about by teachers; when left to chance, the leadership and learning narratives of a school are driven by external or constantly shifting forces. I believe professional educators should be attentive to these subtextual, subliminal, and relational aspects of the roles they serve implicitly and explicitly.

In the following chapter, a detailed discussion of the theoretical framing of this study is laid out. The following is a useful categorization of the theories presented by other scholars in the extant literature which have preceded this study. The concepts that underpin the problem this study aims to examine are the notion of trust as a vital resource in schools, the relationship between teacher and principal, the organizational climate of the school, and potential barriers to innovation change. The first strand is the general concept of trust in the school context, particularly between and within the professionals of the school rather than between the school and community or educators and students. The second strand is the teacher-principal relationship, including the head principal and building level principals like assistant principals. Teacher stories of how they interact with and think of their place in a school hierarchy or organizational structure matter greatly in how we examine the value and role of trust in their context. Naturally, this leads to the third strand, which is the school's organizational culture.

I am interested in how the individual stories of teacher-principal relationships may contribute to or create a particular culture or climate within the school. The fourth strand is how well a school can innovate instruction. Particularly, I am wondering if trust or its

absence is a barrier to the implementation of innovations for students. Do all these factors related to trust, the inner workings of the teacher-principal dynamic, and the organizational climate, contribute to a school culture that can grow and improve for the changing needs of students? Lastly, this study is a heuristic inquiry because of the value I see in closely associating my own experiences about the phenomenon to those of the participants. This lens provides me a way to make and communicate a deeper level of meaning when drawing out the stories of those involved. Heuristic inquiry is detailed in the overview of methodology section at the end of this chapter.

### **Trust in Schools**

The social construct of trust among the people running schools has become an area of interest in the last two decades as research from the business world and the field of industrial and organizational psychology has crossed over into education and educational leadership as a core notion for examining the effectiveness of both schools and their leaders. This line of scholarship in education dates back to the development of Halpin and Croft's (1963) Organizational Climate Development Questionnaire (OCDQ), which sought to determine the "personality" of the school in question. The general question asked then was whether there was a sense of mutual respect in which leadership ideas could flow freely in an "open" rather than "closed" social structure of the school. There, the researchers described an effective climate as one where teachers were not preoccupied with task achievement or the need for gratification.

Halpin and Croft's (1963) work with data from over 1,000 schools identified a graphical taxonomy of different school climate types based on their response to the OCDQ survey instrument. Those types included open, autonomous, controlled, and closed climates.

The first two are denoted by a high sense of social “esprit” and engagement as well as relatively low levels of “stratification” in which inside cliques form and disrupt the work of the school or interfere with leadership (p. 40).

Similar work was done by Pace and Stern (1958) and Stern (1970), but even outside of the field of education there was a lull until the 1990s, when Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp extended the elementary school scope of Halpin and Croft to high schools (1991) and later Hoy and Tarter (1997) developed the Organizational Health Index (OHI).

In their development of the Organizational Climate Index for high schools, Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2002) reviewed an exhaustive collection of instruments and studies dealing with organizational health and openness for the purpose of merging and simplifying the tools into one “parsimonious” instrument to be used for the examination of high school climate and faculty trust (2002, p. 38). Their Organizational Climate Index (OCI) is a product of the previous OCDQ and OHI instruments, designed to map more neatly to four newly outlined dimensions: environmental press (later renamed “institutional vulnerability”), collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, and academic press (p. 39). The OCI was developed as both a practical tool for principals interested in using a diagnostic to reflect on their own leadership styles as well as a theoretical tool for researchers to ask better questions and explore interpersonal dimensions in schools.

Each of these dimensions uses Likert items—ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree on a six-point scale—such as “the principal is friendly and approachable” (collegial leadership) or “teachers help and support each other” (professional teacher behavior) to create a profile of the organizational climate bearing on faculty trust (p. 45). Results from the study of 97 schools showed that faculty trust in colleagues was deeply

connected and related to each of the identified dimensions of climate. My study examined the high school organization more closely, particularly the conceptualization of trust between teachers and principal. A qualitative zooming-in and narrative analysis of teacher stories can help add clarity and context to the existing quantitative data. Overall, Hoy's study (2002) lends credibility to the notion that trust is built by certain characteristics of collegiality and professionalism, including the actions of the principal and those of teachers in the same body.

The research of Wayne K. Hoy, the same scholar who teamed up for the Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland study in 2002, continued as he worked with Megan Tschannen-Moran to further develop a more focused instrument to measure and gauge school climate, namely the degree of trust within a school's faculty. This study further concatenated previous definitions and understandings about trust into a workable and clear format. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's definition of trust (1998) is as follows: "An individual's or group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open" (p. 184). This definition was sharpened from previous language like that of Rotter (1967), who focused on "expectancy" and "promise" of outcomes; Zand (1972), who singled out vulnerability to another party; and Zucker (1986), who defined trust as a social or common expectation that is usually imperceptible until broken. My study examined what happens when trust is broken. How do teachers and principals mend and repair that trust, or what happens if they do not?

As was mentioned previously, relational trust and its counterparts, collegial and reciprocal trust, are of core importance as earlier theories established (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1999). The key notion is described in Bryk and Schneider's work as a blending of philosophical reasoning and



behavioral social science: “Our theory adopts a mixed view: that individuals act in part on behavioral judgments and in part on beliefs” (p. 184). Their work and that of others established the idea that trust is built on action-validated expectations within a social network. Furthermore, the theory of leadership that asserts moral agency as a skill of primary importance in the principalship is found in the work of Walker, Kutsyruba, and Noonan (2010). This theoretical notion asserts that leaders who work to build or mend trust with their teachers—or at least understand and value its “fragility” in the school context—are more fully realizing the potential scope of their role and responsibility in the school organization.

Stemming from the importance of moral agency in school leadership is the notion of teacher interdependency and risk; that is, the value of teacher-teacher relationships both independently and in the context of the broader relationship and culture cultivated by the school leadership. In this study, Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) theorized that effective teacher practice is impacted by shared leadership. They suggest that teacher-teacher and teacher-principal relationships as a system need to be studied to better discern the link between leadership and learning. Previous to their 2008 study, Louis (2006) provided support for the notion that teachers are more willing to engage in change initiatives where trust between administration and teachers, as well as teachers and their peers, is promoted. This study also discussed the promotion of teacher self-efficacy in school environments characterized as “high trust.”

### **The Teacher-Principal Relationship**

Trust can be tied to many different aspects of an organization’s interconnections and dynamics. Karen Seashore Louis’s (2006) more flexible definition of trust is the “confidence in or reliance on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship, or other sound principal, of

another person or group” (p. 2). Others still focused their definitions on trust as a mediating factor in intrapersonal relationships (Boon, Holmes, Hinde, & Groebel, 1991; Gambetta, 1998; Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995; McAllister, 1995). Many of these definitions lead one to consider how trust functions in the context of school leadership and teacher response to leadership decisions and actions. In many schools, even schools with high faculty trust, there is often less trust between teachers and principals (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Collegial leadership and the perceptions of the principal’s actions and stances by the teaching faculty are one of the most important pieces of building trust in schools cited by Tschannen-Moran (2014a). School leaders must understand the implication of Louis’s (2006) study that they should “be ruthless in scrutinizing how their own behavior and context are interpreted by others” (p. 19). Earlier, Louis (2006) stated that great administrators (ones who are successful in building and maintaining trust) must also blend broader transformational efforts with smaller transactional ones in order to facilitate the cementing of a “foundation for trust in institutional leadership for change” (p. 18). Without addressing underlying trust issues in a school, there can be little or no improvement on future school initiatives. This has to start with the teacher-principal dynamic. Tschannen-Moran (2014a) found a significant correlation ( $n=64$ ,  $0.924$ ,  $p < 0.01$  and  $0.05$ , two-tailed) between teacher trust in the principal and a leader’s collegial leadership skills. I wonder, what stories are those teachers telling about their leaders? What interactions do they have in the halls? What conversations do they have at their lunch table? The narratives of teachers about their trust of their principal were a key understanding I hoped to glean in this research.

Tschannen-Moran also pointed out a need for more research in the area of what dynamics “foster faculty trust in the principal” because of her findings about trust and the

organizational climate (2014a, p. 86). Louis (2006) pointed out that trust can change and be manifested on multiple levels in a school system: “Relational trust is dependent on patterned interactions between people who work together on a regular basis,” and patterns of trust are “deeply embedded” and “can become institutionalized” (p. 19). Furthermore, she emphasized that an individual trust relationship, like that of a principal and teacher, or group of teachers, can morph into an institutional model of either trust or distrust if not attended to carefully by school leadership. Louis also explained that there is not enough known about actions that broker or build back an eroded sense of trust (2006).

### **Organizational Climate**

In environments where teachers trust each other and trust their leaders, there is more likely to be collaboration, sharing of resources, and open promotion of new ideas that may benefit students in novel ways. An organizational climate with the capacity to change and grow has been shown to be one where collegial trust is present (Cosner, 2009). This work echoes the vitality of trust in schools due to the interdependent nature of teaching and learning, which rely heavily on the relational and collegial bonds between parties, namely teachers and principals.

Positive, open, and healthy school climates are ones in which teachers, principals, and students have authentic interrelationships that govern their thoughts and actions about how to be at school with each other (Hoy et al., 2002). Climates described in this way are governed by high factor loadings on the items named in each category of the OCI. This study is concerned with climate as a larger part of teacher perceptions of trust in their building because while each teacher speaks in individual stories, it aimed to identify traits and themes within and between those stories that would help illustrate some sort of larger school climate.

The ecological metaphor implied by the use of the word climate in this term is a helpful extension to the previous depictions about open and closed as well as healthy and sick cultures as seen through the lens of faculty trust.

### **The Trust-improvement Connection**

Trust is a complex social construct that operates almost undetected when positive, and it exists at the core of most organizations (McAllister, 1995). When there is a breach, innovation or even simple changes can be stifled or cause distress when working toward common goals (Brown, 2015; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001). Kutsyuruba and Walker (2015) asserted that trust operates as a fluctuating cycle on an “ecological” scale. They said that leaders must see themselves as moral agents, duty bound to uphold this understanding of trust. If trust erodes or is breached at the institutional or individual level, it should be the leader who takes responsibility for mending it. If the system is not healthy in terms of the collective trust and efficacy, then work on meaningful changes and common goals that benefit students can be endangered or halted altogether. Louis’s (2006) study pointed out that early in the implementation of an institutional change, school leaders must understand the perception of “process integrity” at every stage. If any portion of a system-wide decision is viewed by a significant cohort of teachers or stakeholders to be a secretive or “back room deal,” then it must be addressed until suspicions are dealt with fully and trust is re-brokered/mended (p. 19).

The work of Lawson et al. (2017) in nine New York area elementary schools, six of which were described as “odds-beating” due to their expected performance, demographic profile, and academic outcomes, found that there was a connection between successful innovations and strong relational trust. Teaching children in schools, no matter their

demographic profile, has always presented the need for educators to accept some sense of vulnerability, but Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015a, 2015b) pointed out that building or repairing trust can be greatly limited when feelings of betrayal are evident. In both studies, as well as in Bryk and Schneider's 2002 study, the concept of relational trust was established as a core resource for teaching, learning, and school improvement that principals should be cognizant of as they plan and oversee their schools (Lawson et al., 2017, p. 35). Louis (2006) noted three key factors that school leaders should pay heed to in their evaluation of relational trust in their faculties: "(1) perceived influence over how decisions are made; (2) a sense that decision makers take stakeholder interests into account; and (3) an agreed upon and objective measure of the effects or outcomes of implemented decisions" (p. 35).

Outside of the world of education, theories of trust have been developed for similar purposes. In both the economic (Fukuyama, 1995) and political (Putnam, 1993) spheres, social capital represents the capacity to sustain complex relationships between entities. Bryk and Schneider (2002) showed how the theories of Coleman (1988) led to a better understanding of the potential power of interconnectedness and dense relational ties that promote a continuously improving school environment. In the following chapter, these theories are developed more fully and interconnected in meaningful ways that pertain to the current study. Subsequently, Chapter 2 provides a robust review of relevant literature, establishing a strong foundation of support for the purpose, significance, and potential future applications to which the study can be applied.

Moving more deeply into my study, I drew strongly from the subsequent work of Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999), who shared a great deal of scholarly DNA with Bryk and Schneider. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's definition of trust zooms in on the more granular

role-related trust within the school. Their singling out of trust as it relates to one's willingness to be vulnerable is particularly informative to my work. The teacher-principal relationship, which is of primary importance to my study, is best characterized by challenges to the notion of vulnerability that teachers are willing to exhibit and express. As this study was designed to uncover and draw attention to, teacher stories of their relationship with principals are contextualized by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's (1999) trust definition of benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness, as teachers experience the presence or absence of those phenomena in their organizational context. This relationship between teachers and principals can be understood by exploring what effective leadership is, how trust is brokered, the organizational climate, and the concept of professional capital. Those concepts are discussed in further detail in review of literature in Chapter 2. The facets established by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran in their 1999 study were instrumental in the creation of their Omnibus T-Scale, which helped inform participant selection in this study as well as give a sense of the nature of trust at the site.

### **Overview of Methodology**

This study examined the roots of how trust forms, develops, and changes in relationships of core importance in the school setting: specifically, the teacher-principal relationship as perceived by the teacher. Qualitative research is particularly suited to the in-depth and focused study of a small group of individuals whose "small-t" truths cannot be easily generalized but can help provide meaningful context for better understanding the nature of particular phenomena, such as relational trust in this case. This study's methods rely on working toward what Geertz (2003) called "thick description." In this section, I provide a general overview of the methods used in this study.

In qualitative research, “your personal (and often unexamined) motives as a researcher have important consequences for the validity of your conclusions” and this study is no different (Maxwell, 2013, p. 21). I chose this topic, in large part, because of my experiences dealing with teacher frustration with their administration. Whether warranted or not, it has seemed to me in my experiences both teaching and working with other teachers, that perceptions of principal relationships, particularly trust at work in those relationships, are meaningful in the everyday workings of a teacher’s life.

While this a priori judgment about the nature of the phenomenon is not founded in research, it is relevant to divulge clearly here because as a researcher in a qualitative study, I am, myself, a vital instrument (Patton, 2002a). Beyond my experiences as a teacher, another important factor in my selection of this topic and how I chose to go about studying this phenomenon, was my position as a prospective administrator. This personal career goal, I realized, led me to this topic and to the methods of heuristic and narrative inquiry. Maxwell (2013) wrote that eschewing our personal goals as researchers is “neither possible nor necessary” (p. 43) and should be done openly so the researcher can examine their shaping of their work.

This heuristic narrative inquiry of the experiences of teachers with their principals determined how trust is experienced, formed, threatened, repaired, and cultivated in the school setting. In order to access and draw meaning from the essence of those lived experiences, this study used what Geertz called “thick description” (2008) wherein the stories told by participants were examined deeply through a participant-focused, but instrument-driven inquiry. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative research is uniquely

qualified to provide “local causality” in comparison to the seeking of a sense of more disconnected and sterile generalizability sought through “harder” quantitative methods (p. 3).

### **Researcher Positioning**

As a teacher, I have developed a trust-based dispositional awareness, which is innate to all professional activity within the confines of “school.” When I say “dispositional,” I am speaking softly of my own, personal dispositions toward certain choices and professional habits in teaching. After a decade of teaching, I have felt both the high and low tides of effective and present forces of educational leadership. Looking back at those moments, I began to notice tidal patterns on the shores of my experience. At times when the waters rose, I felt buoyed and empowered to reach out to students in new ways. When the ebbing left me stranded, I felt alone and encrusted in self-doubt, unsure if I should wade back out or throw in the towel and head to lunch. From my experiences as a teacher, I knew I was not alone with this feeling.

As I began to search for the source of such frustrations, I found no shortage of new lenses to try on to assess the situation. The study by Edgerson, Kritsonis, and Herrington (2006) particularly affected me because it was written by a graduate student and an assistant principal. Where before I may have reacted to such situations by becoming fixated on classroom level adjustments or personal professional development, I began to see my experiences through a lens of trust as it worked in the whole system of the school, particularly through the teacher-principal relationship.

In reflecting upon my experiences, I came to the conclusion that, if many teachers were feeling like I was about their relationships with administration, there could be stagnant pockets of discomfort, even resentment among the staff. Over time, I realized that while the



teaching of children is vastly larger and more important than any one person, teachers hungered for a cultural identity as a school, one that could best be set or acknowledged by building leadership.

One thing I have noticed in other schools I have worked in is that an increase in the size of a staff, including the size of the administrative staff, tends to strain teacher-principal relationships simply by virtue of the numbers. When my proximity to meaningful interactions with my principals grew more distant, so did my confusion and that of my colleagues. When teachers around me would try to fill the gaps in their understanding of memoranda, daily communication, and other instances of contact, it was often with assumptions that limited our collective potential to succeed instructionally. Slowly, the professional capacity of my colleagues was clouded in doubts about what the narrative of our school was. When we did not understand what was being asked of us and did not see a clear vision about where we were going, we all felt blind. In my experience, an increase in staff size can make vulnerability harder to evoke for some teachers, which Zand (1972) cited as a key factor related to building trust.

As an experienced teacher and prospective principal, I know there is great value in the exploration of this dynamic, and utilizing an interdisciplinary approach has helped to bring clarity to leadership and the social context of schools. We all have blindness when it comes to our social and cultural context, and we all hear the echoes of our own voice a little too loudly at times. As a researcher, teacher, and educational stakeholder, I feel that the intersection of my growing story with those of other teachers exploring their administrative micropolitical context has borne rich and bounteous fruit. I have found, if you ask teachers,

the relationships they share with their colleagues and their leadership play a large role in how they feel about their job.

Based on my own personal and professional experience, I see that the work of teachers and principals intersects at many places in myriad ways through basic communication, role assignment, supervision, direct interaction, and personal communication. When these relationships are positive and trusting, teachers are more likely to be content enough to take risks, ask difficult questions, reach out to collaborate, publish their work, and be otherwise professionally engaged. I think the same is reflexively true of principals who are a part of such a school culture of learning and collegiality. In my experience, when there is not a general sense of trust in a building that the people in charge know what they are doing and are doing things for good reasons, then professional capacity wanes easily. I carried these assumptions with me while conducting this study. The review of literature in Chapter 2 more comprehensively details these concepts as they relate to and support this framework.

### **Selection Methods**

Participant selection took the form of a maximum variation strategy based on a survey using the Omnibus T-scale (OTS) which differentiated participants by their responses on a variety of Likert items. Maximum variation is defined by Creswell (2013) as a strategy of selection that “maximizes differences” early on so that the chance of findings “reflect[ing] differences or different perspectives” is higher (p. 157). The survey was distributed to a large number of upper secondary teachers in a single district, and descriptive statistics provided the criteria for purposeful member selection, which Maxwell (2013) described as necessary for

achieving representativeness, homogeneity of population, and the establishment of secure and effective relationships with participants.

Once the survey instrument provided me with the appropriate participants to select for interviews, I selected eight individuals on whom to focus my time and attention before gathering further data. Creswell (2013) outlined the four major types of data to be collected for qualitative research as: observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials. This study employed interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials. The nature and number of participants selected to be interviewed helped to properly manifest the phenomenon of relational trust between teacher and principal because they were selected to represent a range of expressions of trust in the school and the principal, according to the OTS results.

After participants were selected, they participated in a secondary electronic survey in which they were asked to fill in the text for blank bubbles on cartoon images depicting school situations. The data in this intermediate stage helped provide more contextualizing data about each participant's experience of the phenomenon. Each participant responded to the same pictures, which were addressed as a part of the interview guide in the final step. Finally, each participant went through an open-ended interview with a series of guiding questions, including references and member-checking of their cartoon captions and previous survey data from their site. Each interview was approximately 45 to 60 minutes in length.

### **Data Analysis**

Heuristics inquiry, as designed by Clark Moustakas (1994), is outlined by six distinct phases of research beginning with a purposeful and intentional Initial Engagement with the questions and content of the research. After the researcher is engaged, there is a period of

Immersion with the phenomenon and questions surrounding it during which the researcher's entire waking life is submerged in and subsumed by the issue. After that period of self-dialogue and wakeful discovery, the next phase is one of Incubation, which is actually a retreat from direct and intense fixation in favor of a passive, but constant, meditation on the questions and themes. After the midpoint of detachment comes the moments of Illumination and Explication, during which the gleaned layers of meaning are examined judiciously. Lastly, a visual narrative depiction of the material takes form in the Creative Synthesis phase, which divulges the experiential and analytical knowledge discerned in its totality.

The creative synthesis phase took the form of a thematic coding of final interviews according to Patton (2002a). A combination of emic and etic approaches to the development of a codebook helped to navigate the expressions of experience and truths in each interview and show potential connections and comparisons as they arose. In addition to the emic participant-side codes discovered during the analysis, researcher-side etic codes helped provide lines of consistent ideas that may show up and overlap to reveal something different about the phenomenon.

### **Limitations**

Every study and form of study has limitations, and it is important to clearly outline all possible areas of concern the researcher is aware of that may possibly affect the outcomes of the work. Since I am a novice researcher, there are many potential limitations related to my experiential capacity. In heuristic inquiries, the subjectivity and bias of the researcher are potentially limiting, including the researcher's determinations of reliability and validity. In an effort to reduce as many of these limitations as possible, this study was designed in steps and guides for the collection and analysis of data whenever possible. Chapter 3 provides a more

detailed discussion of validity, reliability, and ethical considerations as well as basic guidelines for conducting research with human subjects, including Institutional Review Board (IRB) and CITI protocol.

### **Significance of the Study**

The aim of this study was to speak to the nature of trust intersections between teachers and principals of all types, including principals, assistant principals, and central office administrators such as assistant superintendents and directors of various departments. The research questions in this study were intended to explore the developmental components of relational trust between teachers and the principals they work with. Based on recommendations of educational researchers such as Walker et al. (2011) and Vodicka (2007), this heuristic narrative inquiry explored the stories teachers tell about relational trust and its role in the facilitation of interdependent relationships. The audience of this study is district- and building-level leaders of school districts who have identified problems that deal with teacher-principals trust at either level.

Karen Seashore Louis (2006) expressed the need for more study of institutional trust in education and pointed out that existing studies up to that point in time “account for a leader’s ability to create and maintain trust, but do not explain how a leader brokers trusting relationships into an acceptance of change” (p. 4). She concluded that trust is not studied enough in education beyond establishing that it is an important factor which has an effect on the organization of the school. We need to explore how it manifests and is dealt with interrelationally, specifically at the secondary level and between teachers and principals. More recently, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015b) strongly suggested the need for more work in the area of teacher-principal trust, specifically qualitative work.

The interviews in Louis's (2006) study relied on spontaneously generated teacher accounts of trust in administration; it was not a designed factor of the study but emerged from the data during analysis. Louis found it important to expand on this theme of connections between district and school leadership trust. The voices of principals and school leaders were left out because the theme of trust did not come up naturally as it did with teachers. The current study bridges what Bryk and Schneider (2002) concluded about faculty trust in elementary schools but does so in high schools instead.

Amy Sallee's (2014) dissertation was a mixed methods study with a primary quantitative paradigm that looked at the correlations between principal-teacher relationships and teacher self-efficacy and then did a thematic analysis using qualitative measures. This was a similar version of Sallee's study (only qualitative) with a nod to the descriptive statistical components and an expanded look at teacher and principal narratives. Her implications for future work were as follows: "Expand the research to include wider and more varied populations" including different experience levels of principals (p. 77). I looked at the interactions of principals and teachers in ways similar to those of Sallee and closely examine themes that may emerge from participant narratives which may speak to the nature of how trust thickens or thins in such relationships. In comparison, my study used a more robust qualitative aspect to get at "what teachers are thinking" and what reasons are behind the perceptions of qualitative and conceptual correlations. The understanding of phenomena like this would be improved with in-depth interviews, which I used as the primary portion of my data collection.

The interdisciplinary nature of this study has implications for policy as well as practice because of its potential to change the ways that teachers and principals view their

collective efficacy and reciprocal trust. Recent professional literature (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013) and other recent dissertations (Vodicka, 2007) have pinpointed related topics, such as “social capital” as areas of interest for educational leaders to focus on as neglected commodities. Walker et al. (2011) asserted that trust between and within groups of teachers and principals is a central issue in the foundation of a school’s culture. I believe the establishment, maintenance, and understanding of “relational goodwill” between these groups is a phenomenon worth exploring because of what Walker (2011) called the “centrality of trust” (p. 1).

This study is needed because there is a clear path laid out in previous research for continued qualitative exploration of relational trust between teachers and principals. More qualitative research is warranted in this area because an existing body of literature has been established in the area of quantitatively exploring the issue (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Trust is defined using Bryk and Schneider’s “three-level-theory” that includes (1) intrapersonal discernment of others’ interests, (2) consideration of role relations formed by institutional and individual “particularities” of the school community, and (3) the organizational level consequences of expanded moral authority. This definition operates on the understanding that schools are “networks of sustained relationships” (p. 38). Based on exchanges between individuals and schools, there are complex, subtle, and often ignored consequences over time that can easily be attributed to non-related factors.

The growing quantitative work surrounding perceptions of acts of trust brokering between and within groups of teachers and principals is one that is ripe for new and deep qualitative work. Based on the literature I have reviewed, there is a clear gap that needs to be filled.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

Chapter 1 provided a comprehensive view of this heuristic narrative inquiry. I gave a general view of the study with a focus on the contextual background of the study, the problem, research questions, interdisciplinary nature of the study, theoretical framework, overview of the methodology, and significance of the study. In Chapter 2, I review the literature connected to the study's purpose: to identify potential themes in the experiences of teachers as they told stories and shared data that clarified what they understood about cultivating trust. Literature review topics comprise four thematic sections: (1) trust in schools, (2) the teacher-principal relationship, (3) organizational climate, and (4) the trust-improvement connection. Chapter 3 presents a detailed description of the methodology with an emphasis on data collection methods that were used in the field study phase of the study. Following the approval of the study by the committee, I obtained Institutional Review Board approval, which allowed me to move forward with data collection. Chapter 4 reports on the themes identified in teachers' stories related to the dynamics of trust in schools. I conclude in Chapter 5 with implications of the findings, recommendations, and future research warranted.



## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to identify potential themes in the experiences of teachers as they told stories and shared data which clarified what they understood about cultivating trust. Particularly, this study was designed to elicit some of the essence of the relationship at the core of the school as an organization: the teacher-principal relationship. The stories of teachers, along with the survey data collected, should provide a window into an ever-present but unexamined area of interest to school leaders and teachers alike.

Drawing on educational leadership and curriculum as knowledge areas related to relational trust, my journey to this study and its intent began with an honest thought about how to make schooling better in light of how many caring, intelligent, and dedicated people in distress I saw working in schools. Teaching in the urban core brought many challenges that outsiders might expect, like limited connections to useful resources, disparate meaningful collaboration opportunities, and a transient population of students who seemed to flux in and out of our system weekly. Having come from a middle class suburban high school, I make no claim of understanding the lives of my students in the urban core, which I could not possibly have learned in a few years teaching there. Instead, I made a point of thinking critically about what made the schools work the way they did. As an applicant to a doctoral program, I found that writing my way to the heart of this problem was a complex task that required more than just time and a curious mind.

My inclination with this study was to seek questions that have applicable lessons not just for the schools and communities I have known, but for all schools. Indeed, I found many of the same problems, perhaps manifesting in different ways, that were present in the non-

urban district I spent the next five years of my career serving. The notions I most deeply wished to explore while this study was germinating were how effective schools established a culture of trust and how teachers and principals could more closely and amicably work together where trust had been breached and needed mending. More so than any issue of curriculum content, I found that this was what could have the most positive impact on the most teachers, and thus students, if we could improve upon the status quo. Luckily, I quickly found a growing body of experts pursuing this topic and its many offshoots and parts.

In addition to this introduction and an overview of the concepts, this review of literature addresses the concept of relational trust in schools as it relates to the study proposed in four thematic strands: (1) trust in schools, (2) the teacher-principal relationship, (3) organizational climate, and (4) the trust-improvement connection. The search for relevant literature for this study encompassed a wide timeframe, extending from the beginning of my program in my initial curiosity about teacher-principal communication in highly effective schools to my later and more focused queries specifically about relational trust in the school setting. In my review, I focus primarily on empirical studies which help establish the core phenomenon as relevant and vital to understand. While more recent research is always preferred, part of the appeal of this study to me is the niche space it represents due to its relative nascence. Even with initial research going back as far as 1967, there had never been a real boom in trust research in schools until the turn of the century, when Bryk and Schneider published their landmark work in 2002, *Trust in Schools*.

In this review, I trace the history of research on this phenomenon to today and provide a robust discussion of the recent as well as the original scholarship. This review provides a structure for understanding the study and allows readers to glean a sense of the

“DNA” of the phenomenon in the context of the site studied. The first section of this review provides an overview of the most primary concept to be explored in this study: trust in schools. The research outlined includes recent as well as more historical scholarly context and work both in and outside of education.

### **Trust in Schools**

“Trust in schools” is a major theme in the extant literature on school improvement (Adams, 2017; Angelis, Gregory, & Durand, 2017; Brown III, 2015; Browning, 2013; Carless, 2009; Daly, Liou, & Moolenaar, 2014; Flood & Angelle, 2017; Freire & Fernandes, 2016; Hallam & Housman, 2009; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015; Lawson et al., 2017; Lesinger, Altinay, Altinay, & Dagli, 2017; Louis & Murphy, 2016; Moolenaar & Slegers, 2010; Northfield, 2014; Scott & Halkias, 2016; Stump, 2016; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis 2015a, 2015b). In addition, it is a theme that still has dynamics that need to be uncovered and studied. There are potential meanings that could be borne out in new research. This is one of the four primary themes addressed in this research. Its subthemes, “defining trust” and “relational trust,” delineated above, showed how scholars’ understanding of this phenomenon has become more cogent, clear, and controlled since the first forays into its nature. Along with the codification of the definition set out here, its more specific form, “relational trust,” is of primary importance to this study as a specific lens through which to view and seek understanding of teacher narratives.

In schools, the power dynamic between teachers and leaders can be a tricky thing to dissect and understand. As a new teacher in a building, it may not be immediately clear who to go to for answers on certain items. In such a hierarchical world, it may seem like the “chain of command” is pretty clear in most schools because there are principals, assistant

principals, and then teachers laid out in a deceptively simple seeming power structure. However, named secondary leadership positions with implied as well as clearly stated powers may be go-betweens for teachers and leaders. Counselors, department chairs, social workers, and even coaches may have more or less power—and therefore potentially wield more trust than others, even though they are not technically “above” classroom teachers. Even beyond those fairly transparent role differences, social and micropolitical bank account balances in any school can make the haves and have-nots of power and trust a lot muddier. Studying trust between and within any of these groups would be fascinating; however, for this study it has been deemed more prudent to focus on the most clearly defined differences in role and duty: teachers and principals. That being said, the definitions and discussions that follow can often apply within and throughout any number of subgroups of educators who may wield the power to shift the landscape of a school.

### **Defining Trust**

This section of Chapter 2 explores the nature of trust as a phenomenon as it is understood to be relevant to the lives of teachers. Specifically, this study explored and discussed the concept of relational trust, in addition to trust generally. Definitions of trust can vary, but in the school setting, there are several common themes as to how the concept is manifested according to relevant scholarship. These definitions range from focusing on the dynamics of a relationship’s “expectancy” or promise of a portrayal of actuality (Rotter, 1967). Zand (1972) said that trust relates directly to an increase in one’s “vulnerability” to another person or group of people, which is a key dynamic in exploring how teachers feel about their leaders in schools. If teachers cannot openly share information with their principal or with fellow trusted teachers, then it may be harder to exercise their professional and

organizational competence. Zucker (1986) stated that trust is the fabric of social or common expectations that go easily unnoticed until broken. This is a particularly salient definition for me because it aligns with my own experiences of leadership. When I had good leaders and colleagues, trust was just there implicitly.

Determining what trust means in the context of schools requires examining the interdependence of relationships as well as the dynamics of power in those relationships because openness can be more challenging between levels of a hierarchy due to fear of informational reprisal or a breach of confidence. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) defined trust in the school context as “an individual’s or group’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open” (p. 185). These factors play an important role in understanding their methods for measuring and quantifying how trust is manifested in a school using their Omnibus T-Scale instrumentation. Hoy’s later work with Gage and Tarter (2006) expanded clarity about vulnerability and its centrality to trust. Building upon and branching out from their work, Karen Seashore Louis (2006) established that trust in schools is a “confidence in or reliance on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship, or other sound principle, of another person or group” (p. 2). Others still have stated that trust is vital for mediating interpersonal relationships (Boon et al., 1991; Gambetta, 1998; Mayer et al., 1995; McAllister, 1995).

Bottery (2004) argued that trust is a critical, even existential need for functioning at the societal, institutional, interpersonal, and personal levels. At the societal level, it is essential in building the relationships necessary for a flourishing society, as well as fostering good relationships between governments and school employees. At the institutional level, it is crucial in building better relationships within a learning community in which knowledge is

socially created and shared, and in building the kinds of group relationships that boost student achievement. At the interpersonal level, it is central to individual integrity and good leadership. And finally, at the personal level, trust is vital to individual morale, self-esteem and self-worth and is central to dealing with uncertainty, unpredictability, and risk.

Bottery's (2004) three-level organization provides a helpful breakdown for viewing trust in an organizational sense. Each of these levels is important to this study, but the interpersonal level is most closely related to its interests, with the institutional level being a close second; the environment and culture of the school is of primary importance to how trust flows. Similarly, Brown III's (2015) work found that "the trust built with all stakeholders [created] an environment of understanding" (p. 315). One of the benefits of this establishment of trust was that "even at times when there was disagreement, [stakeholders'] voices were heard and respected and their opinion was seriously considered" (p. 315). This broader, cultural definition of how trust manifests was explored by Weick and Sutcliffe (2009) and echoed Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's (1999) language of contextualized vulnerability: "A culture of trust should provide a setting in which people are not afraid of breaking new ground, taking risks, and making errors" (p. 2). All of the definitions of trust discussed in this chapter can be drawn from ideas about teacher safety—intellectual, physical, and emotional—in a professional context.

A troubling theme emerged out of the era of accountability and mass testing, assessment, and teacher evaluation. A quantitative study in Britain's educational system led Trow (1994) to point out that at some point "managerialism [became] a substitute for trust" rather than its remedy (p. 11). No doubt the perceptions of increased scrutiny and pressure from above caused a change over time in how teachers cultivated trust in their schools.

Power (1994, 1997) explained that audits in schools bore out a sort of degrading cycle of distrust “with assumptions of distrust sustaining audit processes and becoming self-fulfilling as auditees adapt their behavior strategically in response to the audit process, thereby becoming less trustworthy” (Power, 1994, p. 10). Part of the emergence of scholars researching trust may have been spurred on by this administrative trend. O’Neill (2002) wrote that this “new culture of accountability” incentivizes and increases patterns of “arbitrary and unprofessional choices” (p. 56). Those actions, or even their perception, as something arbitrary is damaging not only to the institution and its duty to children, but to the betterment of the teachers and leaders within that institution.

Teachers may resort to simply playing along in times when trust is weakened or threatened by shifting power. This state of so-called “defensive teaching” (p. 50) “is not predicated on a relationship of trust, but rather subordination and even subjugation” (Carless, 2009, p. 1). Carless asserted that “trust should be given more consideration in relation to assessment reform, yet has probably raised more issues than it is able to answer” (p. 8). The intent of this study was to provide a continuation of the growing trends to explore and address those myriad issues which may eventually help alleviate tensions, adversariality, and distrust in schools.

It is limiting to view the notion of trust in schools as only about how teachers may work; the phenomenon has a moral and ethical dimension as well. Hosmer (1995) composed a definition of the concept in these terms, asserting:

trust is the expectation by one person, group, or firm of ethically justifiable behavior—that is, morally correct decisions and actions based upon ethical principles of analysis—on the part of the other person, group, or firm in a joint endeavor or economic exchange. (p. 399)

The importance of this definition is in its philosophical underpinning rather than a more transactional exchange of labor for trust in the school. Teachers deserve to be able to expect that a moral and ethical trust will be demonstrated by leaders in their actions and policies.

The work of Blasé (1991) centered on the more transactional rather than moral components of trust in exploring how power shapes vertical and horizontal exchanges and positions. “The term micropolitics has been used to describe the political interactions that take place between social actors in different organizational settings” (p. 225). The economy of power and position in schools is similar to other organizational settings in that all educators in positions of some power are always struggling, “constantly forging and reforging alliances with contextually significant others” and dealing in small transfers of power, both formally and informally (Blasé, 1991, p. 271). The absence of trust in a relationship can have a chilling effect as well, as it can create a vacuum which may be filled by any number of things vying for attention and power in its wake. These black holes caused by breaches in trust can create lasting damage which may affect the institution long term or even irrevocably, argued Kutsyuruba and Walker (2016a). They posited that moral leadership is required when trust is breached to restore a sense of hope and purpose in fellow employees in the organization (pp. 133–154).

In general, trust in schools should be understood to be a force for potential good or harm which must be attended to frequently, consciously, and sincerely, primarily by leaders (Flood & Angelle, 2017; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2016a; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2016b). While definitions have shifted over the course of the last half-century of research from focusing on teacher morale in the 1960s (Halpin & Croft, 1963) to incorporating ideas such



as openness (Blasé & Blasé, 2001), to willingness to be vulnerable (Hoy et al., 2001), or the perceived benevolence of leaders (Mayer et al., 1995), the pattern of attention is clear. Trust matters and should be defined by the power dynamic between teachers and leaders in the school setting. Trust in school settings is too complex to be solely measured through quantitative means either (Heller, 1993).

### **Relational Trust**

Louis (2007) reported that there is a need for more research on relational trust in schools. This area remains sporadically explored despite some consensus among those scholars who have attended to the importance of this phenomenon. Indeed, there is overlap and agreement between Mishra (1996) and Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) about the primary components of leadership behaviors that contribute to trust. In Louis's (2007) study, which was not explicitly designed to study trust from the outset, themes of trust "emerged as an unanticipated theme in many of the interviews" (p. 6). The study found organic associations between an ongoing and longitudinal change initiative (Total Quality Management) and teachers' trust of administration. In a point of key agreement with Bryk and Schneider's (2002) work, Louis concluded that relational trust, more so than trust in any one institution such as a school building or district, "appear[ed] to be at the core of teachers' experience with change" (p. 17). This is a key link to this study and its focus on teacher narratives of trust with their principal(s).

Louis and Wahlstrom later developed and executed an in-depth quantitative analysis of the ways teachers experience principal leadership (2008) and found that a more distributed and open model of leadership and shared and interrelated self-efficacy—what Bandura (1993) called "collective efficacy,"—make teacher trust in the principal less of a factor.

According to their factor analysis on contemporary classroom practice, they actually found that shared leadership was, at times, more significant than trust in one's principal. However, principal trust as a factor score in the study accounted for almost three-fourths of the variance across items examined.

Some studies, such as Shelby Cosner's (2009) work on organizational capacity in schools, relied entirely on principal interviews, contextualized by their range of experience, school size, population of color, poverty level, and math and reading achievement over a two-year period. Three rounds of progressive interviews were conducted prior to data analysis through an inductive thematic reading as informed by the work of Huberman and Miles (2001). In some instances, there had been cleavages in trusting relationships or damage carried over from past misdeeds between groups in some schools (Cosner, 2009). Overall, the study concluded that "the cultivation of collegial trust is a central feature of the capacity-building work of these high school principals" and furthermore links and extends the work of studies such as those of Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) and Bryk and Schneider (2002). The study concluded with a call for more research exploring the capacity building responsibilities of principals and their need to understand the nature of collegial and relational trust.

The work of Walker, Kutsyuruba, and Noonan (2011) utilized open-ended questions about trust such as direct inquiries about the "fragility" of trust or "trust-related problems" in their experience. A sizeable (n=177) sample of Canadian school principals completed the authors' survey questions and paved the way for a meaningful theme and cross-theme analysis. As in previous studies, the data showed an outlining of the vitality and importance of the phenomenon related to relational and collegial trust between principals and teachers.

Interviews added depth and complexity to the definitions and understandings of trust by principals. “As one participant put it, ‘trustworthiness is more than integrity’ it also must be accompanied by competence and professionalism” (p. 486). Another key point was the call for more qualitative work in the area of trust as it stems from educational leadership in schools.

This study fulfills a need because of the clearly established place in the extant literature for research on the cultivation and conceptualization of relational trust and its related concepts, particularly between teachers and principals. Another area of need this study fulfills is expanding upon the large base of work at elementary (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) and middle levels (Hoy & Sabo, 1998) to the upper secondary grade teachers and their institutions. Exploring teacher stories of relational trust in a secondary setting, as this study does, helps account for the way administrative roles are often distributed differently in a larger setting due to the increased administrative staff size. Assistant principals, for example, take on more of the work of supervision and teacher evaluation than does a head principal in this setting.

Just as Bottery (2004) outlined a three-level frame for how to define trust in various contexts, Hoy, Gage, and Tarter (2006) provided a similar structure for understanding the relational aspect of trust in schools, which is significant to this study because of its establishment of the teacher-principal relationship in particular:

Because trust is relational, the referent (individual or group) of trust influences its meaning. In this analysis, three referents of faculty trust are of interest: faculty trust in colleagues, faculty trust in the principal, and faculty trust in clients (parents and students). (p. 242)

The relational and personal nature of trust makes the power of teacher narratives even more important to understand the elements teachers consider impacting their views of administration.

Even in the early 1990s, leading voices in the field of educational leadership such as Andy Hargreaves (1992, 1994) were concluding that trust among faculty members in schools, the relational sort, was a vital area to learn more about over time if efforts for organizational change were to take root and be viewed as valid. Others too (Firestone & Rosenblum, 1988; Louis, 1992) noted trust-related factors such as respect for colleagues in and out of the school context to be “necessary for developing” what Bryk, Camburn, and Louis (1999, p. 757) call “teacher commitment” which allows the facilitation of organizational professionalism and community.

On an organizational level, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) found that “Even though trust is conceptually easy to differentiate from perceived ability, benevolence, and integrity of the trustee, separating the willingness to be vulnerable from actually being vulnerable constitutes a finer distinction” (p. 729). This distinction, early in the development of research on trust in schools, was later clarified and distilled by definitions such as that by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) which was mentioned earlier in this section. The key point was the nature of vulnerability and teachers’ willingness to be in a state of vulnerability in the context of administrative decisions or purveyance.

Beyond a state of feeling safe with those in power above them, research shows that teachers need work environments that promote trust. Research by Moye, Henkin, and Egley (2005) has shown that higher levels of relational and interpersonal trust between instructional staff and leadership may come, at least in part, from environments where teachers feel

empowered by a sense of designed autonomy. That autonomy may present itself in many ways, including how supervision impacts coaches and teachers. Nicklaus and Ebmeier (1999) found that the trust and commitment to a principal was related to the level of “collaborative supervision” (p. 351) as opposed to more punitively viewed or adversarial supervision.

Both Robinson (2010) and Sebring et al. (2006) wrote that the formation and maintenance of relational trust are of vital importance to the success of a principal. Robinson echoed what Bryk and Schneider (2002) wrote about the empirical connection between teacher trust in the principal and its effects on classroom learning, that it is a core competency for leaders who seek an instructional foothold. Similarly, Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton, and Luppescu (2006) found that “a climate of relational trust, [along with a school’s] organizational structure, and resources of the local community” are among the most vital ways to address the nature of increasing student learning (p. 15).

The next theme, “the teacher-principal relationship” stems directly from language in the research questions that asks about how trust is manifested in the leader-follower paradigm of the teacher and principal. Such relationships are often fraught with unexamined nuance and potential for improvement which may be chalked up to vague generalities or tangential phenomena (Lawson, et al., 2017). This study explored these themes deeply in order to uncover new truths about the formation and maintenance of such a vital and potentially mysterious resource.

One aim of this study is that, as a result of the data gathered from this qualitative study, there will be an increased ability for scholars and practitioners alike to discern meaningful patterns in their leader-follower interactions beyond that vital “gut feeling” many people are inclined to feel about scenarios. If teachers are left with only that gut to rely on,

they may be bound for assumptions and chaos rather than informed and intentional decisions, which will ultimately impact the classroom, the break room, and our students. After holding these definitions of trust in schools and relational trust up to the light, a clearer path to a better understanding of the teacher-principal dynamic should become illuminated by relevant teacher narratives as well as the wisdom of the established scholars writing on the issues.

### **The Teacher-Principal Relationship**

A key idea which is necessary to fully address both research questions and their sub-questions is the nature of the teacher-principal relationship. The four sub-sections that follow each lay out components of this dynamic which will, in turn, help highlight elements of the participant narratives that might showcase new meanings about trust in schools. Research on the teacher-principal relationship through communication (Arlestig, 2007, 2008), conflict and micropolitical activity (Ball, 1987, 1988; Blasé, 2001), and teacher empowerment (Bredeson, 1989) all helped inform this research.

### **Effective Leadership**

The work of Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) has long explored the dynamic between principals and teachers at the school level. Fullan's (2014) reconceptualization of the position of principal as one more complex than a mere manager or too-broadly-defined "instructional leader" (p. 5) gives new clarity to the idea that the understanding that teachers and principals of all stripes are a part of a system. Historically, and in decades past, principals have been characterized as managers who oversee personnel and take care of daily operations. Fullan (2014) explained this shift well: "[principals] are expected to run a smooth school; manage health, safety, and the building; innovate without upsetting anyone; connect with students and teachers; be responsive to parents and the community; answer to their districts; and

above all, deliver results” (p. 6). An effective leader is not only one who can accomplish these sorts of tasks, but also can communicate a larger vision for learning and staff development. Ärlestig (2007) clarified that leaders have become more vital “as creators of culture, decision makers, and change agents”: all dispositions which demand efficient and effective communication and trust with teachers and stakeholders.

The ways that teachers experience different principals’ leadership and their conceptualization of that relationship both individually and collectively may, in some cases (Wahlstrom & Lewis 2008), have an impact on the sense of efficacy and community among a school’s members. According to Wahlstrom and Lewis (2008), there is a significant “need to describe what school leaders do to support collective efficacy among their faculty” (p. 467). Organizational trust has been a topic of concern for quite some time in other professional circles (Driscoll, 1978), but it has only recently come to the attention regularly of educational psychologists and researchers such as Hoy (1992), Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004), Louis (2007), and Bryk and Schneider (2002).

Proximity to teacher instruction is a factor in the ways teachers experience and make meaning of principal leadership. Fullan (1995) called this sort of leadership “instructional capacity” and Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) demonstrated that this is only one part of the greater efforts a principal must make to build a culture and climate that promotes teacher self-efficacy and collegial trust. “As an instructional leader in the building, the principal is expected to understand the tenets of quality instruction as well as have sufficient knowledge of the curriculum to know that appropriate content is being delivered to all students” (Wahlstrom & Lewis, 2008, p. 460).

Given that expectation of leaders, it may seem somewhat complex to discern how to broadcast a sense of trust in your teachers while at the same time ensuring you are aware of what it feels like to be a learner in your building (Alvesson, 2002; Johnson, Møller, Jacobson, & Wong, 2008). In fact, McAllister (1995) argued that “monitoring” of teachers, or the perception of being monitored, “is the opposite of trust,” because such action creates an environment where scrutiny takes the place of more positive professional activities. Møller (2008) said successful school leadership could be described as the “ability to maintain the grass roots tradition and marry it to the demands of top-down reform” (p. 6). Bromley and Cummings (1995) went so far as to say that supervision of teachers not predicated on trust can “restrict the opportunity for innovation and change” (p. 33).

Like with good teaching, a trust-engendering style of leadership is built upon more than just carrot-and-stuck mentality. “Relational trust is characterized as a result of a complex system of interpersonal social exchanges functioning within school settings” (Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010). Principals must understand every interaction with teachers, digitally, in person, or through policy, as an exchange of power where trust may thicken or thin. Communication and leadership are inextricable concepts; even expressing this truism has become fairly commonplace now, but part of the impetus for research in trust is rooted in the ways principals and teachers communicate. One study suggests that communication on a principal’s part is at the core of expressing the values and aims of the organization both for instructional actions and policy:

How the aims of schooling are understood and communicated, become prerequisites for what activities and perspectives are valued and lead to further actions. This implies that communication can be both a way to analyze and understand processes in schools and a process to influence others’ actions and understanding. (Årlestig, 2008, p. 9)



Ärlestig's empirical study, comprised of documents, interviews, and questionnaires from one Swedish school, sought to explore its structure, culture, and messaging between teachers and principals. Her study shows that the principal's actions, especially through communication and leading dialogue, can strongly shape educational outcomes of every sort. Some would even argue that leadership only exists through communication (Witherspoon, 1996).

Ärlestig's data from respondents showed that it is not just habits or individual practices of principals, but rather the entirety of the processes and policies that make up the relationship that connects teachers and principals which matters. That culture of trust-building communication has features which "become prerequisites" that can support and/or strengthen the principals and teachers work towards successful outcomes (p. 272). Such a culture can also hinder or distract messages and information to become meaningful and important in principals' and teachers' daily work. Data from the 25 teachers who fully participated in the study showed that principal proximity to their work and clear communication about that closeness was lacking even though their principals were digitally available as needed. So, despite a routine and improving communication system, the culture of trust and value of pedagogical work was still lacking, in the respondents' opinions (Ärlestig, 2007).

One of the problems that comes during times of transition is a comparison of skill sets or inherent professional values of new leaders to followers. Such problems can create an adversarial tension if new principals are not seen as top performers. This sort of calculus, which can unfold quickly and unconsciously, can lead to low levels of trust. However, research shows that "effective leaders are effective not because they have more knowledge or experience than ineffective leaders; rather, it is because they have a more valid and effective

way of handling the complex issues they face” (Johnson, 2008, p. 85). Being aware of this dynamic and how you are perceived can be a big help to leaders undertaking a new position or initiative. Browning (2013) clarified that “trust-leadership dynamics matter for leaders who aspire to be transformational” in their practice (p. 388).

Another thing transformational leaders do in their practice is mediate teacher growth, development, and motivation through intentional strategies such as distributed leadership (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010). Hoerr (1996) even made the keen observation that in leadership, whether classroom or building, it is invitations, not commands, that multiply the impact of power that is shared. We know that principals cannot, and should not, control everything, but according to Banta and Sapp (2010), they can absolutely control how they interact with teachers. The authors on a related study found that “the quality of leadership matters in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of their teaching, which subsequently affect student performance” (Jacobson, Brooks, Giles, Johnson, & Ylimaki, 2007). Teachers who have the ability, or feel they have the ability to exercise their best practice, improve themselves, and are left alone to do so, tend to do better. Transformative and transformational leaders work to engender this sort of autonomy because they believe it is a moral duty directly related to their instructional leadership.

Weiner (2003) found that autonomy is one of the vital conditions for generating and sustaining trust in educational institutions because it is “a condition arising from the ethical and responsible engagement with decision-making” (p. 82) even going as far as saying that such trust is a critical condition for freedom in the small-d democratic sense. That notion, a “critical consciousness” as he calls it, is a “keystone of the educational process” (p. 84) both ontologically and epistemologically as it relates to how leaders encourage participatory

pedagogical leadership build from a desire to share and not impose authority. Paulo Freire's (1970) concepts related to critical consciousness makes it clear that schools far too often "mirror oppressive society as a whole" (p. 73), a phenomenon school leaders must be honest and vigilant about acknowledging if we are to promote a small-d democratic, liberating educative environment.

If, as Freire suggests, knowledge is our most powerful currency, it means allowing the power of your currency to spread organically and grow outward from every interaction (exchange, transaction) you take part in. Odhiambo and Hii (2012) noted all stakeholders need to feel this sort of trust pervasively and consistently, not just teachers, but students and parents as well: "the similarities in the teachers' and students' views about the beneficial nature of the principal's power highlight the need for respect and trust to be shared between the principal and the stakeholders" (p. 238). In fact, what is modeled by the way teachers are treated by their leaders is most likely what will be carried into all other categories of teacher-student and teacher-parent interactions.

Trust and its relationship to the connection of the teacher and principal dynamic is not the easiest thing to capture. One study (Heller, 1993) found that the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and a particular categorization of their leaders' styles was hard to significantly establish due to potential oversimplification of complex phenomenon. This is one of the challenges in studying the effects of trust cultivation in a similar context; hence the importance of studying teacher narratives of these relationships qualitatively. Honig (2012) stated that past research has shown the need for "more vertical alignment of expectations with regard to instructional role and knowledge efficacy between all in-district levels of practice" (p. 763). She also found that principals may need more supports in their

development as participatory relationship builders with teachers. Odhiambo (2012) found, “there has been limited research on how teachers, parents and students perceive effective school leadership in practice” and later concluded that this needs to change “given the increased autonomy and accountability of schools, leadership at the school level is more important than ever” (p. 233).

Ultimately, the communication of norms and expectations on the part of administration to teachers can be understood as the creation, cultivation, and sustaining of culture. Currently, it is popular among certain education leaders to put the importance of a good culture into truisms that emphasize its primacy over all other fads or trends. Indeed, the “this too shall pass” mentality of some teachers can, sometimes rightfully, snuff out advances in innovations of school practice. The saying “culture eats strategy for breakfast,” as my principal puts it often, clarifies why complex, pluralistic notions of relational value, like trust, are the most important. Höög, Johansson, and Olofsson (2005) stated it this way: “structure, culture, and leadership are ‘preconditions’ for a successful principalship” (p. 597). They insisted that, in the case they studied, it was a “blend of social and academic goals” and “leadership based on both a drive for structural change as well as the vision for cultural change” that promoted the most successful leadership tenures (p. 598).

Student achievement may even be tied to some aspects of principal actions that promote trust. As Louis, Dretzke, and Wahlstrom (2010) reported, “trust in the principal and professional community, on the other hand, are both associated with student math achievement, which suggests that relationships among adults may be important factors determining how well students perform” (p. 325). This effect is due to the promotion of a collegial and professional relationship with teachers and the supporting of a positive social

and academic culture. The blending and balance of these elements, purportedly driven and influenced by trust in the principal, can be referred to as “collegiality.” Fishbein and Osterman (2001) found that “teachers and administrators were complicit in communicating expectations to interns about role divisions and the rules regulating behavior in the administrative role” (p. 33). That is, the conception of how the relationship is co-created is rooted in the work and definitions of specific duties. Brown, Boyle, and Boyle (1999) found that “collegial models of education management are becoming the dominant paradigm in the literature” but also noted that the attainability of that phenomenon was challenging and even questionable (p. 14).

The enduring question about school principals is centered on what “type” may be the best across the board. The best answers out there often refer to one who is able to take the long view, contextualize current issues and culture of a building, and plot a course forward to transform the school. “There is strong evidence that a transformational leadership style is a good predictor of organizational effectiveness in many different organizational contexts” (Höög et al. 2005, p. 604). Transformational leaders have been found to be effective, confidence boosting, and trust cultivating in various ways. In Höög et al.’s (2005) longitudinal study in Sweden on the successful principalship, it was found that democratic dialogue positioned transformational leaders to make “crucial decisions” in otherwise limiting and challenging situations. These effective leaders may be granted a sense of “formal authority” by their districts; however, their ability to exert influence with their staff that is lasting, comes from their ability to project and affirm a sense of trustworthy authenticity based on a pedagogical and organizational expertise.

Similar to that research on transformational leaders and their effectiveness, Höög, Johansson, and Olofsson (2009) found that culture and structure should not be celebrated as something bound to one singular “great man” as the educational leadership theories of old have implied; however, that does not mean there is not a challenge in passing great cultures and structures on to the next generation of leaders. Their observations and interviews of teacher teams and newer, incoming principals showed that teachers found it hard to accept second and third generation administrators who had inherited a great program. Their work implies that each new person needs to make minor cultural adjustments that are true to them in order to be able to authentically “walk the talk.” You cannot just copy and paste winning cultures. The same goes for effective leaders who seek to build and sustain an environment of strong relational trust.

### **Trust Brokering and Repair**

Perceptions about decision-making, trust allocation, collegiality, adversariality, and the nature of teacher-principals communication point to the importance of identifying and maintaining relationships that grow stronger over time (Edgerson et al., 2006) and build social capital (Vodicka, 2007) for the support of a shared school mission (McEwan, 2003). Furthermore, teacher self-efficacy is another component closely related to the principal-teacher relationship quality (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Teachers who understand where decisional capital, human capital, and social capital intersect and flow through their school’s mission will have a greater impact on student achievement and promote a sustainable culture in turn (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013). In her 2006 study, Karen Seashore Louis noticed that even though teachers were not directly asked about drawing conclusions related to district and school leadership and trust, they did so of their own volition. Macmillan, Meyer, and

Northfield's (2004) study found teacher-principal trust to be of primary importance to the reduction of turnover in the principalship.

Mistrust and missteps can set an organizational effort back a long way or even kill it altogether. Leaders in schools must be able to assess and pre-empt these sorts of pitfalls by acknowledging the dangers of losing trust before it happens. Principals must understand that "trust and hypocrisy on an organizational scale are related" (Kilicoglu, Kilicoglu, & Karadag, 2017, p. 5). This acknowledgement of danger is a first step in making sure teachers feel heard, valued, and involved in the process of making change in their schools.

In Bryk and Schneider's work (2002), they were able to identify that in the highest performing schools studied, teacher-principal trust was clearly evident in the data. In these top-quartile schools, teachers strongly tended to "perceive that the principal looks out for their welfare and also places the needs of students first" (p. 95). When compared with bottom quartile schools in the study, teachers were more likely to report that they respected their principal as an educator, felt respected by him or her, and were comfortable placing professional confidence in this person as it related to their duties. Several key factors about the school context were laid out as a result of the work in these schools. The authors found that small schools with low racial and social conflict as well as stable populations and academically reputable histories all correlated strongly with high teacher-principal trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Their final conclusion after a three-level hierarchical linear model analysis of survey data was that "the stability in a school's student population significantly predicts both teacher-parent and teacher-teacher trust but not teacher-principal trust" (p. 98).

Macmillan, Meyer, and Northfield (2004) found that there was a continuum that trust developed along in different phases between teachers and principals including how teachers

perceived the leader's role, practice, and integration with others, and correlated those abilities to their work. Several years later, the same group studied the effects of groups of teachers who might be labeled "informal leaders" in a building and how they come to trust in the work and position of new principals during a transition, especially in the shaping of teacher morale. Closely related to the formation and management of morale among teachers is that of broken trust and its "necessary restoration" which Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) described as one of the most serious issues facing principals today. Other scholars such as Li, Hallinger, and Walker (2016) agreed: "trust is one pathway through which school leaders can foster improvement" (p. 21). They proposed in their study that trust is actually an important "mediator" of the work of the principal on the growth of teachers, professionally.

A facilitative micropolitical orientation can be referred to as a "power-through" (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991) or "power-with" (Kreisberg, 1992) approach to leadership; such an approach is designed to empower others (rather than control them) through a process characterized by varying degrees of reciprocity, co-agency, negotiation, sharing, and mutuality to achieve educational goals. This leadership orientation views power as expanding (non-zero sum), thus allowing individuals and groups the maximum opportunity to participate through "synergistic interaction" (Kreisberg, 1992). Bredeson (1989) listed several factors—listening, providing supportive resources, visibility, trust, praise, feedback, follow-through on teacher decisions and involvement—that enhanced teacher empowerment. Such factors shape principals' perspectives on, for example, the status of teachers' professional knowledge, teachers' capacity for change and improvement, teachers' commitment to the school organization, and teachers' participation in decision making and classroom autonomy.



Great leaders can aid their teachers by the distribution of leadership duties, which may, in turn, help to build a sense of growing or renewed trust. Trust in the principal as well as a sense of collective efficacy may be related to teacher leadership levels, according to Flood and Angelle (2017). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) found that teachers who sense a strong moral or ethical sense of integrity from their principals tend to be more likely to trust that their needs will be met, and thus, trust will increase. According to Flood and Angelle (2017), “when the norms of the organization ‘emphasize ethical behaviors and a work environment of openness, trust, and respect,’ then trust violations are less likely to occur” (p. 88). Their study employs the notions of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) that such violations or thinning in relational trust between different levels of an organization, especially a school, are weak spots that can lead to more vulnerability, a lack of consistency, and reliability over time if not addressed.

When the dynamic between vertical roles breaks down and becomes negative, it can have lasting effects. Barber (1983) noted that “when trust fails or weakens in small or informally organized communities, the members may use various means of informal social control—ridicule, ostracism, unhelpfulness and the like—to bring an untrustworthy actor into line” (p. 22). Similarly, Blasé and Blasé (1997) found that “effective leadership built upon trust and trust-building has been referred to as ‘facilitative’ or ‘power-with’ leadership.” This distributed model for thinking about leadership can easily be viewed as something that construes power, decision-making duty, and responsibility to teachers from principals. The act of sharing leadership in and of itself is one of vulnerability because it places the teacher at the same level or above the sanctioned building leader as the outside sees them: “second-wave reformists have advocated fundamental changes in the leadership orientation of school

principals and the governance structures of schools to enhance teacher empowerment” (p. 2). Principals who can achieve this sort of cultural disposition have a unique opportunity to drive their schools forward to new heights through the expertise of a broader body of knowledge than the singular, “great man” narrative of leadership can provide.

The hard part about the principal-teacher relationship is the power dynamic that is ever present, ever nebulous, and ever so tenuous in terms of its feeling; this “push-pull-nudge” idea is presented by Fullan and Hargreaves (2013, p. 39). Blasé and Blasé (2001) recommended leaders should “strive to develop cooperative, non-threatening teacher-supervisor partnerships—characterized by trust, openness, and the freedom to make mistakes” (p. 24). This hopeful notion about the leadership-follower dynamic should drive all leaders who hope to be transformational, longitudinal, and long lasting in their position. While we often see patterns and trends from the corporate world seep into education, they are often limited and temporary in their scope. Similarly, Kilicoglu, Kilicoglu, and Karadag (2017) found that “the inconsistency between rhetoric and reality may not necessarily be dictated by the tendency of schools to copy the corporate world, but at least in part results from the education system itself” (p. 3).

Working on the development and maintenance of a relationship with teachers, principals would be mindful to consider not just the formation, but the re-formation of those connections when things go south. Lewicki and Weithoff (2000) delineated the connection between a lack of trust and conflict in a school setting between parties. Their research found that an overlapping of values and beliefs creates a sense of “identification-based trust,” whereas an opposing dynamic may form around carrots and sticks that is a “calculus-based trust” that is more reactive (p. 1). Schools where leaders cultivate trust based on fear and the

protection of reputations rather than on the promotion of a shared vision, according to the research, is different. Effective leaders who seek to identify opportunities to build and mend trust should seek the former type.

An important inflection point in organizational leadership is the moment of ascension or transition in leadership. This time can be fraught with both opportunity and peril because there is uncertainty, hope, and promise all tied together. Even when the leadership position is not the head, but an assistant principal in a building, this change can have a lasting and strong effect on the staff and with the success of ongoing initiatives. Meyer, Macmillan, and Northfield (2009) asserted that “several factors influence the degree to which morale is affected during principal succession: informal leaders, experience level of staff and the degree to which the principal is considered to be an integral part of the school” (p. 197).

Noonan, Walker, and Kutsyuruba (2008) found that “more extensive exploration is needed in some aspects of trust such as relationship intensity and coping with broken trust” (p. 14). Their work situates the current study’s findings through examining trust brokering as it may be found in the narratives of teachers. As far back as 1995, researchers like Poole found “it was understood by both teachers and administrators that trust between the teacher and his/her supervisor or coach would be essential” to the success of any initiative or transition in power” (p. 11). Poole’s work also drew connections between teacher vulnerability related to, in part, administrator turnover. He suggested a carefully planned dialogue can help abate the negative effects of a transitory period of admin culture where trust has been challenged, broken, or thinned.

## **Organizational Climate**

The concepts of organizational climate and school culture are closely related, but ultimately differentiated by several nuances that are important. School leaders may set a culture intentionally, like scraping a swab onto a dish of agar and allowing it to grow in a laboratory oven overnight. There is an element of control and conditional assignment of sorts. Principals and teachers alike may shape the culture in various ways or may respond to pieces of it they wish to address, amplify, or change, but a climate is far trickier. A climate is bigger, sturdier, and more deeply situated temporally than a culture. Where cultures can manifest and change in semesters, it may take years to actively change a climate. By the same token, you may not notice the changes right away. Perspective and reflection are key elements of schools whose leaders are aware of their climate and their relationship to it. If a school's climate and culture are healthy and co-created by participants who are earnestly engaged, there can be a beautiful harmony. However, while one may be mistaken for the other, assumptions about what may endure may leave stakeholders—especially learners—disappointed.

As it relates to this study, an organizational climate should be seen as a series of governing rules, physical laws of nature, or ecological strata within which the elements and organisms of the school live and operate. Many teachers learn about the “hidden curriculum” of a school during initial teacher training, and when I reflect on the two concepts together, I see similarities, though the latter is contained within the former (Apple, 1971; Jackson, 1968). In this section, the notion of capital and social webs are explored as they are understood to undergird the ideas of relational trust between teacher and principal in the modern American school. This section outlines the importance of working to discern the

network position of each actor in a school as well as the frequency and value of the currency they are exchanging either actively or passively through their teaching, writing, speaking, and work generally.

### **Professional Capital**

According to James and Jones (1974), organizational climate can be a hard term to pin down. They concluded that it “refers to organizational attributes, main effects, or stimuli” compared to a more individualist sort of climate solely based on a person’s internal psychology (p. 1110). They were interested in whether climate could be discerned as an organizational attribute apart from other factors including demographics, styles of leadership, employee satisfaction, and size of company or department. They found this hard to do and did not reach a strong conclusion about the nature of climate. Tschannen-Moran’s (2009) work in the area of professional trust showed that teacher and principal professional orientations can and often do reciprocate one another, even offering a predictive window into the flow of professional capital. Professional capital, on the other hand, is a measure by which organizations can estimate the value of a person’s individual ability to contribute in a skill-based professional capacity in the work environment.

Fullan and Hargreaves (2012) defined the term as a collective capacity of all the professional components (social, decisional, and human capitals) that are geared toward the sustainable and continuous improvement of all students. Having a strong vision for a potential path forward is of the utmost importance for professional capital to take root and grow naturally. Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo, and Hargreaves (2015) suggested that this looks like “setting a small number of ambitious goals, giving first priority to the enhancement of

professional practice, and making the learning of all students a shared responsibility of everyone across the system are crucial elements of such a vision” (p. 8).

One of the more prominent pieces of work in the area of professional capital is Fullan and Hargreaves’ 2012 text on the matter, subtitled “Transforming Teaching in Every School.” Their work to professionalize teaching comes not just through semantic calisthenics or the purveying of catchy buzzwords, but through a meaningfully complex and layered organization of ideas about how we value the work of educators.

According to Kanter (1993), a work environment that provides access to information, resources, support and opportunities for training and development leads to the worker’s empowerment, resulting in more satisfied employees who feel that management is trustworthy. The work of Lawson et al. (2017) provided the understanding that social exchanges in and around schools matter greatly for their improvement. This is a function in part of professional capital as it is understood for this study. This trust-communication connection between school improvement is about how leaders can actuate the potential of their teachers.

The three components each play an important role in the formulation and “lifecycle” of trust in the school system, because each one is intertwined and, in some ways, inextricable from the others. Kutsyruba and Walker (2015) used an ecological metaphor to characterize one good way to understand this phenomenon. Trust, teacher-principal communication, and professional capital need to be viewed through an ecological lens in order to make sense.

The measure of climate in an organization is important to understand with regard to the history of studying relational trust in schools because the latter was at least partially conceived of through the former. Pace and Stern developed one of the first instruments for

organizational climate measurement in 1958. Their work eventually led to others boring into topics more deeply, which helped make up school climate research. Faculty trust is one of those areas that emerged. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2007) concluded that certain positive elements were related to reported senses of trust, especially teacher self-efficacy: “the greater the degree of perceived trust in a school, the stronger the belief in teachers’ ability to organize and execute courses of action that lead to success” (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2007, p. 109).

In 1989, Tarter, Bliss, and Hoy found that the engagement of teachers was significantly related to supportive principal behavior and that such factors were usually accompanied by highly reported senses of faculty trust. Their work also implied that school leaders have the capacity to build trust in a collective and general sense, but that the direct, teacher-to-teacher linkages of trust could not be facilitated by a clear and direct action. This sort of leadership builds the capital of the organization as a whole, collectively. The increase in trust is an increase in capital for all. Moolenaar et al. (2010) found specifically that transformational leadership styles can do a lot to “motivat[e] followers to do more than they originally expected and often even more than they thought possible” (p. 625). Capacity building styles like this can help promote the formation or repair of trust between teachers and principals because, as Moolenaar et al. (2010) explained, teachers under such leadership may be more likely to share their learning in a networked fashion if principals stay engaged.

In addition to varying leadership styles, the role of career stages in the development of professional capital is important as far as categorizing the stages of interactions you may have with teachers of various levels of experience (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013). Teacher trust in administration can potentially influence their development or openness to

professional learning. Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi (2010) found that “consistently positive evidence” exists in connection to “the contributions to student achievement of disciplinary climate” which is primarily set by administration in secondary buildings (p. 675).

Secondarily, their study catalogued not just that the principal could impact the nature of student learning, but that a wide range of teacher emotions including job satisfaction, collective efficacy, organizational commitment, and morale (among others) were potentially principal mediated effects on student learning. As they put it, concomitantly, developing relational trust among faculty members, staff members, and administrators influences student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2010). Similarly, Nolan and Molla (2017) found that a teacher’s confidence in their job can be understood as a “key element” and a “critical condition” required for the activation of professional capital and professional learning. They asserted that mentorship is pivotal in “enlarging teacher professional capital” (p. 17).

If organizational capital is about getting at the best ways in which all the individual cogs of a system can function better together as well as on their own, then the role of the principal and ways in which they are trusted are vital to consider. Hoy et al. (2002) wrote that “in a healthy, open school environment, administrators, teachers, and students have a positive relationship with one another” (p. 39). These organizational supports extend to perceptions of the principal and vice principal as well. Jacobson (2011) found that “long term stability and perceptions of parents who think the principal and vice principal work well together can breed trust” (p. 40).

### **Social Connections**

More than just the measure or consideration of professional capital on its own, the social interconnections and interactions between the adults in schools constitute a great deal



of communication efforts in general. That is, the sociability, friendliness, and general sense of social connection between teachers and other staff in a building, and between those educators and leaders, is worth considering. As the previous section reveals, social capital is an important leg of the stool of organizational capital (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012). Lin (2002) asserted, “social capital is the resources, real or potential, gained from relationships” (p. 23). This section discusses social capital as it relates to relational trust and the general improvement of an organization’s climate.

Daly, Moolenaar, Bolivar, and Burke (2010) suggested that building social capital via trusted connections in a school organization is a way to fight negative effects from initiative implementation exhaustion or “reform churn” in “change-weary” schools. (p. 360). We do not know enough about how social structures in schools influence knowledge and learning, but as Daly et al. asserted, we should start by looking at principal social connections and communications because they are “the primary conduits through which the reform is initially diffused” (2010, p. 372). In Lin’s (2002) work, he stated that social capital can refer to “the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit.” This wording is helpful because it establishes that our network social webs are not just about the nodes and their resources or skills, but about how those items are “mobilized” through the web (p. 23).

Moolenaar, Daly, and Slegers (2010) found a connection between trust and organizational climate as it related to social capital: “the social network position of a principal,” they wrote, “may support or constrain the flow of resources in the school’s social network, thereby affecting the climate in which the generation of new knowledge and practices may arise from interaction among educators” (p. 657). In 2012, the same authors

expressed that research suggests that the relationship between student achievement and teacher collaboration “is likely indirect” but there is a connection, and the facilitation of teacher collaboration may give rise to student growth in some ways (p. 252). Teachers’ interactions are being studied more to discern what ways they may “support or constrain” the social conditions such as trust that affect “shared decision making and innovative climates” or the “advice relationships” that are likely to promote innovation in the school organization at large.

A multi-year, multi-school qualitative study utilizing focus groups and interviews found that school leaders must “pay attention to daily relationships with teachers” in order to facilitate the cementing of a “foundation for trust in institutional leadership for change” (Louis, 2006, p. 18). Without addressing underlying trust issues in a school, there can be little or no improvement on future school initiatives (Louis, 2006). “Having high levels of organizational trust thus allows leaders to ask for change without engendering suspicious resistance” (p. 18). The key idea here is “suspicious resistance.” That phrase, when contextualized within a social network, helps to tell the story of why teachers and administrators can be at odds more often than not. The general sense of unease is easy to default to in most cases, where there is not a deep sense of trust because of that oftentimes default disposition. Louis (2006) contended that “relational trust is dependent on patterned interactions between people who work together on a regular basis” and that patterns of trust need to be “deeply embedded” and “can become institutionalized” within a strong culture with consistent leadership (p. 19). High trust districts and schools reciprocate trust and reinforce teacher perceptions that initiatives were based on philosophical priorities rather

than a mere desire for top-down control. Low trust districts, they found, “hardened the institutional mistrust in the capacity of the system.”

As the last section’s discussion implied, there are organizational climate issues that allow the formation, thickening, or thinning of trust. Årlestig (2008) stated that a school’s “organizational culture is manifested in norms, history, symbols, basic assumptions and shared values” (p. 12). Setting norms and establishing and cementing a school’s culture is the duty of the building leader first and foremost, but the success of the dissemination of such acts plays a big role. If a school leader can engender this ideal into building staff, then the network will take on an identity bigger than the individual nodes. In fact, the “network intentionality” of all educators in a school can evidence a predisposition for innovation “partly because this strong network intentionality is associated with more outgoing relational activity” (Daly et al., 2014, p. 99).

According to Bryk et al. (2010), the development of trust, as a social resource assists in “advancing change” in so many ways that it has to be understood to impact student learning (p. 156). They argued in a review and meta-analysis of previous work in the city of Chicago that enhancements on learning come from the strengthening of “subsequent” and “essential supports,” including the support of improvement initiatives (p. 157). They argued, in reflection, that “trust is the social energy or the oven’s heat in baking the cake of a school improvement initiative; it is required for comprehensive school change” (p. 159). Their multi-site, longitudinal, quantitative study found evidence that connected the development of trust and school improvement. Questionnaire items included such topics as whether the principal was trusted at his/her word and how much confidence the principal had in the

expertise of the teachers—elements that contribute to an organizational climate of trust and improvement.

Recently, researchers have found that the social connections among teachers and administrators can significantly impact the development of a learning environment for students (Daly et al., 2014; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Specifically, the presence and persistence of a sense of relational trust among teachers and school leaders was found to promote student growth. Schools need to develop relational trust among adults in a school environment. Interpersonal trust enhances a school's social capital, which increases the school's effectiveness (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009).

Due to the nature of teaching in U.S. schools as a rather isolated act practiced in solitude, it is important, Bottery (2003) found, to bolster teachers' understanding of the administrative framework within which they operate so they can better be supported and interconnected. This notion of an "integrative" or "correlative" sense of trust, is useful because it can provide a sense of predictability in the visible and routinized professional workings of teachers' immediate landscapes (Macmillan et al., 2004). Flood and Angelle (2017) found that "trust can be increased when relationships are positively fostered in an atmosphere of support and cordiality" (p. 87). What teachers know about each other's roles and how those roles are divided up along that trust continuum can help promote the sort of predictability and reliability that creates a sustainable professional ecosystem. Great leaders work to expand and strengthen that "integrative" trust that binds the identities and duties of team members together more closely from a systems perspective.

Communication has been routinely established as a core component of leadership success. Even so, others (Heide, Clarén, Johansson, & Simonsson, 2005) have asserted that

much of the communication between principal and teacher which makes up the largest portion of everyday conversations are taken for granted. Höög et al. (2009) found that in schools involved in a study of principal effectiveness and communications, the most important parts of their missions were to create an environment where leaders could produce “both good social and academic outcomes and happy students that liked to go to school.” They found that teachers expected “their incoming principal to have a leadership based on trust, dialogue and collaboration” (Höög et al. 2009, p. 750).

While the principal may direct and convey some of the more memorable and weighty messages to staff, Ebmeier (2003) found that teachers’ connections with peer teachers were also worth seriously considering. Ebmeier claimed that the peer social connections of teachers studied played a “profound and independent role in influencing commitment and satisfaction but have much less influence on individual teacher efficacy” compared to relationships with administrators (p. 141). This softer social and emotional space can be hard to identify and hone in on without a useful syntax for doing so.

A study by Andy Hargreaves (2001a) outlined five emotional geographies of teacher-parent interactions: sociocultural, moral, professional, physical, and political. His examination of these patterns of closeness found that attending to “emotional geography in teaching may help us better understand how to create stronger emotional understanding in teachers’ relationships” (p. 1076). Hargreaves posited that a sense of “political distance” between parties can be caused where “relations are characterized by power plays more than partnerships” (p. 1077). Hargreaves advocated for moving the focus on these geographies (including trust) from the periphery to the core of the work of teacher development and stated that teachers must be empowered through a policy framework that gives them “discretion, the

conditions, the expectations, and the opportunities to develop and exercise their emotional competence” (p. 1077). In his concluding assertion that new geographies need to be defined and explored, Hargreaves (2001b) wrote that at the time of the study, “emotional geographies of teacher collegiality seem to create mutually affirming friendships for a few and a more distanced conflict-avoiding culture of friendliness or politeness for the rest” (p. 524). Studies such as this one that explore teacher-principal trust can build on this dynamic and offer new landscapes for definition and exploration which were heretofore unexplored or isolated.

The creation of a social web of connections and trusted interacting parts is complex and tenuous in most schools because of, unfortunately, how often administrative (and teacher) turnover can take place. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) found that, in teachers at least, a stronger sense of social and emotional competence could point to a longer and more successful tenure in education. These jobs are high stress and challenging in ways that are more visible than other jobs, but when principals depart, even assistants, it can strain an organization’s social fabric and maybe even trust in the institution itself. Holme and Rangel (2012) stated that it is important to pay attention to this sort of turnover, and its effects “are felt in particular when large numbers of key individuals (e.g., school principals, key administrators, or department chairs) leave an organization” (p. 260). They argued that such departures, when coupled with other stimuli, “can create instability and decreases in organizational social capital” (p. 280). This sort of breach of trust is more tertiary in comparison to direct social and professional actions between teachers and principals, but it is a part of the same fabric in which the work is done.

The fear of instability in an organization can drive teachers and students to fill gaps in service on their own. What you had previously come to expect may disappear or degrade in

quality. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) argued that this sort of breakdown and fear has a weakening effect on a group's collective and professional "knowledge and knowing capacity" (p. 245), which Inkpen and Tsang (2005) explored further as it related to social capital and knowledge management in organizational groups. Holme and Rangel's 2012 work asserted further than schools' intellectual capital should be thought of as connected intricately with the ways individuals within those social webs derive and express their intelligence collectively. In other words, the health of the organization and its stability is expressed through seemingly individual acts within classrooms. What principals do, or avoid doing, to help engender a strong social sphere to operate within is a key part of the health and sustainability of trust within the organizational climate.

The relationship between how trust forms in the school climate and how teachers literally navigate their space is interrelated, found McGregor (2003). She said, "space is seen as relational, both producing and a product of interconnecting social practices" (p. 354). The reciprocal nature of space and socialization applies to all groups within an organization's role and trust structure. McGregor also maintained, "the spacial and the social are reciprocally constructed through materially embedded practices and performances that create and maintain everyday social relations. Space is literally made through our interactions" (p. 354).

The power of the school social network can be driven by the assertion of acts of leadership, as Lesinger, Altinay, Altinay, and Dagli (2017) found: "Leadership becomes a vehicle to solve the problems of school and also a way of building trust through the power of social interaction" (p. 2). The authors also indicated that "trust is built within the school structure when individuals have love and respect for each and when these are mutual" (p. 13). The organization's climate can be elevated by an understanding of social capital and

how it spends between levels and parties working in the school. Penuel, Riel, Krause, and Frank (2009) stated that “valued resources and expertise are embedded within social networks and that it is through social ties that one gains access to and can make use of resources to effect change” (p. 153). Building a social network is about trust and change as much as about feeling good about those with whom teachers work.

### **The Trust-Improvement Connection**

Innovation, change, bounce-back from mistakes or errors and challenges, and resiliency are all elements of a work environment that may cause breaches in trust. There are many studies that show a connection between trust in the workplace and professionals’ performance on their job (Angelis & Wilcox, 2011; Cook et al., 2000; Kraft et al., 2016; Meier, 1995; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a, 2015b). In education specifically, there has been shown to be a reciprocal relationship between built or growing trust and the sustainability of innovations and risks (Lawson et al., 2017).

### **Risk Taking**

Specifically, this study shows there is evidence of a trust-communication connection with regard to school improvement. Acknowledging that trust and risk-taking are connected to school improvement, we understand that social exchanges in and around schools may matter greatly for improvement too: “kinds of social exchanges among people in and around a school are central to a school’s functioning and to its efforts to mount broad-scale change” (p. 35). There is a need for more work in this area, according to Moolenaar et al. (2010), who pointed out there is a shortage of work “examining the network position of school leaders and the relationship of that position to an innovative school climate” (p. 625). The



exploration of relational trust between principals and teachers can help contribute to such a gap today.

The recent work of Angelis, Gregory, and Durand (2017) showed that “odds-beating” (p. ii) schools who serve students in challenging situations with fewer traditional supports are more likely to have “established and continually cultivated the conditions conducive to positive relations and interactions” (p. 32) between teachers and administration, especially in the areas of reciprocal and relational trust. Teachers who felt they were trusted to have freedom and grace to “make judgments about practice” were an important factor in the sustaining of a trusting and successful culture for students. This sort of climate was described a generation before by Ball (1987, 1988), who said that teacher autonomy is key to school improvement and innovation, and developing and focusing on teacher autonomy will help alleviate the ills of a top-down structure with limited trust.

Risk taking in general has a lot to do with power. Dunlap and Goldman (1991) called attention to the changing dynamics about power in schools and the relationships between those up the scale of the hierarchy and those at the base doing the lion’s share of the work. They wondered how site-based management could potentially transition into something else and how particular metaphors made sense or lacked staying power. Their study discussed the fundamental concepts and philosophical understandings of power as proposed by Bertrand Russell, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim as well as considerations of domination and facilitative power (a suggested departure from top-down thinking). Confusion over power can create problems as well as the lack of access to that power, McNamara claimed, “multiple power and authority structures create an ambiguous leadership structure, which makes an intentional change process more difficult” (2010, p. 49).

This category of work is valuable to explore further, according to Moolenaar, Daly, and Slegers (2010) because there is a “lack of clarity” when it comes to situating the understanding of “innovation” as it relates to the principal social network position (p. 661). However, their work also suggested that investigating the promise of school climate and transformational leadership could be supportive of more innovation. “However,” the authors contended, “the behaviors themselves can either be enhanced or diminished based on the social position the leader occupies” (p. 662).

If the goal in any school is continuous improvement via the incorporation of new ideas about pedagogical practice, then a sense of buy-in is generally regarded as a necessary prerequisite. Trust has been shown to build collective efficacy—“buy-in’s” more formal syntactical cousin. Moolenaar et al. (2012) suggested that the relationship between student achievement and teacher collaboration “is likely indirect” (p. 252), but there is a connection and teacher collaboration may give rise to student growth in some ways. Teachers’ interactions are being studied to discern what ways they may “support or constrain” the social conditions such as trust that affect “shared decision making and innovative climates.” Another useful distinction their study mentions Ibarra’s (1993, 1995) research on the importance of differentiating between instrumental and expressive social networks in schools.

Angelis, Gregory, and Durand (2017) held that even “inconsistent trust” can be damaging to school performance such as trust expressed but not demonstrated in action or a lack of commitment to message or consistent communication. The differences they found in the effects of a positive climate of trust was even more impactful when the population included more families from low-income and minority groups. “In the schools with higher

levels of reciprocal and relational trust, the process of innovation implementation was smoother and the results in terms of student performance on Common Core assessments stronger.”

### **Organizational Learning**

Studies such as Smith and Barclay’s (1997) have emphasized the importance of trust in the performance of work teams. Zand (1972) demonstrated that teams characterized by low levels of trust tend to share less information and ideas, and their members are less involved. They are also likely to impose more control when coordination is necessary. Trust has been found to be a “lubricant” for organizational learning and growth and a factor that facilitates communication and contributes to greater efficiency. Another point from the relevant literature is that trust is essential in schools since schools require teachers to communicate with one another for the purpose of contributing to their efficiency (Freire & Fernandes, 2016).

Due to the complexity of a school as an organizational entity with many interlocking and yet wholly independent parts, trust in the efficacy of roles and duties take on a special importance, especially the bigger the school gets or the more quickly its demographic makeup changes. This special trust depends in part on people’s ability to discern others’ intentions from their respective actions. Especially during times of rapid, dramatic innovation, trust is important because it helps to counter feelings of vulnerability amid uncertainty and complexity, especially as it becomes apparent that everyone depends in some measure on everyone else (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a & 2015b). In a 2014 study, Northfield found that consistency in school leadership played a particularly significant role in organizational learning: “trust, particularly in the principal but extending to staff relations

overall, was an important leadership quality and also a facilitator for innovation adoption and implementation” (p. 45).

Brower, Schoorman and Tan (2000) found that the way teachers and principals view one another in a professional and personal context is likely reciprocal in nature. If teachers know they have leaders who hold especially guarded and cautious views about their instructional personnel, they are less likely to be open and vulnerable with them and less likely to improve or take an active part in improving the school through a networked effort. Louis and Murphy (2017) referred to research on high quality leader-member relationships which can cascade into many other complex and positive outcomes. Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, and Chen (2005), along with De Jong and Elfring (2010) reported that the route to higher academic performance of teachers and students begins with efforts to promote and sustain cognitive trust. This idea usually presents itself in discussions as “buy-in,” which in turn creates mutual trust, respect, and a sense of distributed and independent obligation to something larger than individual well-being. Organizational learning starts with the shared understanding and contextualized communication of the salience of ideas and then involves organization members in meaningful ways in implementation.

**Teachers’ organizational learning.** Just like the connection between the social network position of leaders in schools and trust, the line between organizational learning and the improvement of staff is clear. Holste and Fields (2010) found that in schools where trust in leadership was higher, teachers were more likely to engage in outside opportunities for improvement. Other studies have suggested that cognitive trust is related to the willingness to use information from others, while affective trust may promote sharing of new knowledge (McLain & Hackman, 1999). Louis and Murphy (2017) made connections between the

principal's trust in teachers' professional competence and their ability to promote an organizational climate that is "safe for risk-taking and experimentation" (p. 105). In a climate where teachers feel empowered and enabled to engage in learning of their own choosing knowing that it will be blessed, students will most likely be better served.

In keeping with the studies mentioned so far, McNamara (2010) clearly stated that "organizations maintain reputations and trust by being open to scrutiny, admitting problems, and seeking input" (p. 63). Her insight showed that direct involvement and inclusion of teachers and staff in organizational level decisions routinely promotes a shared sense of purpose and power. McNamara also continued by positing, "within the organization, a solid infrastructure, a sense of goodwill and mutual trust among faculty, administrators and boards, and agreement regarding the challenges being faced by the institution supported the change process" (p. 70). When the school is more nimbly able to react to systemic needs and challenges, it is more likely to maintain high quality instructional outcomes and better serve students. Work on professional learning communities by Cranston (2011) showed that change-ready schools benefit from resources generated in trust-rich environments led with relational trust in mind.

Geijsel, Slegers, Stoel, and Krüger (2009) outlined a helpful categorization of teacher professional learning at the individual level, including: "keeping up to date, experimentation, reflective practice, and innovation" (p. 406). They found that, within and between those categories many "psychological factors" should be considered as to how teachers participated in building and organizational level learning efforts. They indicated a metaphoric image of the "sublimation of teacher and school goals into one another" as a key factor in allowing organizational learning to take root, buffeted by self-reflection. Like a

leader's willingness to be visible, vulnerable, and open, they found that "teachers' internalization of school goals into personal goals" could build trust across the school network and create a shared sense of commitment to ongoing and organic learning that was connected to a shared purpose (p. 418). This is most likely to happen when leaders appropriately set a vision that is transformationally oriented. Again, the previously noted reciprocal nature of teacher-principal openness, trust, and willingness to learn together is borne out in their results.

**Teachers as curriculum brokers.** Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, and Hoy (2001) wrote:

trust makes schools better places for students to learn, perhaps by enabling and empowering productive connections between families and schools. There seems to be a collective effect of trust; in schools where there was greater trust, student achievement was generally higher. (p. 14)

Furthermore, trusting environments between adults can help foster better relationships between those adults and students. In order for reforms and changes to succeed and take hold, those relationships must be facilitated in reliable and trustworthy ways routinely at all levels of an organization. Friend and Thompson (2010) asserted that every student needs to be well known by an adult in order to succeed.

Hargreaves (1995) founds that, while there are differences between collegiality and collaboration in terms of leadership styles, both can contribute to a school's effectiveness and improvement. In 2002, the same author expanded on the language and discussed the idea of "social geographies" as a way of thinking about the "imaginary and mythical properties of social spaces" which, he argued, can leave "historical traces of meaning" which leaders need to learn to identify and root out if a collegial and collaborative organizational culture is to

take root in sustainable ways (p. 196). Especially in an era of American education where market forces have been imposed upon schools which are supposed to promote a social good for all rather than for the few, Hargreaves argued that the social geographies of communities must be a part of a school's calculus; and that includes the ways in which leaders understand and plan for the organizational learning of their staff members.

In 2009, Rhodes, Camic, Milburn, and Lowe used organizational health index subscales to examine how “changes in teachers’ perceptions of the schools’ institutional and administrative dimensions affected changes in their sense of affiliation and academic focus,” including the “importance of attunement to the schools’ organizational culture” (p. 721). They found a “growing body of research that has underscored the importance of principal-teacher relationships in affecting school climate and teacher satisfaction” (p. 716). If schools are going to be positioned to better promote the improvement of their practice as well as their organizational climate, there must be a clear and direct focus on the cultivation of this relationship in order to promote a sustainable and renewable sense of trust.

**Teacher experience as curriculum.** Context is vital to our pedagogical practice as teachers and school leaders (Clandinin, 2015; Polanyi, 1967). When considering stories of school leaders, we should also consider their personal practical knowledge as it relates to the cultivation of trust in the school setting. Clandinin et al. (2006) provided a new framework and set of tools to discuss and discern pedagogical epistemology. What teachers know to be true and what they know to do in classes must come, and does come from the web of stories written, experienced, and being written. Bringing light to stories of school leaders and school leaders’ stories is a new area of scholarship needing to be developed and deepened. The space where teachers’ out-of-classroom lives bump up against those of school leaders, either

directly or through policy, needs to be unfolded. When analyzing elements of the organizational learning within a school, teacher narrative and experience can be seen as vital to discerning the forces at work between principals and instructional staff. The curricular experiences designed for and experienced by teachers provides an important window into whether trust may be thickening or thinning.

Educational philosopher and pragmatist John Dewey's (1902) introduction of the term "curriculum" into the public dialogue is important to note. He believed the discussion and discernment of curriculum was always in the public interest (achievement, assessment, poverty, and so forth). Indeed, it could be said that today we still find this to be true. "The broadest arguments over educational purposes, financing, structure, and method are either directly curricular or quickly become so in discussion" (Connelly, 2008, p. 515). If education and life are inextricably partners, so too are narrative and research, teaching and ethnography.

The idea of relational trust between teachers and school leaders—particularly in secondary schools, as opposed to elementary schools—in the Midwest is important because epistemologically, "there is a need for curriculum theorists to conceive the ways that hidden research is present in and used by contemporary society" (Connelly, 2008, p. 437). This study built an understanding of the "professional knowledge landscape" occupied by teachers and school leaders (Clandinin et al. 2006). The intersection of trust and narrative understanding of lives in schools is made clear through landscape metaphors and its Deweyan dimensions of "relational, temporal, and shifting school contexts" (p. 6).

If we are to attend narratively to teachers' and administrators' lives in school, we must be engaged in doing so for ourselves at least to some degree. The work of Cruikshank



(1990, 2005) and Crites (1971) both point to the importance and persistence of stories in our lives (Huber, Cain, Huber, & Steeves, 2013). In education and educational research, we may think of a “curriculum of lives” as a way of seeing teaching differently and with more depth and texture (Clandinin et al., 2006). Clifford Geertz (1994) encouraged a thickening and enrichment of textual detail and interconnectedness.

“Seeing small” via the “lenses of a system” means contextualizing school data, but not people (Clandinin et al. 2006, p. 163). Greene (1995) suggested an approach that transitions between “attending to particular children” (i.e., “seeing big” and “seeing the particularities” (p. 163) and more intangible stories and the organizational seeing. Between these “seeings” are the bumping places between teachers and school leaders in context with students brought about through a true sense of “relational knowing.” It is important to note these stories are written from the composing of lives. Looking closely in this way allows access to teachers’ secret and cover stories. Considering how we compose meaning of trust in this way means understanding the related way blame is “deflecting attention from the complexity of people’s lives” and “making them invisible” (p. 169).

Another element that may be worth considering are the performative aspects of a school leader or teacher’s job. As Conquergood (1991) wrote, “experience cannot be studied directly. It is studied through and in its performative representations...every identity becomes a cultural performance” (p. 185). In an exchange with his anthropologist former wife, Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson argued, “A dead camera...sees nothing” and “a tripod is a stake through the camera’s heart” (cited in Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p. 271), His conversation is really about the limits of positivism and certainty. How much can we truly say we know from one perspective? One thing Mead points to that is worth mentioning is

those with a thesis and a camera “in your hand” are more likely to be influencing the material, whereas not holding a camera changes the situation. This is akin to Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle about the position and speed of a quantum particle. Ontologically, perhaps there is not much difference between quantum mechanics and the social sciences; both deal in observations that can be both troublingly invisible and yet undeniably present.

### **Summary**

This chapter reviewed the relevant, recent, and historical literature on relational, collegial, and general trust in schools as it relates to climate and leadership. Compiling and studying these works of scholarship provided me with the appropriate background to establish this as a needed area of work in the realm of educational administration. Many of the studies compiled were solely or primarily quantitative; I found many recommendations for future research to expand on the notion of trust in a more qualitative sense. Further clarifying the need for this study was the fact that most of the work on relational trust in schools reviewed here has been done below the high school level. This study examined the stories of upper level secondary teachers and their perceptions of trust in the context of their school leadership.

The next chapter examines the methods of the study including a rationale for its qualitative disposition, site selection, sampling mechanism, descriptions of participants, and a discussion of the data collected and its analysis methodology. Lastly, the next chapter covers the study’s limitations, validity, reliability, as well as relevant ethical considerations.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this narratological heuristic inquiry was to investigate the ways in which teachers make meaning of their experiences with their principals with regard to the cultivation of trust. Of key interest is the effectiveness of principals as brokers of trust and the perceptions of them by their instructional staff. Research suggests that effective schools have principals who are perceived as being good at managing the communication continuum from listening to concerns to communicating needed actions (Ärlestig, 2008). Indeed, effective school leaders have been shown to be so not because of some magical techniques or elite pedigree, but because of their communication with teachers, particularly through establishing a degree of collegial and relational trust (Höög et al., 2005; Johnson, 2008; Leithwood et al., 2010). Furthermore, there is “evidence of a reciprocal dynamic between trust development and school improvement” which this study further explored from the perspective of teachers (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton & Luppescu, 2010, p. 311).

This study aimed to provide a meaningful new kind of context for teachers, principals, and school leaders at the district level to think about and assess an important and too often unexplored phenomenon: relational trust between teachers and principals. The deeper our understanding of the research questions, the more closely those sorts of teacher-defined meanings can be considered when principals are acting on behalf of teachers. Ultimately, a qualitative inquiry should be a process that evolves and finds novel ways to access the participant-owned and co-created meanings that highlight the phenomenon being explored (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). The following research questions were written to facilitate the elicitation of participant meaning:

1. How do teachers characterize trusting professional relationships?
  - a. What stories do teachers tell about interactions with their principals?
  - b. How do teachers respond to different metaphorical depictions of principal-teacher relationships?
2. What does it mean for teachers to develop trust in a professional context with principals?
  - a. What meanings do teachers attach to the development of relational trust with principals?
  - b. What do teachers think are factors that cultivate trust in the school context?

This chapter reviews the methods employed by this study. Guided by the research questions, this chapter outlines the study's design beginning with the rationale for choosing the qualitative tradition discussion of the selection of interviews, including heuristic and narrative inquiry traditions; site and participant selection; as well as data collection and analysis. Finally, discussion on the limits, validity, reliability, and ethical considerations are laid out.

### **Rationale for Qualitative Research**

The study conducted was served by primarily using qualitative means because the limited recent work done on the topic involving a qualitative component has shown that mixed methods are valuable in conceptualizing the teacher-principal relationship and themes of efficacy, and this study's approach flipped the paradigm so the focus was on qualitative data (Sallee, 2014). Other recent studies were only quantitative surveys of existing data (Louis & Murphy, 2017; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a) or quantitative surveys only (Li et al., 2016). Some of these studies suggested increased focus on the "human" elements of

trust cultivation, while others (Louis & Murphy, 2016) focus on the emerging value of understanding how the “emotional content of principal leadership” relates to improving climate and culture (p. 119). Sallee (2014) concluded one of the most important recommendations is to pursue a “more detailed qualitative” approach to exploring the leader-follower dynamic to discern teacher thoughts and experiences of principals. Many past studies have laid important groundwork in the quantitative realm (Gambetta, 1998; Halpin & Croft, 1963; Hoy, 1992; Pace & Stern, 1958; Thomas, 1976) which leaves an opening for this study’s qualitative dimension. While this study is not a mixed methods effort, it does employ the use of descriptive statistics collected via an established quantitative instrument, the details of which are discussed in the data sources section of this chapter, which follows.

This study was a heuristic, narratological inquiry drawing upon qualitative traditions. In determining this design foundation, I began with what the relevant studies in my field suggested for future work. Several studies (Louis, 2006; Vodicka, 2007) recommended a qualitative expansion on the extant body of work to include more teacher context and story surrounding trust and connection with principals, which is primarily quantitative in nature. In selecting a methodology for this study, I was informed by factors Creswell (2009) suggested, including: (1) the makeup of the research paradigms, (2) the exploratory nature of the inquiry, (3) the need for a close look at the central phenomenon, and (4) a need to accommodate the study of individuals in their natural setting. Using these principles, I determined that a qualitative approach was most necessary. Creswell (2003) contended that such an approach “is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives” (p. 18). An approach supported by constructivist understandings means that we can view what Guba and Lincoln (1985) called “multiple

constructed realities” through the addition of new voices and stories (p. 295). I believe their work and perspective is another piece of evidence that gives weight to the need for a qualitative expansion of this work on trust in schools.

In order to build a richer and more descriptive picture of the experiences of teachers and principals in the context of relational trust, a heuristic, narrative inquiry paired with a selection of quantitative, descriptive statistical tools to aid in member selection and secondary-level analysis was a fitting next step. Moustakas (1990) described the phenomenological inquiry process as one where the researcher attempts to access lived experience through a connection with the participant. This requires a philosophical disposition about the process and not just the method. Discovering the essence within lived experiences “marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method” (Creswell, 2003, p. 15). Merriam (1998) noted that “qualitative research draws from the philosophy of phenomenology in its emphasis on experiences and interpretations” (p. 15). My disposition toward this methodology was driven by my intense personal interest and connection to the issue being studied. This closeness should be called to attention both as a point of potential limitation and a strength.

In order to construct and access participants’ constructions of such an essence, this study explored what Geertz (1973) called “thick description.” Semantically, this idea resonated with me as I incorporated it into my qualitative inquiry mindset, but functionally the description Geertz used positions researchers—even novice researchers—to consider the right things through a process of in-depth exploration of each individual’s experiences as they contribute to an understanding that is greater in the sense of both wholeness and fragmentedness. Thick description is about connecting the phenomenon to each participant’s

life in ways that provide a sense-giving context for readers and is true to participant experience. By the account of Denzin (1989), a thick description of participant experience is an effort to glean more than just mere facts and single-ply observations like what Bateson and Mead (2003) described as a “dead camera” that does not truly “see” a vision of the essence (cited in Denzin, 1989, p. 83). In this way, thick description is about finding the webbed connections between the otherwise disconnected-appearing social relationships between people and feelings. Thick description contextualizes the moment of observation and analysis with history, voices, feelings, and meanings of the individual’s many experiential facets.

### **Interviewing**

Kvale’s (1996) six steps of analysis of interviews connects with a heuristic inquiry in that they respect the idea of interviews as conversations being constructed as story and reflection on their “lived world” intended to “unfold the meaning of [their] experiences” (p. 1). Those steps are as follows: subjects describe, subjects themselves discover relationships, interviewer condenses and interprets, transcription is interpreted by interviewer, re-interview, and action. Ethical consideration in interviews is in dealing with the “burden of denial,” which should not be placed on a subject (when did you stop beating your wife?); however, Kvale (1996) also suggested employing leading questions strategically as checks on reliability. If done properly and sparingly, these explicit checks can be orienting and even help assess validity. “The decisive issue is then not whether to lead or not lead, but where the interview questions should lead, and whether they will lead in important directions, producing new, trustworthy, and interesting knowledge” (Kvale, 1996, p. 158). Qualitatively, a similarly singular focus can make it “possible to investigate in detail the

relationship of a specific behavior in its context” and to help establish a relationship between individual and that context or situated experience (p. 103). Thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting are the seven stages of qualitative interview investigations as put forth by Kvale (1996).

### **Narrative Inquiry**

This study was designed to seek out a small group of teachers and explore their experiences in their own words; thus, a narratological tradition is fitting. This study was designed to operate on notions of Deweyan thinking about experience and the temporal dimension of a person’s experiences and ideas about place. The study aimed to be “attentive to the interactions of the embodied person” with regard to the larger narratives of place as well (Clandinin et al., 2006). One reason narrative inquiry was selected for this study was so I could more deftly access and attend to the “landscape” of individuals as they told their narratives.

Ultimately, I was curious about the impact the teacher-principal dynamic may have on practice. While the unit of analysis for this study was the teacher story of relational trust, it should be noted that narrative inquiry should always connect back with how curriculum is done (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Particularly, they explain the notion that teachers are individuals “leading storied lives” that shape their teaching, and their experiences can be studied as phenomena themselves (p. 477). Trust, as defined in the context of this study, is a “social resource” used to advance and understand an organization’s fitness for change or effectiveness (Bryk et al., 2010). However, that definition dovetails nicely with how Connelly and Clandinin (2006) wrote about narrative inquiry as a tool to attend to the “bumping places” in teachers’ lives with their stories of school (p. 5):



People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person entered the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 6)

What Connelly and Clandinin (2006) outlined in their discussion of the “professional knowledge landscape” is one that is primarily relational and temporal in the context of the school (p. 6). This study considers what Clandinin and Connelly (1994) called teacher stories: stories of teachers, school stories, and stories of school. Each type of stories can come with its own particularities and cross-comparison possibilities. Furthermore, the framework of understanding provided by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) work provided this study with necessary language for situating stories of trust into categories of “sacred stories,” “secret stories,” or “cover stories.” Using relational curriculum theory as a frame to examine teacher-principal trust was useful because of the narrativity of the phenomenon. Indeed, examining relational trust between these parties, as this study did, helps further research into the “plotlines” of the lives of teachers and may uncover what Battiste (2004) called “wishful fictions” that undermine the effectiveness of successful schooling. When the stories teachers tell about their schools embody a sense of distrust, there is not a strong likelihood success can be sustained for their students (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Louis, 2006).

The current study expands understanding of the professional knowledge landscapes occupied by teachers and principals. The intersection of trust and narrative understanding of lives in schools is made clear through the landscape metaphor and its dimensions of “relational, temporal, and shifting school context” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). That “hidden research” is the many microcontextual, short-term, cumulative, informal interactions between teachers and principals (p. 431). This is where my unit of analysis may provide

novel insights manifesting in new ways (Enns, 1993, 2007). Anecdotal and experiential narratives from teachers can help populate the landscape of understanding about trust as a vital and meaningful organizational construct that should be important to school leaders.

The area of interest for this narrative inquiry was the relational trust situated between teachers and principals in one educational setting, Midwestern upper secondary schools. I believe this study provided the opportunity for a vicarious generalization and imaginative application of the phenomenon to a broader context when finished. Epistemologically, “there is a need for curriculum theorists to conceive the ways that hidden research is present in and used by contemporary society” (Enns, cited in Connelly, Phillion, & He, 2008, p. 437). This study rejected the false choice of using narrative as either method or phenomenon and married both approaches into its heuristic, narratological approach in order to more aptly capture participant experiential meaning.

JoAnn Phillion (2002) explained, “Narrative is about how people experience their lives, how they interact, how they shape, and are shaped by, the contexts in which they live and work” (p. 20). This methodology is particularly important in order to explore ways teachers understand the central phenomenon this study examined: the facilitation of trust and its role in forming professional relationships within the school context. A guiding definition of narrative is that of Czarniawska (2004), who framed the term as “a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (p. 17).

Narrative matters because the way many people—educators for certain—make sense of the world is through writing and conveying narratives about our lives. Experiential knowledge is a key tool for understanding phenomena that may take root in schools and

potentially shape our practice in ways unseen. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) cemented narrative inquiry as a well-founded methodology for understanding the lived experiences of teachers, students, and school leaders. Marshall and Rossman (1999) argued that narrative inquiry can provide robust and meaningful data in qualitative research due to its immediacy, proximity to participant life, and perspective-based focus. This study aimed to use participant narratives as a primary tool to get at what Patton (2002b) described as the “heart of narrative analysis” (p. 118).

### **Heuristic Inquiry**

For this study, I employed a heuristic inquiry perspective in order to most accurately capture the perspectives and experiences of participants and their stories. Grbich (2013) described the employment of a classical phenomenological method as one intended to acknowledge the “disengaged consciousness” of the researcher from their own reality in order to reflect and see the phenomenon more clearly. The work of Edmund Husserl (1913/1982) was expanded by later works in the existential tradition of phenomenology through Martin Heidegger and Clark Moustakas, among others. Primarily, the search for meaning in phenomena shifted from Husserl’s concept of moving from the real to the abstract to the other way around.

Getting to the essence of people’s stories involves a deep dive approach like this, and I believed this best served my research questions and provided the right sort of context, process, and data for participants. Patton (2015) explained that heuristic inquiry is rooted in the examination of one’s own experience with a phenomenon and what you determine to be the “essential” element of it in connection with others who have a deep or “intense” experience with the phenomenon. Moustakas (1990) required that the researcher have an

intense experience with what is being studied. Exploring the common aspects of interaction with a phenomenon, such as relational trust between teachers and school principals, is aided by a heuristic lens that brackets such experiential meaning in parameters that include the researcher in a state of awareness that calls attention to bias accountably (Moustakas, 1990). The description of structures of experience, the distillation of those structures, and the essences of those experiences are part of the process (Patton, 2002b).

Getting at the philosophical underpinnings of a phenomenological inquiry is a process that entails seeing this study and its concepts in a new way. Through this lens, I discovered that examining the nature of a phenomenon is about discerning exactly what that “something” is and what is it not (Patton, 2002a, p. 104). Due to my inextricable involvement with the experience and definition of the phenomenon of relational trust and stories of trust between teachers and principals, I felt a heuristic inquiry would be most fitting as a methodological approach. Personally, my connection to the phenomenon is rooted in the nature of this study because I have considered the impact of leadership communication, trust brokering, and relational trust in schools for years as I have taught.

As a new teacher, I found it easy to trust everyone, especially those in positions of power in my school—namely, principals. Eventually, I experienced enough breaches of trust that my expectation of others’ behavior changed, but it troubled me when I first felt cut off from school leaders who were intended to be there to help me develop. Later in my career, as my professional skills grew, I noticed certain troubling patterns in a few leaders and their communication styles. Specifically, I experienced a disconnect between what I was hearing were the values of my school and what sorts of actions were incentivized and carried out. As Tschannen-Moran (1998) explained, I wanted to feel confident in trusting that my leaders—

those whom I was “vulnerable to”—were “benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open” (p. ii). As a teacher, I experienced breakdowns in each of those categories.

I overheard one assistant principal in a building where I was teaching express disappointment in my choice to take a day off because, in this person’s words, how could I possibly have anything important to do when I had no children? The context that matters here is the district was strapped for substitutes at this moment due to a lack of control over what they deemed “troublesome” students. The combination of the challenging circumstances of the students’ lives, their transience, and the high teacher and principal turnover created unstable conditions that put everyone on edge. In an environment like this, it was easy for anyone to make poor choices of words. However, I remember feeling well within my right to take the day off I was contractually guaranteed, and I remember feeling that it was certainly not my fault if the administration could not solve their staffing issue. This was a breach of my trust in the competence and reliability of my school’s leadership. Furthermore, the nature and tone of the comment I overheard was dismissive, presumptuous, and demeaning. This was a breach of my perception of this leader’s benevolence.

Stories like this one, which took only seconds to unfold in real time, can have a lasting impact, in my experience, on how you operate as an educator. All of this leader’s future actions, as well as the actions of those who supported that person, were colored a darker shade because of this deep and damaging breach of trust. As the narrative inquiry section previously addressed, what this story reveals about that one leader was that their “secret stories” were, at least in this instance, about questioning and reducing the power of teachers. That person’s carelessness in making the comment where I could hear it caused me to have to adjust a great deal of my future actions to be new “cover stories” that needed to be

aligned to a new reality (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p. 105). In the next section, the tradition of Clark Moustakas is detailed as it relates to the methods employed in this study.

### **Design of the Study**

In the section that follows, the study's setting, participants, data sources, and analytical methods are outlined. In addition, the role of the researcher is discussed prior to an accounting for the limitations, including validity, reliability, and ethical considerations made in the course of the research. A conclusion is provided before findings are discussed in Chapter 4.

#### **Setting**

In selecting my site for this study, I thought carefully about my own situatedness and biases and their potential effect on the study, as well as my professional situation and that of those around me. The site was my own district, the Fieldview Park School District. The district enrollment for the year previous was 18,157 students. The total staff size was 2,692, of which 1,466 were certified staff members, 83.3% of whom had achieved a Master's degree or higher. The most updated information available from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education projects the secondary enrollment breakdown for the district in the coming year to be 8,688, of which 5,816 are in grades 9–12.

The average teacher salary in the district for the year 2017 was \$59,784, and the average administrator salary was \$107,250. Student ratios in the district were 18 per classroom teacher and 245 per administrator. Student demographics for the secondary buildings in the district ranged from around 70% to 78% white. Free and reduced lunch percentages ranged from 8.5% to 24.2% in those same buildings. In terms of academic performance, of the district's 1,409 graduates from all three high schools, 51.4% scored at or

above the national average with an average ACT score of 22.2 compared to the state average composite of 20.2 (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018).

In this study, the site selection was determined in large part by my own positionality. Due to the personal and potentially fragile nature of the phenomenon related to trust in a professional context, I wanted to be sure I was fully cognizant of how I would be potentially perceived while conducting the data collection. Prior to conducting this study, I had planned to use a district I had working in previously, but due to my change in position, thought it would potentially put a strain on my perceived position and intentions. I at least worried that this was possible, and so I weighed the risks of continuing work at that site versus my newer district. Because of my primarily outsider status, I thought I had little chance of being perceived in a way that would skew results or significantly alter participation rates at the new site.

### **Participants**

For this study, the participants were selected from a high school building in the district. Pseudonyms for the Fieldview Park School District's three high schools were assigned as follows: Portulaca High, Palmetto High, and Oleander Heights High. These pseudonyms bear no relation to the district or region they are referring to and do not share initials or descriptive characteristics of the schools. Selection of teacher and administrative participants was purposeful within the site for maximum variation as Patton (2015) stated, "picking a wide range of cases to get variation on dimensions of interests" (p. 267).

One benefit of this district was access to a large number of teachers who are led by a fairly large number of principals with whom they may have developed professionally proximal relationships. Larger schools afford a greater number of potential participants, and

for this study, I leveraged my existing relationships with educators to procure willing and relevant participants ethically. The study selected participant teachers in the secondary grades, 7–12 from the pool of questionnaire respondents. Sampling was guided by the principle of maximum variation for teacher experience, grade level and courses taught, and time in the district. A heterogenous group of participants helped provide useful comparative connections.

### **Data Sources**

The rationale for using the Omnibus T-Scale as a sampling mechanism for the study was two-fold. First, it provided a simple point of entry for participants to engage in the research effort with the option of devoting more time to an interview if they felt comfortable. Second, the OTS provided not only a meaningful sampling tool based on relevant criteria informed by the phenomenon under study (relational trust); it also provided meaningful context for participant stories. Without the OTS data of staff members who were not interviewed, there would have been a less comprehensive view of how trust may potentially manifest outside of the eight participants and their experiences. In addition to the value of the broader descriptive statistical context of the OTS and the rich participant narratives drawn from interviews, the documents generated by the researcher in the form of the cartoon ethnograph provided an accessible representation of participant experience in a visual format.

Study participants were selected using an initial quantitative questionnaire that helped select appropriate candidates for in-depth interviews as a part of the closer study. Teachers in full-time instructional positions received an electronic survey version of the full Omnibus T-Scale questionnaire. In qualitative research, surveys are often used as a participant selection or theme identification tool since they can serve as a meaningful preliminary



pathway to gathering richer data through interviews. Patton (2002a) noted that in using such a measure, “the quantitative data identify areas of focus; the qualitative data give substance to those areas of focus” (p. 193). The descriptive statistics provided important context which helped address the research questions, and the in-depth interviews added clarity, found what people really meant, offered opportunity for subsample follow-ups and generally helped make sense of the initial data. In other words, the interviews “put flesh on the bones” and brought them “to life through in-depth case elaboration,” but the initial survey responses provided an important structure for that material to cleave to (p. 132). Through qualitative questions, that were open-ended and exploratory and participant-generated mini-narratives with the use of a cartoon, I was able to illuminate the meaning of trust for eight participants and connect to the descriptive findings of the quantitative data. I was able to see meaning in the data that I would not have obtained with solely quantitative data. Richardson (2003) explained the power of crystallization, representing three distinct data sources, the researcher can obtain “both what we know and what we call into question (Richardson, 2003, p. 934) within the research process. A description of each data source and its use in the study follows.

### **Survey**

As noted, this study used the Omnibus T-Scale (OTS) (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2007) for sampling and then dug deeper with qualitative follow-ups based on those responses (see Appendix A: Teacher Questionnaire) and participant-generated mini-narratives as documents. As Patton (2002a) recommended, the follow-up interviews played an “elucidating role” by adding depth and detail which may help confirm preliminary findings (p. 193). Another benefit of using survey data as a preliminary stage of the research prior to

interviews is that it can provide a breath between data collection of one type—the quantitative, OTS responses—and the more “reactive” and murkier interview phase because, as (Patton 2002b) suggested, there is a “hard-and-fast distinction between data collection and analysis” when it comes to quantitative data (p. 436).

The OTS included a six-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree and measures on three subscales (internal consistency shown in parentheses): Trust in the Principal (0.95), Trust in Clients (0.92), and Trust in Colleagues (0.94). The scale’s designers used factor analysis to assess evidence of the structural validity of the scale and to ensure each item was properly loaded for only one of the referent: client, colleague, or a principal. Moreover, a content analysis of the three subscales provided evidence of content validity, as all facets of trust—benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness—were represented in each subscale (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2007). Alpha coefficient measures of the scales were calculated in the original research in order to determine the reliability of the scales (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2007). The Cronbach’s Alphas for this study were as follows: Trust in the Principal (0.88), Trust in Colleagues (0.84), and Trust in Clients (0.86).

### **Interviews**

Eight participants were selected for participation in interviews after the initial stage in an effort to guard against the likelihood of some dropping out from the study and leaving an undesirable sample remaining or causing the researcher to restart the effort. None of the eight who volunteered dropped out or failed to participate fully. Participation was chosen by the method of purposeful sampling as defined by Creswell’s (2013) considerations for selecting participants, specifying the strategy, and choosing the most appropriate sampling size. Maxwell (2005, 2013) explained the five goals of a purposeful selection: (1) to achieve

representativeness, (2) to adequately capture the heterogeneity of the population, (3) to select cases that are vital for establishing theory, (4) to craft comparisons between groups of participants, and (5) to select groups or participants with whom you can establish the most fruitful and purposeful relationships for answering your research questions.

Maximum variation sampling strategy guided the selection of participants to be interviewed in order to ensure an interesting diversity of individuals based on their professional teaching credentials and experience levels in addition to their scale scores on the instrument as a whole and particularly their subscale score for teacher-principal trust (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Once the teachers for the study were selected, it was important to ensure that a functional researcher-participant relationship befitting of the qualitative tradition was cultivated. Maxwell (2013) explained the importance of relationships in this way: “the relationships that you create with participants in your study are an essential part of your methods and how you initiate and negotiate these relationships is a key design decision” (p. 90). In striving for heterogeneity in sampling from a population of potential participants, the potential weakness of the stark contrasts in cases is mediated because “any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value” and they should represent the “core experiences” and potential “shared dimensions” of the target phenomenon (Patton, 2002a, p. 235).

One of the benefits of this process of in-depth interviews is the increased intensity and proximity to participants and to their expression of stories of experience with the phenomenon. Interviews should be a way to, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) contended, “support the extrapolation of the constructed meanings of individuals” (p. 268), including all subjective experiences contained in the participants’ past and potential future. In these

interviews, the participant was in command of their stories, and I remained a co-facilitator of their expressions of meaning. Josselson (2007) validated this approach and mindset when conducting qualitative interviews as a part of a narrative inquiry so that each participant can be treated “as the expert” who is there to confer meaning upon the researcher conducting the interview.

As deMarrais (2004) confirmed, putting interviewees in control in this way allows “the essence of an experience” to gently “[emerge] from interview data” (p. 57). Finding my way to the essential structure of experience with the phenomenon related to stories of relational trust with principals meant attending carefully to how participants told their stories, including their diction and level of detail, as well as their tone and delivery as they explained their answers to the general interview guide questions. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) recommended, a general interview guide was used in order to appropriately manage the openness of the conversation, while maintaining the focus on trust items in the words of the participant. The interview guide (see Appendix B) contains items generated from the subsections of this study’s review of literature, outlined in Chapter 2. “The general interview guide approach involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins” (Patton, 2002a, p. 342). Questions covered in the guide include items such as “Give me a definition of trust as you understand it in terms of your work as a teacher” and “what does it mean to feel supported by your principal?”

One 45–60-minute interview was conducted with each participant, individually, after they were selected from the pool of survey respondents who indicated their willingness to participate further. Within a week of the initial interview, follow-up interviews were conducted in person in order to ensure a rigorous attention to the intended meanings. A

member checking process via letters sent to the participants followed the interviews and completion of transcripts (see Appendix C). Details on the timeline of the interviews and data collection are included in Chapter 4.

Participants were interviewed at a location and time of their choosing in order to facilitate maximum likelihood of comfort and openness on their part. The location, according to Creswell (2013), should be a quiet place free from distraction. Consent was obtained from the interviewee at the site prior to starting the protocol (see Appendix A). The study's purpose, interview time, and plans for using their response data were covered in a pre-data collection meeting with the OHHS staff. During the interview, audio was recorded using a directional microphone connected to a laptop running AudioNote, which is software that allows for detailed and time-stamped notes. The researcher read from the guide and typed notes in addition to remarking aloud when necessary; the researcher clarified that it was his job to listen and take in participant stories. Before the interview concluded a non-identifying pseudonym was selected to protect the participant's identity.

### **Documents**

The third type of data collected in this study were participant-generated artifacts, which, according to Patton (2015) qualify as documents. Documents are rich sources of information that may either be gathered as a part of an ongoing field study or could be existing information collected at the behest of the researcher. Merriam (2009) noted these artifacts may be “written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study at hand” (p. 139). Participant-generated mini-narratives were constructed during the study in the form of a cartoon with empty bubbles filled out by participants according to a set series of situations related to the survey questions. The purpose of this task was to playfully but

seriously capture the essence of experience in singular moments. For example, teachers saw a comic panel, including a principal standing in their doorway while they are sitting at their desk during class. The task was to fill in thought and speech bubbles which broadcast anticipated thoughts, fears, hopes, or expectations unexpressed during the instant an interaction with leadership occurs.

What might not come up during a reply to an interview question about a similar situation, can be targeted with a visual but cognitive-focused cartoon. I hoped to capture thoughts, feelings, and participant narrative in these documents, as Creswell (2013) said, “may shed light on the identities of individuals and how they see themselves” (p. 71). This particular step was vital to capturing what may otherwise have remained hidden in participant stories of teacher-principal relationship, organizational climate, and trust in schools.

Recent research has found that the use of participant-generated visual media such as a cartoon can “[enable] the expression of emotions and tacit knowledge (the unspoken or unexpressed), and [encourage] reflection” (Glaw, Inder, Kable, & Hazelton, 2017, p. 2). Pain (2012) found that “Using visual methods to facilitate and enrich communication” (p. 303) enhanced the data, producing richer and a different kind of data than verbal methods. Similar to my proposed use of a cartoon with empty speech and thought bubbles, Glaw et al. (2017) used a multi-step process of analysis with the visual media (autophotography and photographic elicitation in this case) where the descriptive codes used in analysis were participant generated labels for each picture. This layer of meaning added depth and increased validity according to their findings. Lapenta (2011) asserted that the potential co-collaborative value of the intersection between narrative and visual methodologies

between researcher and participant can “lead to new insights and knowledge” (p. 211).

Adding this data source provided me with richer, thicker descriptions of experience with the phenomenon and an opportunity to get at that description via participant-driven means.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

In keeping with the phenomenological philosophy, I wanted to investigate my own awareness and experience with the phenomenon of relational trust and grow my own self-knowledge as I deepened my study with others. Heuristic methodology means I am present, myself, throughout the process (Moustakas, 1990) and work in creative ways to make sense of how my experiences with the phenomenon overlap and intermingle with those of my participants. This dedication to attending to shared experience creates unique opportunity for insights and meaning making. “Heuristics is concerned with meanings, not measurements; with essence, not appearance; with quality, not quantity; with experience, not behavior” (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 42).

The primary sources of data collection for this study included survey results, interviews, and documents. Those are typical to qualitative research as explained by Patton (2015). Part of my interviews involved representing the relationships between teachers and principals in a metaphorical sense, utilizing the mindset and lens of Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) metaphorical thinking. In this heuristic narrative inquiry, I hoped to access the experiential knowledge of teachers and principals at the places where they form, assess, build, or break down the bricks of relational trust.

In addition to the interview data, some of the interview and document collection stemmed from imagined dialogues between teachers and principals. Barri Bumgarner employed a version of this method in her 2012 dissertation study. For her, the “dialogue

between two fictional characters offered insight and emerged as a result of my thinking” (Bumgarner, 2012, p. 136). My study gleaned similar insights from the imagined dialogues as a part of the participants’ narrative tapestry. This took place through small multi-paneled comics featuring school settings, teachers, principals, and empty dialogue boxes.

In my study, I employed a heuristic analysis of the data collected from interviews and documents as well as surveys. “Heuristics is a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the forefront the personal experiences and insight of the researcher” (Patton, 2002a, p. 107). Through the delineation of researcher biases, opportunities were uncovered for comment, critique, and connection with participant data that more accurately situated their stories within and around my own, further strengthening the presence of themes.

### **Moustakian Heuristic Inquiry**

There are six distinct and independent stages set out by Clark Moustakas (1990) which bound the practice of heuristic inquiry. I have broken these six stages down in the following sections using a pattern of progressive verbs which striate the process into more muscular, agile, and active syntax: attend, rend(er), apprehend, and comprehend. The echoing of suffix sounds, ironically culminating in “end” but not “an end,” creates a pleasing rhythm and flow between the stages of discovery that I found helpful in my ownership of and immersion in the process. My personal progression of these terms represents the reflective mindset that promotes taking ownership of the heuristic process fully. Moustakas’s six stages begin with Initial Engagement and Immersion, where attention to self and context is key to explicating the problem at hand through the lens of the researcher’s experience. From there, the problem is Incubated on its own before the particularities are brought out in a re-examination of experiences in Illumination. Finally, a period of intense focus called



Explication serves as the penultimate step before a Creative Synthesis brings the researcher closer and closer to comprehension of the problem as it is expressly manifested in their experience and understanding.

**Attend.** First, there is the stage of “initial engagement” with the phenomenon where the researcher attends to an issue that is troubling; in this case, the troubling issue is the nature of trust between teacher and principal in secondary schools. The engagement or encountering of a question that holds personal power is a process that requires inner receptiveness, a willingness to enter fully into the theme, and to discover from within the spectrum of life experiences that clarified and expanded knowledge of the topic and illuminate the terms of the question (Moustakas, 1990).

The researcher should strive for a sense of “tacit awareness” of the phenomenon as they experienced it in order to glean a better understanding of the question’s context and why it matters in the way that it does. In the “immersion” phase, the researcher’s attending to the issue deepens as they interrogate ways in which it intersects with life, facilitating the immersion process into exploring the tacit dimension including a period of what Moustakas (1990) described as self-dialogue and the pursuit of hunches drawn from experience.

**Rend.** To “rend” is to cut from a larger part and make neat. Graphics are rendered to finalize changes. Meat and animal waste can be rendered to make a useable product. In this rendering and “incubation” stage, the researcher should rend themselves from the experience, step back, and focus on the question. Here, Moustakas (1990) said the researcher should aim for a sense of creative awareness that stems from a deep-planted seed being carefully and slowly nourished: “the researcher is no longer absorbed in the topic in any direct way or alert to things, situations, events, or people that contributed to an understanding of the

phenomenon” (p. 29). In other words, the experience of the researcher and his or her knowledge of the phenomenon are isolated and focused upon.

Next, in the “illumination” phase of the inquiry, the rendering leads to a rendering of the seemingly familiar elements of experiences as the researcher tries to see them differently.

Moustakas (1990) explained that “a degree of reflectiveness is essential, but the mystery of situations requires tacit workings to uncover meanings and essences” (p. 29). This elicitation of meaning through and from the metaphorical fog of mystery requires a mindful and meditative state of focus.

**Apprehend and comprehend.** In the “explication” phase, the researcher works to apprehend meaning from layers of experience with the phenomenon: “concentrated attention is given to creating an inward space and discovering nuances, textures, and constituents of the phenomenon which may then be more fully elucidated through indwelling” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 25). The notion of texturing phenomenological nuance gives the researcher a sense of grabbing hold of, which is another reason the language of apprehension fits so well; there is a grasping image that comes to mind like a person trying to find the light switch in a darkened room. Lastly, Moustakas’ “creative synthesis” phase provides space for the comprehension of what was apprehended. The researcher derives and describes personal meaning from the tacit dimension through a “narrative depiction utilizing verbatim material and examples” (p. 31) perhaps in a new form unique to the perceptive capacity of the researcher. These meanings are “inherent in a particular worldview, an individual life, and the connections between self, other, and world” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 32). In the following section, the study design is outlined and described in detail, including the setting,

participants, data sources, and methods of analysis of those data. Concluding this chapter are sections on limitations, reliability, and ethical considerations.

During this process, I divided codes into both descriptive and interpretive batches to work with. Key to heuristic inquiry is the notion during coding that the researcher is present in and through all of the steps Moustakas (1990) laid out. This helps to ensure the story of the data is situated in a space of shared and expressed meaning stemming from and through the researcher, interconnected with each participant. Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that this is helpful because descriptive codes “entail little interpretation,” whereas the interpretive codes provide a more substantial meaning-based understanding of the data context (p. 57). The coding process can further serve the purposes of answering research questions in detail through a process called “pattern coding” that is more thematic than either the descriptive or interpretive coding on their own (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This involves formulating themes from the codes that envelop and encompass the previous code groups and concepts more broadly. Even in the research process, researchers can use member checking to add credibility to a study’s results as a part of the process (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

### **The Role of the Researcher**

I combined Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) metaphoric lens with one involving a crystallization perspective like using a dialogue as Bumgarner (2012) did or the filling in of dialogue in a cartoon bubble related to teacher-principal interaction. The re-mediation of narratives of relational trust can be explored through imagined vignettes that are intended to capture or represent the power of the subtle moments that can shape organizational relationships between teachers and principals. Because crystallization is “thoroughly partial” and deeply complex, increasing—somewhat paradoxically—both what we know and what

we call into question (Richardson, 2003), this process helped to elicit themes that could be folded back into the interview like a chef folding eggs into a dough for baking, interleaving layers of meaning and nuance before the final stages of analysis.

Another guiding ideological frame for this study during data analysis is the concept of the qualitative researcher as bricoleur. A bricoleur is artisan who crafts quilts, makes patterns, and stitches things together in a way that is simultaneously linear and connected and nonlinear and recursive. Kincheloe (2001) described qualitative “bricolage” as a cousin of hermeneutics in terms of its approach to navigating the potential meanings of qualitative texts: “If hermeneutics came to connote the ambiguity and slipperiness of textual meaning, then bricolage can also imply the fictive and imaginative elements of the presentation of all formal research” (p. ix). The image of the crystal and extended metaphor it represents also guided me in the analysis of data from this study. “The central image for qualitative inquiry should be the crystal, not the triangle” (Richardson, 2003, p. 7). Teacher stories and their imagined dialogues provided phenomenological “prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves,” using the language of Richardson (p. 7). As Richardson and St. Pierre (cited in Lincoln & Denzin, 2008) imply, the use of cartoon ethnography could be considered creative analytic practice (CAP) ethnography, as it helps move from the “plane geometry” of triangulation to “light theory, where light can be both waves and particles” (p. 479)

### **Implementation of Data Sources**

The previous section provided a comprehensive review of this study’s methodology including discussions of its traditions of narrative inquiry and heuristics. The rationale for qualitative research and selection of participants was described in addition to procedures for data collection and analysis. The researcher’s positionality was solidified as a key component

of the study as well. This section provides support for how the Omnibus T-Scale questionnaire was used as a sampling mechanism and also the context it provided alongside the narratives of participants captured in the subsequent interviews. First, I explain the dissemination of the survey for the OHHS staff and the identification of eight teachers for subsequent interviews. Next, the interview participants are displayed with their roles and discussion of OTS scale scores. These scores are compared to the normative sample for the OTS, and scores for the OHHS teacher respondents are displayed and explained.

### **Survey Implementation**

I met with the OHHS staff and was introduced prior to phase 1 of the study that entailed the OTS survey data. After the meeting's conclusion, I met with the principal's secretary to line up the email salvo to go out to staff in the best way possible to be seen and viewed as an approachable task. Eventually, we came to the notion that the principal's weekly Sunday email newsletter was the best way to place it in front of staff and not get lost in the shuffle of a giant school full of messages and people with many daily needs. That Sunday night, I waited patiently, anticipating the arrival of the first Google alerts from their responses. As they started to roll in slowly over the next few hours, my anxiety about the presence of the data began to wane. While my final response rate of 32 (25.8% of total staff) replies could have been higher, I knew it would provide a meaningful sample of the population of this building.

I used scale scores to help determine if there was an interesting difference in the participants who had volunteered to be interviewed. After calculating a few basic descriptive statistical measures for the entire sampling and breaking down scale scores for each sub-section (teacher-principal trust, teacher-client trust, and trust in colleagues), the overall

scale scores for the test gave me a good approximation of the range of trust scores I had on my hands. The teacher-principal trust measure was most meaningful for me to concentrate on as I moved forward.

After consulting with my committee chair and my quantitative advisor about the appropriate response rate, I scheduled interviews with the eight people who had indicated their willingness to participate. Most preferred to meet in their own rooms, which I was able to accommodate easily on their planning hour. One interviewee came to meet with me outside of the building. Sergio, Amanda, Jill, Bella, Gina, Linda, Marcy, and Susan (pseudonyms) all signed their consent forms and welcomed the chance to talk about their experiences beyond the 26-item Omnibus T-Scale questionnaire.

### **Interviews and Omnibus Trust Scale Scores**

In this section, I outline (see Table 1) the duration of each interview conducted, in addition to that participant's role in the school, overall Omnibus Trust Scale Score (comprised of teacher-principal trust, trust in clients, and trust in colleagues), and their individual score for items related directly to teacher trust in the principal. A discussion of each of the subscale scores is presented compared to the normative sample for the OTS (see Table 2). Finally, Table 3 shows only the items related to teacher-principal trust as they were scored for OHHS teacher respondents.

An email with a survey was sent to the entire faculty of Oleander Heights High School. Teachers had the option of filling out the survey or not. Respondents from this pool marked whether they were willing to be an interview participant; from those who indicated their willingness to be interviewed, eight participants were selected after the OTS results (see

Appendix D) were collected and scored. They were selected with maximum variation of their sub-scores on Teacher-Principal Trust in mind as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

*Study Participants*

Participant	Interview Length	Role in School	OTS Scale Score	Teacher-Principal Subscale Score
Jill	41	Special Educator	135	5.375
Sergio	39	Teacher	147	6
Susan	29	Teacher	123	5.125
Linda	37	Teacher	118	4.5
Gina	34	Teacher	107	4.25
Marcy	39	Teacher	118	4.375
Bella	46	Counselor	126	4.875
Amanda	24	Teacher	118	3.625

*Note.* The OTS Scale Score is standardized to the instrument, and the Teacher-Principal Subscale Scores are on a range from 1–6 where 6 is the highest level of alignment and representation of trust’s presence.

Table 2

*Overall Subscale Scores for Oleander Heights High School*

	Trust in the Principal	Trust in Colleagues	Trust in Clients
Subscale Item Average	4.77	5.01	4.52
Standard Score	548.85	738.66	513.40

In general, the questionnaire found a high degree of trust in the building at large and an interesting and variable range of trust scores in the respondents who chose to become interview participants at the next stage. Table 2 reveals the scores, on a scale of 6, represent ranges of agreement on OTS items including: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The average Teacher-Principal Subscale scores shown in Table 2 reflect a general sense of expressed trust and agreement with the items. For example, Amanda's average of 3.625 means she had more agree statements than disagree, but she had enough "somewhat disagree" selections to bring the average down below the 4 threshold. Sergio, on the other hand, scored a perfect 6 for his principals on each of the subscale items. Jill and Susan expressed a strong level of agreement overall, but had several responses that were "strongly agree." Linda, Gina, Marcy, and Bella mostly had positive responses and scored nothing below the level of "somewhat agree." The table shows their overall scale score on the entire questionnaire as well. So Gina's moderate expression of Trust in the Principal (4.25) is moderated by her considerably low score overall, which was a function of scoring similarly low on trust in clients in comparison to trust in teachers and principals. Marcy was the lone participant who scored a 1 on any item related to teacher-principal trust.

Table 3 reveals in more detail how the teachers surveyed viewed their relationships with the principal. The subscale score average for each of the three areas is shown for the sample (n= 32) along with the OTS standardized score, which is calculated by taking the difference between the sample's score for each subscale (e.g., Trust in the Principal) and the mean for the normative sample, times 100, and that product divided by the standard deviation of the normative sample, finally adding 500 to the result (Hoy, n.d.). This was done for each



subscale with the unique normative sample mean and standard deviation in the same way. Table 3 shows the OHHS staff's responses rated in the top 97% of schools for Trust in Colleagues and were average for Trust in the Principal as well as Trust in Clients (students) for the 26-item Likert Survey, which measured responses on the three subscales mentioned.

Table 2 shows overall relationships to the three areas (trust in the principal, colleagues, and clients), while Table 5 (discussed in the next section) consists of the narrative themes and breaks down each of the eight items tied directly to Teacher-Principal Trust alone. The display shows the raw sum of all respondents' scores (N), the mean of those scores (M), the standard deviation from the mean (SD), and the scale score (SS) for the instrument's normative sample. Scale scores on the OTS range from 200-800 for each subscale, and 3.53 is the mean of the normative sample (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2003). Overall, the building's responses indicate that, on issues of teacher-principal trust, they are a mostly average group of teachers, in terms of their experiences. On item 23 in particular, "The principals did not tell teachers what is really going on," the response average was below the threshold of agreement, scoring a mean of 3.84 and a scale score of 419.82, lower than 84% of schools in the normative sample. The highest average item of agreement was item 7, "The teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of the principal," whose mean was 5.00. That item also showed the most consistency among respondents in their answer, showing a standard deviation of 0.73, which was the lowest in this subscale. Item 23's standard deviation was the highest, at 1.44.

When comparing the data of the eight interviews with OTS subscale scores for high school, the results show the highest degree of trust between teachers and their professional

Table 3

*Item Results for Oleander Heights Teachers on Teacher-Principal Trust*

	N	M	SD	Scale Score
1. Teachers in this school trust the principals	154	4.97	0.91	575.55
4. The teachers in this school are suspicious of most of the principals' actions	154	4.97	0.91	575.55
7. The teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of the principal.	155	5.00	0.73	580.00
9. The principals in this school typically act in the best interests of teachers.	149	4.81	0.87	553.30
11. The principals of this school do not show concern for the teachers.	154	4.97	0.98	575.55
15. Teachers in this school can rely on the principals.	149	4.81	0.87	553.30
18. The principals in this school are competent in doing their jobs.	152	4.90	0.83	566.65
23. The principals did not tell teachers what is really going on.	119	3.84	1.44	419.82

colleagues. This quantitative finding meshes well with what I heard in interviews about the collegial culture of each department and school as a whole. According to the OTS, OHHS exhibits a surveyed trust between teachers that is higher than 97% of the average survey respondents. Their trust in clients, defined as the community, parents, and students, was average, as was their trust in the principal. On item 23, in particular (see Table 3), the scale score shows teachers at OHHS are lower than 84% of schools surveyed. The comprehensive

analysis of the quantitative data provided an understanding of trust between the teachers and the principal compared with normative data, indicating that results were relatively average.

### **Limitations Including Validity, Reliability, and Ethical Considerations**

Every researcher must appropriately bound their study in order for it to be properly received by its intended audience and for it to have its desired effect. According to Creswell (2013) “a limitation indicates a potential weakness in the design of the study” (p. 148). One such source of limitation is the unaddressed allowance of researcher bias in heuristic design: “the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 108). Yin (2003) stressed that researchers clearly define and lay out their design process and adhere to it closely in order to reduce error and bias as much as possible. According to Creswell (2013) “a limitation indicates a potential weakness in the design of the study” (p. 148). While this may be an informative and useful starting place, Maxwell (2005) encouraged researchers to look beyond this singular prescription and be mindful of the process as a whole: “The validity of your results is not guaranteed by following some prescribed procedures....it depends on the relationship of your conclusions to reality, and there are no methods that can completely assure that you have captured this” (p. 105).

It was vital to establish protocols, identify parameters, and clearly state and refer to them throughout the process of the interview in order to maintain awareness of possible limitations that could have arisen. However, Maxwell (2005) cautioned that simply following procedures does not guarantee valid and useful results: “there are no methods that can completely assure that you have captured [such results]” (p. 105). Yin (2003) suggested, that the researcher write as though someone were “looking over your shoulder” (p. 38), and in that way keep the presence of someone outside yourself and your participants in mind.

Maxwell (2005) further suggested that implementation of methodology does not necessarily lead to validity. The imagined presence of another set of eyes on your writing and work is helpful in identifying bias and bringing out what you might see as conflicting sources of internal dissonance. In this study, admitting bias and telling my own stories played a key role in providing evidence of the validity of the questions I posed to participants.

In addition to having the mental image of a reader over your shoulder, researchers may benefit from the use of a critical friend during the process. Earl and Katz (2006) explained the role of critical friends:

External critical friends with expertise in data collection, interpretation, and use, as well as sensitivity and the ability to listen and think on their feet, come without vested interests and can build trust and bring a dispassionate perspective. They can observe what may not be apparent to insiders, facilitate reflection on the issues that arise, explain complex data in accessible ways, ask questions, probe for justification and evidence to support perceptions and help reformulate interpretations. (pp. 21–22)

Other risks and limits worth considering in qualitative research like this study may include the ethical reporting of data, description of participant data, and only having one data collector and the implications of that on perspective.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Crystallization and triangulation are two ways researchers can bolster validity and reliability through the processes of description and positionality. Crystallization, in particular, is “thoroughly partial” and deeply complex, increasing—somewhat paradoxically—both what we know and what we call into question (Richardson, 2003, p. 934) within the research process. In a heuristic inquiry, especially one operated by a novice researcher like myself, one must be concerned with meaning applied throughout the process, as the researcher is the foremost judge of validity (Moustakas, 1990).

As outlined by Richardson (2003), crystallization allows for the simultaneous increase of both knowledge and doubts about that knowledge through the conceptualization of participant-created meaning as being a multi-faceted, “thoroughly partial” expression of truth (p. 934). Traditionally, the language of triangulation has guided thinking about validity in qualitative research; crystallization offers a more nuanced and nimble approach to achieving the goal of checks on evidence of validity; namely, the alignment of research data with what actually happened in the world (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Patton (2002b) explained that in quantitative research, triangulation is about “consistency of findings across methods and data sources,” while a more socially constructivist approach tweaks that focus to be more about “capturing and respecting multiple perspectives” (p. 268).

This research socially constructed meaning from participant stories and expressions, as well as from and in the context of the data of their peers. So, while it would be easy to say I was seeking to triangulate between survey data, interview data, and narrative response data, it is more helpful, I think, to actuate the notion of the crystal and its metaphorical power for seeing multiple truths in the data in an unbound, interconnected, and sensitive way. What I mean by unbound is that there is no precise way to replicate my exact process for determining meaning. What I see in the interconnectedness of the crystal facets is the potential to always know you are on to something if you keep shining a light and following people’s stories. This study employed member checks to ensure what Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted are critical measures for providing evidence of validity. Member checking means relaying back to participants what you are gleaning from their expressions and stories of experience. Doing so is of primary benefit to them because it gives the participant control

over their story and what you see in it; it also allows you, the researcher, to take a step back and re-experience what they are telling you.

While it may be tempting to search out a hard-and-fast rule of thumb to determine the meaning of validity or reliability, it should be emphasized that the nature of qualitative research makes this impossible. Patton (2002b) confirmed that “there are not and cannot be formulas for determining significance. No ways exist of perfectly replicating the researcher’s analytical thought processes. No straightforward tests can be applied for reliability and validity” (p. 276). Lincoln and Guba (1985) used alternative terms that are naturalistic to address validity and reliability: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Further, they purported, “since there can be no validity without reliability (and thus no credibility without dependability), a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter.”

### **Ethical Considerations**

In order to ensure a proper disposition for qualitative inquiry, an ethical researcher must begin in a place of honesty about the way he or she uses and represents the data from participants. Indeed, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained, “An unethical writer could so select from among available data that virtually anything he wished could be illustrated” (p. 378). What is commonly referred to as the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical & Behavioral Research, 1978) is a key piece of documentation intended to ensure that researchers working with human subjects are informed about the ethical treatment of persons and their ideas. One of the foremost features of this report is the concept of “beneficence,” which is defined in the report as “Persons are treated in an ethical manner not only by respecting their decisions and protecting them from harm,

but also by making efforts to secure their well-being.” This concept is one of three elements of basic ethical consideration stated in the report, the other two being “justice” and “respect for persons” (para. 15).

Issues of justice are particularly important in educational research because of the nature of the populations of schools. Researchers must understand how to select participants, whether adults or children, for their value to the research rather than their convenience or position. The Belmont report states,

the selection of research subjects needs to be scrutinized in order to determine whether some classes (e.g., welfare patients, particular racial and ethnic minorities, or persons confined to institutions) are being systematically selected simply because of their easy availability, their compromised position, or their manipulability, rather than for reasons directly related to the problem being studied. (National Commission for the Protection, 1978, p. 19)

In schools, especially schools where teachers are employed and conducting research, careful attention must be paid to participant selection as a clearly delineated process prior to and during the process.

Another ethical area of concern for my study was deciding how to report data from the district where I am employed, using participants who are my colleagues and professional partners or acquaintances. Vital to the design and implementation of my study was control over repeating the intents and purposes of the study to potential participants and the district leadership. Indeed, it was paramount to my success as a researcher of relational trust and perceptions to demonstrate and cultivate such trust through my work so as to enable the proper understanding of its value. Indeed, the risks and benefits for my participant teachers and principals was rooted in their stories and voices being heard and shared; I established and communicated my purposes for the study clearly and provided protection for the identities of

those involved to increase not only the validity of my study, but also (and more importantly) the privacy for participants and their words.

Critical to the success of this study was the trust between the participants and myself. If they did not sense that I would protect their identity and honor the heart of their story as a part of my inquiry, they would not be empowered to share the full extent of their feelings or engage at all with me in the deep way the study required. As Creswell (2013) explained, “The researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informant(s)” (p. 201). Especially considering the unit of analysis in this study, it was important that I ensure that my interactions model appropriately what relational trust looks, sounds, and feels like for my participants. If I were to communicate what the Belmont report calls the appropriate “assessment of risks and benefits for my study,” then a sound design was first required (p. 12).

By its design, the study should not present much concern or risk to participants; however, there is a time commitment required of the participant teachers in terms of completing the survey, the narrative writing portion, and the interviews. My aim was to base all stages of the data collection around the convenience of the teachers involved. The survey data and all subsequent participant information are stored on a secure, electronic, UMKC server. Furthermore, the study utilized the protocol of the ethical review designated by the University of Missouri-Kansas City’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). No students were involved or contacted for this study, and IRB guidelines for human subjects research were adhered to strictly so certification and approval of the study could be ensured prior to the collection of any data or contact with any participants. I also completed the Collaborative



Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program in human research subject protection and exams within each course.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study used a heuristic narratological inquiry approach that was strongly informed by the experiences and personal and professional knowledge of the researcher as a practicing teacher. The purpose of this study was to discern the nature of how teachers make sense of their relationships with their principals, especially with regard to the stories they tell about trust. Of particular importance is the notion that teacher stories are examined in three realms: those of the sacred story (the idealized narrative of practice), the cover story (what teachers present to the world voluntarily), and the secret story (the most vulnerable internal details about their practice) (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). A qualitative approach was determined to be most appropriate due to calls in the existing literature for growth out of the mostly quantitative work in this area (Heller, 1993; Walker et al., 2011). The heuristic component of this work is due to my current position as a secondary classroom teacher. My positionality provided an important and vital dimension through which to view the experiences of my fellow participants (Moustakas, 1990) and was narratological by virtue of its commitment to the acknowledgment of participant narratives as structured and continuous stories of worth (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As indicated in Table 4, on June 21, 2019, I received full approval from the Institutional Review Board through my university and began my data collection procedures according to the recommendations of my committee and the plan set forth in my dissertation proposal, which had been approved the previous month.

At the time, my mind was preoccupied with all of the potential steps needed to ensure successful collection of the data and to engage in successful interviews. I made contact with

Table 4

*Data Collection Timeline*

Date	Description
May 10, 2017	Pass Comprehensive Exams
May 2, 2019	Proposal Approved
June 5, 2019	IRB Submitted
June 21, 2019	All IRB Comments Fully Addressed – Cycle 2
July 15, 2019	Received Research Approval from Site
August 5, 2019	Contacted Site Principal
September 5, 2019	Presented Study Details to Site Faculty
September 8, 2019	Sent Questionnaire
September 19, 2019	Scheduled Interviews
September 24– October 2, 2019	Conducted Interviews
October 3, 2019	Data Analysis Began – Interview Audio Sent for Transcription, Reflective Journaling on Process Began
October 17, 2019	Began Coding Interview Transcripts
November 26, 2019	Received Final Interview Transcript
November 27, 2019	Finished Coding Interview Transcripts
December 3, 2019	Sent Member Check Emails to Participants with Transcripts

building administration on August 5 and filed the appropriate paperwork, and also tried to lay the groundwork with a few teacher contacts in the building so my presence would not come as a surprise. As Lincoln and Denzin (2003) suggested, this is when the ethnographic efforts began.

My greatest concern, after going through my proposal defense, was that my population may represent a fairly high scale score on the Omnibus T-Scale (OTS); some members of my committee also expressed an appropriate level of caution about this. They wondered if I would have interesting enough data to really represent the phenomenon. Due to my target school's perception in the region as a "destination district," there was a justified notion that there would be a high degree of trust among the participants in the survey and interviews.

Furthermore, I was attending to an inner concern about the degree of response bias that might play into who would elect to participate in a study in a high climate of trust. The narrative that I worried about confronting was maybe there were a small section of people who represented an interesting departure from the group in terms of their experiences with teacher-principal trust, but they would be the least likely faculty members to respond. Perhaps they would respond to the anonymous survey but would not be comfortable being interviewed even with clearly communicated identity protections.

With that in mind, I made sure that I spoke with the few teachers I knew in the building before the initiation of phase one, the dissemination of the OTS's measures of teacher-principal trust on September 8. I expressed that concern in so many words so they could act as back-end supports if any colleagues inquired or shared doubts about participating. The principal was originally open to me coming to the first-of-the-year whole staff meeting, but upon further consideration, we agreed that maybe it would not give the teachers a chance to get a handle on their all-too-important start-of-year activities. If I as a teacher were asked to do "one more thing" at the beginning of the school year, I can easily

imagine it drifting off into the ether of well-intended side projects and opened-but-unread emails.

When I went to the faculty's staff meeting to be introduced by the principal on September 5, I made sure to emphasize that I was not sent by the district or building administration and was a safe person to share with openly and candidly. Waiting for that second staff meeting was the right choice. The staff already had their footing for the school year and, it appeared, were able to summon more than a modicum of attention and mental space for my research introduction. So, succinctly and enthusiastically I expressed my gratitude for their attention and energy to something outside of their regular duties. I quickly and completely immersed them in the process I was going through and its purposes. Many times over, I expressed how vital their participation was and how thankful I was for their willingness to be involved.

The meeting with staff went well. The principal's introduction of me came across as simultaneously professionally removed and welcoming. I was able to introduce the basics of my study, who I was personally—a teacher in the building next door—and how important their participation and stories were to this new and exciting research.

I promised to come back and share the results after the study's conclusion. After meeting with my committee chair, we decided that holding an optional period of time like a poster session in the school's library or district's central office would show my commitment to sharing the data internally.

During phase 2 of the study, member checking procedures included a notice at the conclusion of each interview, when I informed participants there would be a follow-up email showing the official transcript of our interview so they could approve what was said and be

certain they knew what I was working with in conducting my analyses. Interviews were conducted over a six-day period, from September 24 to October 2, 2019. After conducting the interviews, I spent considerable time reflecting on the process, waiting for transcription to be completed, and trying to orient myself with the data and my own experience with what I had heard.

My heuristic approach to data analysis stems from a mnemonic I developed while reading Husserl (1990) and Moustakas (1994). I combined the six stages of heuristic inquiry into thirds to more clearly categorize my thinking and reflection on the emergence of meaning in both participant stories and my own. I used Attend, Rend, and Apprehend/Comprehend, because these terms encapsulate my theoretical approach to analysis as it is rooted in both Moustakian tradition and my personal experience. The diction of those terms mattered, too, as I explained in the discussion of data analysis sub-section in Chapter 3: Attend (engage, immerse), Rend (incubation, illumination), and Apprehend/Comprehend (explication, creative synthesis). The cyclical reflective process marked the beginning of data analysis on October 3, with final member check emails sent to participants on December 3. I returned to these six stages over and over again throughout my exploration of the findings.

When conducting the eight interviews, I found many similarities in how each participant engaged with the interview guide questions, but also a fair number of divergent interpretations and experiences. As I progressed through them, I found each interview take on its own shape and form. Every participant had a different energy and level of engagement than I expected compared to my preconceived notions. As I interviewed several people with whom I had some professional connection, building rapport with them went a little more

smoothly. Only one of the interviews felt partially closed off—Amanda’s—and that person may just have a more closed off and guarded style of communication; still it is worth pointing this out.

Directly after conducting the interviews, I imagined potential themes would include a great deal of high trust language and positive representations of the teacher-principal dynamic. When I consider the survey results as well, I remember feeling that almost every response was positive; however, the details of that data have a great deal more nuance, as Tables 2 and 3 show. After completing these eight interviews and hearing so many of these teachers’ stories, it was clear to me that there was a palpable sense of trust in many, if not most, cases. Many of the teachers referred to experiences in their past to help contextualize and root their current experiences of trust with administration to previous examples where something was lacking, or where a different dynamic was more common. Just as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested, paying close attention to the temporality of their stories helped me greatly in my analysis and reaction. Prior to coding the transcripts, I expected the model of a “destination district” like Fieldview Park to be strongly borne out.

I developed a draft descriptive codebook that served as a conceptual framework for coding the data in initial stages by listening to the audio from each interview and following along with rough, but un-codable preliminary interview transcripts. After completing this task with each fully complete transcript, they were imported into MAXQDA’s software for more careful coding by section. There, the text was painted with descriptive, interpretive, and thematic codes as they appeared in and emerged from the responses. Before completing the full thematic coding of the transcripts, I grouped sub-themes or interpretive codes into connotative groups of either green (positive element), red (pejorative element), or yellow

(neutral or structural element) prior to organizing and naming thematic elements. I saw this as a temporary strategy that helped me frame my own thinking before moving on to more complex interpretations.

The process of coding the first interview transcript I received took about four hours to do with fidelity in its entirety. I went through all of Bella's transcript and assigned codes as they fit, rewriting, shortening, and reorganizing codes as the text called for it. While I was working from the point of my first draft codebook, I analyzed the interviews with fresh eyes and considered the best fit for each coded segment. Nearly every line of the interview transcript was coded in some way. Most of my interviewer questions were not coded, but a few times it was salient to include the prompts I had given. When I reached the end of the first interview transcript, I had created 48 codes. Some were entirely new and some were combined or shortened versions of previously drafted codes from my initial pass through the audio and rough transcripts the previous weeks. My goal was to cover every possible section of participant expression with a meaningful and enlivened code.

After initially organizing a draft of descriptive and interpretive codes, and ultimately themes, I set that aside to work with only the freshest information from the interview. Originally, my themes were: Self-Confidence Breeds Trust, Personal Expectations of Excellence Undergird Trust in Process, Administrators as Punitive Force, Culture/Climate Controls Help Build Trust and Innovation, Trust as a Two-way Street, and Community Identity Coordinates Trust.

After my deeper dive into the text of the first interview transcript, I found a tighter organization of codes that could work to make meaning of participant experience. Not only did following the text of the interview give me new insights into participant narratives, but it



drew out some different themes thanks to the nuanced organizational changes which came about as a result of the coding. The first series of interpretive codes were more gut-related in nature and not as deeply rooted in the explicit wording of particular sections of the text. I think the process of coding directly provided a more zoomed-in view of participant experience.

It is important to note that while the unit of analysis is teacher stories of relational trust, the connection to curriculum via narrative inquiry is vital and strongly represented in how the teachers interviewed discussed their departmental culture and its importance to them.

As I read each interview transcript and coded in-vivo, my goal with each teacher's transcript was to allow the most granular and lively coded segments to appear as component parts of an emerging whole. I started with Bella's interview and initially generated 129 coded segments with 47 unique initial codes. As I coded, I worked to combine and parse out sub-codes as it suited the individual stories being told by each participant. I found some participants to be more succinct in their conveyance than others and some who offered a greater degree of elaboration than others, and the codings reflect that.

In order to make analysis of the emerging themes more discernible and navigable, I reorganized the codebook in MAXQDA so I could better conceptualize where the meanings were potentially emerging. I collapsed my codebook after backing it up and tried to reorganize where things fell in relation to each other—between the interviews as opposed to just within each one. This was a step in my synthesis process. I set out to combine and rename codes as needed as well.

I started by creating six considerably large, overarching categories so I could more clearly discern between the meaning of each code and how it was situated among and across the entirety of the data. From there, I was better able to assess each individual coding, its memo, and how it might overlap—partially or completely—with other existing and synonymous codes that had emerged from the narratives. So, codes like “DoYourJob” became a part of the “StoriesOfWork” code because both were related to views of work competency; “AtMyOldSchool” became a part of “stories of work,” and so forth.

After this umbrella reorganization, I conducted a frequency count of each occurrence by code and by participant. I created sortable tables for individual codes and participants as well. As groupings of particular codes prompted me to consult definitions and coded segments to refresh my connection to my original frame of mind, I found a few more codes to reduce. Seeing the counts of each coding tally gave me some direction as I composed my second level of interpretive codes, which were ten in number and titled the following: relationship defined by role as disciplinarian/evaluator, stories of barriers to trust, admin competency & follow through, admin relationship is pedagogical, stories of healthy organizational items, school selectivity of staff shapes culture, horizontal mediation of trust, admin openness & benevolence, stories of seeking context, and trust is variable, complex, multifaceted, & vital.

After an unproductive early attempt to organize interpretive codes and themes along a continuum from pejorative to ameliorative factors relating to teacher-principal trust, I found more luck in a conceptual grouping method. While polarizing my interpretive codes, in fact, did not generate any meaning, the assay served as a point of reflection for me as I revisited the data. I ended up with four overarching themes that encompassed and represented the

entirety of the data I collected. The teachers' narratives of relational trust between them and their principals provided me with the following themes: Role Rapport Harmony (74 coded instances), Eleemosynary Presence (62 coded instances), Ecology of Excellence (122 coded instances), and Authoring Invitational Space (217 coded instances). Each of these themes strongly represented expressions of lived truth and experiential wisdom from teacher participants involved in the study.

In the sections that follow, I review the heuristic process experienced as the study unfolded, provide portraits of the participants who co-researched with me and shared their narratives, describe the data gathered in each phase of the study, present findings generated from those data, and answer the research questions by bringing together each piece of this puzzle. The phases of Heuristic Inquiry are outlined as I experienced them: Initial Engagement, Immersion, Incubation, Illumination, Explication, and Creative Synthesis.

## **The Heuristic Inquiry**

### **Initial Engagement**

Per Moustakas (1994), the initial importance of this research is all centered on my own personal encountering of a meaningful question. At the time I started this process, a question that held great power for me personally was about how teachers and principals related to one another and what sense could be made out of the successes and failures I witnessed in places where I had previously taught. Encountering this question forced me to find ways to reach inward and search for ways it had formed and become significant to me. Moustakas's (1990) recommendation to strive for "inner receptiveness" was one I worked to manage. I wrote versions of the question welling up in me and focused on the most critical components that tugged at me intuitively. I arrived at the conclusion that I was dealing with

an issue central to who I am as a teacher and a question about how my optimism and positivity will be challenged when I take an administrative role someday.

**Immersion.** Most days as I drove home, I engaged in a self-dialogue about the study and my relationship to its deeper mysteries related to my life. Sometimes I recorded on the memo app on my iPhone and sometimes I just freewheeled aloud to myself. I would argue, discuss, and pose challenges to myself about the deeper questions contained within my own tacit dimension. I wondered if answers I was searching for in this study were rooted in my own failures with certain leaders with whom I had not connected or if I was playing apologist to the ones I had respected greatly but whom other faculty found less than appealing. At the same time, I was trying to discern if and how my interests were connected to my own desire to be a principal, and to be one who does it better than those before me. My wife also spoke with me about my motivations, doubts, excitements, and ponderings. As an outsider to the study, she was genuinely curious and provided a foil for many things I was feeling tacitly but not expressing clearly.

**Incubation.** After being so deeply immersed in the inquiry and where it was rooted in my own mind, I stepped back and gave the seeds time to germinate a bit. I trained for and ran a half marathon. I read the work of Haruki Murakami, *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*, which in a way, is about many heuristically relevant processes for him as a writer and runner. Running, and reading about how a great writer runs, gave me breathing space and time to think. Just as Polanyi (1967) asserted, the deliberate processes of a search do not always result in meaning. Thus, I stepped back from my mental calculations about teacher-principal trust and its roots and leaned into a constructed “period of rest” so I could let the

seeds of the research process properly germinate and give me a sense of what Moustakas called “creative awareness” (1990, p. 31).

**Illumination.** In the space after my academic and critical Rumspringa (a period of time observed by many Amish communities in the United States during which youth are encouraged to depart the familiar and experience the world before returning to the culture and community where they were raised), I entered what Moustakas (1994) called a “receptive state of mind without conscious striving” (p. 3) and searched for things I may have previously missed. During a process of indwelling and contemplation of inward space, I engaged in meditative activities intended to create an emotional and cognitive buffer space between the work and my current state of mind. I started doing yoga with my students at school and also found meaning in my birding practice at home. Creating space for intentional, personal ritual before returning to deeper academic thoughts made it possible to let those indwelled meanings bubble more naturally to the surface.

**Explication.** Just as Moustakas channeled Polanyi’s (1967) notions of a passionate and personal connection to knowing via “intimate encounters” with knowers, so too did I find value in the marriage of my initial quantitative data to its imperfect and vital “coefficient” in my participant narratives (Polanyi, as cited in Moustakas, 1994). Thus, I allowed new layers of meaning to be uncovered via this inhabiting of inward space, where I worked to make contact with the many new textures of my participants’ narratives and hold them up against my own.

**Creative synthesis.** Ultimately, the creation of the comic panels as a primary tool to invite more unguarded truth from participants was drawn from my own tacit dimension. When I did the first doodles of the situations, I knew that representation both reached

backward into my own experiences and would be facilitative as an invitation to my participants to do the same sort of reflecting. The process, fully detailed in Chapter 3, was one which caused me to reflect on my own fears and hopes about the relationship of teacher and principal in the context of built or waned trust. Returning to those panels after the heuristic process and data collection presented another unique angle through which light could be shined through the crystallized meanings of this study.

## **Data Collection**

### **Meeting My Participants**

For this study, the setting was a large, traditional, suburban secondary building including grades 9–12. My participants, denoted by pseudonyms, were educators in the building whose backgrounds and roles included core teachers, a special educator, and a counselor. Their levels of experience in teaching ranged from brand new to longtime veteran and from parents with children in the community to people who commute from out of town. I had met several of the participants before and knew two fairly well on a personal and professional level, but most were new to me beyond a few casual greetings. I chose these teachers from a pool of questionnaire respondents and selected them from among those who said they were willing to be interviewed, controlling for maximum variation based on level of experience and the nature of where their responses scored on the Omnibus T-Scale's measures of teacher-principal trust.

As Table 1 indicated in the previous chapter, I spent between 24 and 41 minutes in recorded interviews with each participant and had at least a few minutes of unaccounted for time on either end of the interview guide when we chatted casually. All of the participants, except for Sergio and Susan, chose to invite me to their rooms on their planning period for

the interview, so our time together had a natural constraint. One teacher, Susan, met with me in a study room where she felt comfortable, and Sergio met with me outside of his building. Over the course of the study, I was in contact via email or in person with the participants actively for about a month from the time they were presented with the initial questionnaire to when I finished collecting data from them. A later follow-up email was sent to each participant for member checking once the transcripts had been finalized. Only one participant had comments during that phase, which were addressed in a few brief emails.

I found it important throughout this process to present myself to the staff at OHHS as a neutral actor who was not a threat to their professional identity or employment in any way. Even though I anticipated a largely positive response from many people, I did not want there to be any reason to dissuade potentially negative experiences from being shared due to my position. When I met with the staff at the invitation of the principal, I wanted to convey clearly the hopes I had for the study and why I needed their help in gathering narratives. At the time, I was concerned because of my own past experiences in other districts. I had been privy to many conversations with teachers who shared concerns about administration; making sense of such stories was one of the impetuses of my study. I knew I would be less likely to procure openly critical and honest testimony from participants if I was not careful early on about how I explained the data collection process and how it would be used afterward. As noted earlier, because I had some connections with teachers in the building and was able to use their natural network power to generate some interest in a topic some might be sensitive about, I feel I did the best I could in this regard.

Over the course of the study, my relationship with participants remained largely the same in tone and tenor. Each interview was different in its pace and texture. After conducting

each interview, I spent time reflecting on the process and what participants seemed to focus on. This shaped how I listened to each participant whose interview followed. For example, Sergio spoke so much about the notion of family that connected him to OHHS, I was drawn to reflect on what that meant to me personally. I too, found that I greatly valued feeling that my colleagues at school were familial, which may have something to do with my comfort and trust on a larger scale. I never got the same interview content twice. Each participant's story was uniquely situated in their own experiences, and, despite thematic overlaps I later highlighted, was wholly different than the others.

As I was asking the questions in my interview guide, it was challenging to not go off script and talk about my own stories with each item. I found success in diminishing that tendency by working extra carefully to focus on reframing and summarizing their responses as I went. Moreover, I tried to build interviewer-interviewee rapport in this way and convey completely that my goal was capturing their story as they were telling it rather than in a way that suited my biases or preconceived notions. My aim was to situate their narratives in an attentive, three-dimensional space where the temporality of their lived experiences could give voice to the phenomenon I was interested in examining. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested, my approach was informed by the participants' personal and social dimensions, the continuity of their narratives, and their current situations.

The study was designed to incorporate robust checks on reliability and validity, which included a stated purpose of incorporating multi-dimensional characteristic qualities of each story as faces of a crystal that Richardson (2003) and Ellingson (2009) espoused as forms of validity. After participants completed the Omnibus T-Scale questionnaire, their responses



were scored and compared to the standard scores as well as to the scores of the sample population, according to the guidelines set out by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2007).

### **Participant Profiles**

In the sections that follow, I begin with a summary of the themes and their meaning units that help to define each. Table 5 is a display of each participant's expression of various themes extrapolated from their narrative data. A frequency count is provided to give a general sense of the overall presence of a theme; a participant's representative volume of each theme is marked by a denotation of weak, moderate, or strong. Next, I present a profile of each participant, telling their stories using the elements of narrative inquiry. I conclude with a review and summary of the themes drawn from their stories. This discussion is followed by a display of each participant's expression of various themes extrapolated from their narrative data. All four themes were present in Bella's data. As noted, Table 5 displays the relative strength of each individual theme as it is represented in the narratives of each participant. Scales from weak to moderate were determined based on the relative range for frequencies of each thematic code. Appendix D displays the breakdown and counts of interpretive codes.

As I present the thick description in each of the stories, the themes represent vivid displays of their meanings of trust. The authenticity of their stories was captured using in-vivo coding, the language of the co-researchers, that in some instances reveals different aspects of their sacred, cover, and secret stories of trust.

Table 5

*Presence of Themes and Interpretive Codes in Participant Narratives*

Theme	Freq.	Jill	Sergio	Susan	Linda	Gina	Marcy	Bella	Amanda
<b>Role Rapport Harmony</b>	29	Mod	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Strong	Mod
<i>Stories of Barriers to Trust</i>	15	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Mod</i>
<i>Relationship Defined by Role as Disciplinarian/Evaluator</i>	59	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Mod</i>
<b>Eleemosynary Presence</b>	19	Strong	Mod	Weak	Weak	Mod	Strong	Strong	Strong
<i>Admin Competency &amp; Follow-through</i>	40	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Strong</i>
<i>Admin Relationship is Pedagogical</i>	22	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Strong</i>
<b>Ecology of Excellence</b>	36	Mod	Mod	Weak	Strong	Weak	Mod	Strong	Weak
<i>Horizontal Mediation of Trust</i>	5	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Mod</i>
<i>School Selectivity of Staff Shapes Culture</i>	61	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Mod</i>
<i>Stories of Healthy Organizational Items</i>	89	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Mod</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Weak</i>
<b>Authoring Invitational Space</b>	83	Mod	Mod	Weak	Mod	Strong	Mod	Strong	Mod
<i>Admin Openness &amp; Benevolence</i>	113	Mod	Weak	Weak	Mod	Mod	Mod	Strong	Mod
<i>Stories of Seeking Context</i>	58	Mod	Mod	Weak	Mod	Strong	Mod	Strong	Weak
<i>Trust is Variable, Complex, Multifaceted, &amp; Vital</i>	46	Mod	Weak	Weak	Mod	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak

Note. Italics denote interpretive codes to each of the bolded themes.

## **Jill**

As a third year teacher, Jill spent many years before as an occupational therapist in schools. Her current position is teaching in a class-within-a-class. Previously, her job in schools was transient. Now she enjoys being a faculty member rooted in a professional community where she gets to know her colleagues, administration, and students. Her OTS scale score was 135, and her teacher-principal sub-scale score was 5.375, which both characterize very high trust in the organization overall and directly in the principal.

When I met with Jill, we went into her room and she immediately radiated a sort of motherly calm and welcome. She was able to reflect on many years in the classroom in various roles in this district and in others. What I remember most about her recollections was how she couched feelings of comfort with a realistic notion of what made her at ease or not.

When Jill spoke about the first comic of the pop-in observation, she expressed a general feeling of nervousness associated with the potentiality of a threat to her and the expectations for her principal's **Role Rapport Harmony**. In my reading of the participant narratives, "Role" is an inextricable and equal portion of this theme in relation to "Rapport," since one modifies the other. As one complex phrase/grammatical unit, it is not a concept that should be parsed because that would delineate a hierarchy between the parts. Hence, the pop-in observation signaled the view of the principal's role as a *disciplinarian/evaluator*, which, in a bad moment, could be oppositional or disruptive. Jill responded, "what's interesting...when a principal comes in and says 'do not mind me,' I would just be like 'yeah right'...you always mind when a principal walks into your room. You cannot help it." Jill's feelings may be due to the duplicity teachers often face when confronted with pop-in

observations, especially when faced with the managerial styles of some principals. Teachers simply play along and teach defensively to please managerial style leaders (Bottery, 2004).

Jill shared that the context for an observation matters greatly to her and can either help put her at ease or on edge, “If I know I am not on rotation, if this was my principal coming in in the last week of August, I would have been like, Whoa, Nellie. We just are still learning procedures.” When a teacher like Jill feels this emotion, it is due to a lack of charitable availability, or **Eleemosynary Presence**, on the part of the administrator. In fact, if an observation is done at the wrong time, Jill’s experience should tell us that *Admin Competency & Follow Through* is vital to creating a sense of trust and autonomy, as Kutsyuruba and Walker (2016) describe it. At the same time as she expresses the nature of the source of her potential unease, she shares that her principals are pretty good about seeking context if something seems off:

On any given day if the teacher has something else kind of going on, I think they would just say, Hey, is there any way we can really relook at this soon? Would you have time to pop back in within the next week? You surprised me, but, you know, I did not sleep well last night. I had a family emergency. We were just doing independent work because I just was not emotionally ready to be up and in front of my class today. And any administrator I’ve met here would be like, Okay, well, good because I was worried about you. This did not look like a typical classroom scenario.

While the comic triggered an uneasiness with pop-in observations, Jill explained the importance of **Authoring Invitational Space** through principals *Seeking Context*. Authoring invitational space meant she has had some negative experiences with administration in the past, but that her current administrative team is generally approachable, open, and personal with her, which helps greatly. She feels that because she knows about her principals’ kids and family, for example, she is more able to inhabit professional space safely with them. McGregor (2003) noted that space is inherently relational, and the ways we interact and

navigate that space can shape professional activity. When I asked Jill to respond to the cartoon ethnograph, she painted a picture of how it might feel to be a bit flustered at the sight of your administrator at your door when it is not your best day.

In Jill's version of Comic 1, the principal making the observation is simply worried that she's not seeing her teacher's usual good work. The teacher is feeling a little raw and exposed, but does get the chance to explain some context for why he is a bit removed and disengaged. In Jill's mind, the principal ultimately thinks she will just have to come back on another day to see his best work. After Jill and I examined these initial frames, she said the first thing she would do is go to her colleagues and ask for their help to make sure she's back to her best for the next observation. Considering the sample score for Trust in Colleagues was the highest among the three measurements, it is no surprise that Jill feels comfortable with this immediate response given the scenario presented to her.

As we moved on to examine the second three-panel comic, our conversation shifted from the mindset of a teacher being observed to one who is seeking out one of her principals in their office. Upon looking at the first panel in comic 2, Jill shared, "I've never had an administrator not be willing to just give me that second or quick minute." Her description of her *Administration's Openness and Benevolence* shows how she experiences their commitment to **Authoring Invitational Space** for their teachers. Indeed, evoking this sense of confidence in interactions in a professional environment may later even make Jill more open to other learning opportunities (Nolan & Molla, 2017). She continued as she walked me through how she viewed the comic:

Comic 1: "The Unscheduled Observation"

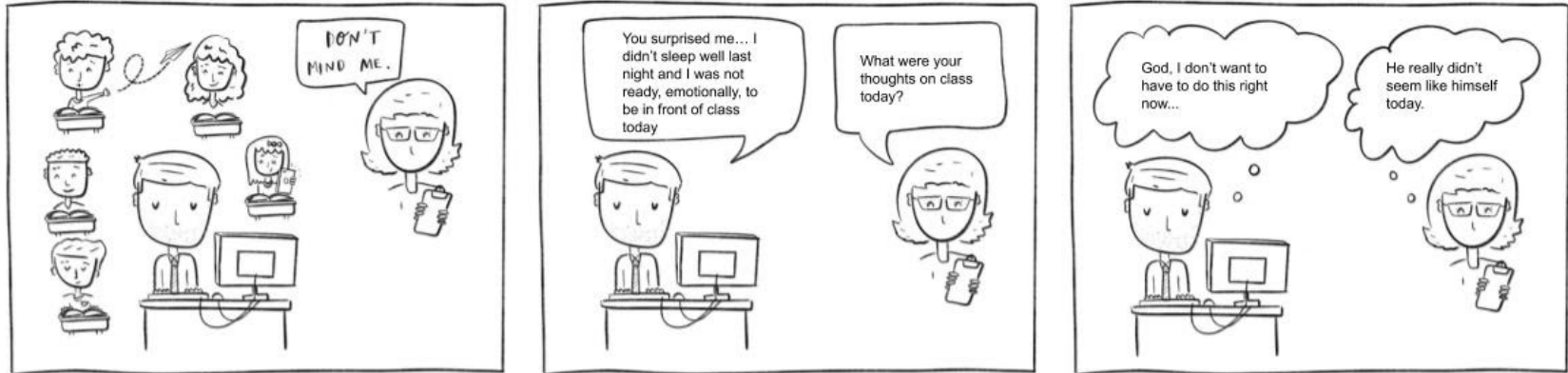


Figure 1. Jill's Comic 1

So I would say my experience, especially here at OHHS, is not the closed door. I've always been able to get the help and the support I need...because we are on the same path, it does not mean I got what I wanted, like if I wanted to go to a conference that I was not able to go to, well, that is just the way it was. There was not money for it. It was fine. But, yeah, I've never left wanting to cry.

In her version of Comic 2, it is clear she feels comfortable making a request of her principal and does not leave feel discouraged, even if she does not get what she wanted.

Jill's definition of trust was interesting as well. She spoke of feeling she could give her principals a lot of leeway because they had built up a relationship over time, whereas she would not just let anyone in so quickly to the same parts of herself. Her definition evokes how social connections with her fellow teachers can contribute to a strong climate and culture, which evoke *Stories of Healthy Organizations* and add weight to the general **Ecology of Excellence** she experiences in her school. What she described echoes the findings of Daly et al. (2014) in terms of the "network intentionality" of her professional peers based on their build-up collective efficacy.

So trust in a general sense is just kind of having an agreement of expectations and that those expectations are adhered to; so even among coworkers, I expect that they're not going to go through my drawers without asking until I guess we have a friendship built up; so those I know, I did not care—they already kind of know because over time they know what's in my drawers and where I've gotten things in the past, but if a science teacher just walked in and was looking for something through my drawer, that would be an untrusting thing, like, Why are you in my stuff?

Jill's experience of principal leadership, shows that, in some ways, negatives have more power than positives, and she's been fortunate to work with good principals who do not invoke a negative sense of trust. Sutcliffe and Weick (2009) showed how important this is for teachers in terms of their overall confidence. If teachers feel they have the flexibility to work, they extend a lot more trust.

But with principals, I think trust comes from you've offered me a lot of choices. When there's been something that is going to affect me, you call me and talk to me in person. If there's anything that you can be flexible about or you think—you let me have that flexibility when I can; so trusting that I'm making good decisions and that if you have not had any reason to not trust, then you are going start to trust.

Another interesting facet of our discussion was how she framed that the trust she had in her principals was not just based on how their actions would affect her personally, but how she viewed the treatment of her colleagues as well. In sharing a concern about one of her fellow teachers being transferred to a different building against her wishes, she explained it is “important that your administration listens, and even if it's not me personally, we all will share and talk.” This rebuke of the central worry of having a principal with whom your *Relationship is Defined by their Role as Disciplinarian/Evaluator* shows the high level of trust Jill has come to have in her administrative leaders at OHHS. Her story continued to show how she and her principals really understand the notion of what Rotter (1967) called relationship “expectancy” and that each principal's **Role** is in **Harmony** with how she views her own.

When this sort of tone is set by administration, there can be a sense of “defensive teaching” where teachers work can be geared to please managerial style leaders rather than accomplish more complex aims (Bottery, 2004). In fact, Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi (2010) found that an ecological development of trust among staff is concomitant with student achievement. In addition, scholars have found that social connections among teachers can matter a great deal, even carrying over to how building leaders are perceived (Daly et al., 2014; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).



Comic 2: "The Drop-In"



Figure 2. Jill's Comic 2

Jill continued telling her story and shifted to an instance where a principal, in a different school she worked in, left trash in classrooms so she could test whether the custodian was actually cleaning. “That is not an administrator that I want, and you stay away from those buildings.” Jill was confused in that case as to why the principal would not just talk to her custodian, or to the teachers whose rooms were not being cleaned, which connected to *Trust is Variable, Complex, Multifaceted, & Vital* for **Authoring Invitational Space**. Knowing that such a degree of distrust is present between your principal and any member of the school staff can color all your potential thoughts about organizational changes.

Naphapiet and Ghoshal (1998) found that fear of organizational instability places a burden on teachers and is an environmentally relevant factor for building or repairing trust, and Lesinger et al. (2017) directly described how important a mutual sense of love and respect for one another can be a source of trust.

In general, Jill’s stories showed strong evidence of two themes: that of **Eleemosynary Presence** and the **Ecology of Excellence**. The notions that trust in the principal comes from a sense of perceived benevolence (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995), that taking risks and making mistakes is not detrimental (Sutcliffe & Weick, 2009), and that moral leadership is demanded for trust to take root or to be repaired (Kutsyruba & Walker, 2016) are all supportive of this theme and its presence in Jill’s narrative.

More than any other interpretive code, I found her story evoked the importance of *Admin Openness & Benevolence* because of her continued examples of principals who sought context when things appeared off, like the case of Comic 1. The notion of a temporal understanding of staff climate superseding its culture is borne out in her stories as well

(Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015). Considering how Cosner (2009) explained how difficult it can be to overcome previously breached trust, it is particularly special that Jill's stories of her current school compare to her previous ones. The potential negative impacts of trust-breaching actions are mediated by a strong sense of the excellence of staff and community around you. Jill spoke in several cases about the power of her fellow teachers as mediating forces in building and keeping trust with administration. *Horizontal Mediation of Trust* at the interpretive level showed this, as well as "high self expectations" at the descriptive level, which both shaped the theme of an overall **Ecology of Excellence**.

### **Sergio**

When Sergio and I met, he evoked a sense of confidence and pride about who he was and where he taught. He spoke fervently about how Oleander Heights was a destination district and how everyone there is a family: "I've always wanted to teach in this district and I've had my eye on it since the school opened." The degree to which he spoke about his pride about being hired in the Fieldview Park School District, and OHHS in particular, showed how important the idea of *school selectivity* was to him in terms of how *School Selectivity of Staff Shapes Culture*. His view of the school where he teaches is largely shaped by an understanding that he is a part of an **Ecology of Excellence** where his fellow department members and staff will hold him to high standards. Indeed, one of the more applicable definitions of trust that applies to his relationship with the OHHS staff is Louis's (2006), stating that trust is "confidence in or reliance on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship, or other sound principal, of another person or group" (p. 2). He went on to speak about how important it was for him to live in and build connections through the community, both before he was hired and afterward:

So I try to make myself visible at events not only just for the students' sakes so they know I'm actually going to the football games and actually part of it but also to help out. I try to make myself involved with the other programs that are going on. For example, like tonight, there's—the band is practicing. I said, Oh, I actually have a free night. I'm without kids. Can I come out and observe and help—things like that. That way you know then they see like he helps out with the band. That's cool. I didn't know about that—things like that, and then also, you know, if they see me out in public with my children, Oh, how old is your kid? We have a kid the same age. So that's helpful when you and the principal have kids the same age, it's easier to say, Hey, for parent teacher conferences I need this much time blocked off because I'm going from this school to this school, and it's outside of our policy of this exact many minutes; so can I have a few more minutes because I physically can't travel that fast.

Throughout our conversation, he spoke continually about how his school pride contributed to his desire to push himself, which related to how he viewed any potential criticisms or comments from administration. When began to discuss the first comic, he prefaced his approach to the situation by saying he had certain standards that he held himself to. In looking at the first frame of Comic 1, he said there is very little chance that would be him. “I did not sit at the desk, so that's like a red flag. If an administrator walked in here and saw me sitting at a desk, they would know something is wrong.” Still, there were elements in our conversation of a fear or nervousness about principals acting only in their role as an enforcer or disciplinarian. Sergio's view of school leadership is one that welcomes close scrutiny, but at the same time cleaves to the notion that scrutiny can replace more positive investments into teachers (Moller, 2008), which aligns with a representation of **Role Rapport Harmony**. It seemed clear that Sergio's construction of himself as an excellent teacher interfered with the thought that he would settle for a day just taking a seat, as Comic 1 shows, even during a test. Still, he knew there were days he may be observed when he was not on his A-game, He shared, “even if I'm not having a really good day, there's still times where I've had an evaluator come in and I'm doing something maybe like, Oh, man.” That

initial reaction is important to extricate temporarily, because his initial expression of that pang of fear is married to the immediately following self-rationalization, which he has obviously cultivated as a part of his professional mindset. “This is not the best time to evaluate me, but I’m glad you’re evaluating me because it’s not the best time so I get solid feedback here.” This expression is one that acknowledges a twofold truth about Sergio and his view of administration at OHHS. On the one hand, he accepts his own high standards of excellence, and on the other hand, he trusts the principal visiting because he senses the act of **Authoring Invitational Space** initiated, either passively or actively, by that principal.

Sergio expressed an openness about critical feedback which, in part, is evidence of the presence of an **Ecology of Excellence** as a factor of a high-trust school between teachers and principals. He perceived that it helps when your teachers expect a lot of themselves and know that their principals not only expect a lot, but that their support of you is fair and authentic.

... it is not the score that matters. It’s what happened in the classroom that matters, and so even the follow-up, the post-op interview was, Oh, this is me in the snapshot, and then before anything else happened, the assistant principal said, Okay. Now what happened 15 minutes before and 5 minutes after I left?

Such *Stories of Seeking Context* through **Authoring Invitational Space** by the principal (a cultural norm clearly anticipated and expected by Sergio), that makes his vulnerability in such a moment an opportunity for growth rather than something to fear or a shaming trigger.

Comic 1: "The Unscheduled Observation"



Figure 3. Sergio's Comic 1

Listening to his stories, I got a sense of how Sergio viewed himself in terms of the community that helped underscore just how personal his approach is to his relationship with administration, professional peers, and students alike. “I try to develop some kind of common ground with all the administrators. That way if I feel I need to go to them, I feel comfortable doing so, and I’ve done that with most of them.” Finding this sort of common ground with his principals was important to Sergio as he went about his work. These *Stories of Seeking Context* between teachers and their principals showed another dimension of how the OHHS principals were working, in their high trust environment, to **Author Invitational Space** through their expressions of common ground and personability.

As we worked our way through the two cartoon ethnographs, it became clearer the he attributed much of the quality of his work environment to efforts to personally connect beyond the expected professional capacity. Resources of the local community help build a climate of trust around the school (Sebring et al., 2006)

In Comic 2, Sergio expressed that, in OHHS, he’s always been met with a sense of openness and availability by his principals. He explained:

I have not ever felt like I’ve been ignored or that they’ve been too busy for me, but it’s been like, “I cannot help you right now because I’m dealing with this emergency with a student, but I can later.” So I’ve never left feeling like I was not valid or I was not like—I’ve always felt like my question was answered or it was soon going to be answered.

Like Jill before him, Sergio found one of the more appealing things about his principals to be how much they truly embodied the welcoming and open atmosphere he craved in his previous district. Just as Hoerr (1996) explained, the way a principal **Authors Invitational Space** is done more clearly through invitations than commands. True also, is what Sergio

implies about teacher leadership, which comes from efforts to grow collective efficacy through such invitations (Flood & Angelle, 2017).

Many of these moments may seem small and insignificant in the grand scheme of things, but there is evidence that Sergio's narratives exemplify a notion that Friend and Thompson (2010) established is true about the student-teacher relationship: that the more well-known people are within school, the better off they are. As I reflected on Sergio's narrative, I wrote in my research journal about how it shows the power of opening yourself up personally: "he really feels like he needs to be present in school in personal and familial ways, not to advance his career, but because it's the real human thing to do" (Personal Research Journal, Entry Feb. 20, 2020). Zand (1972) would describe this a show of vulnerability that can help build trust. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) asserted that trust is the willingness to be vulnerable to one another, and others (Hoy, Gage & Tarter, 2006, 2007) found that vulnerability is central to trust.



Comic 2: "The Drop-In"

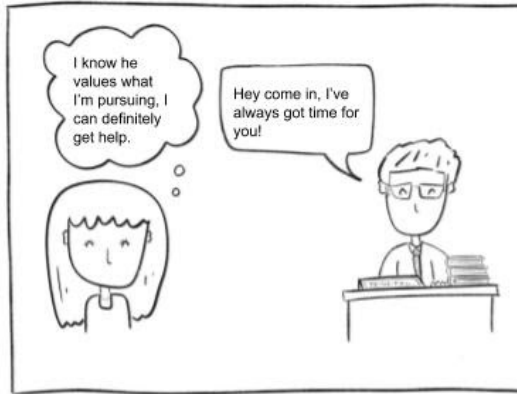
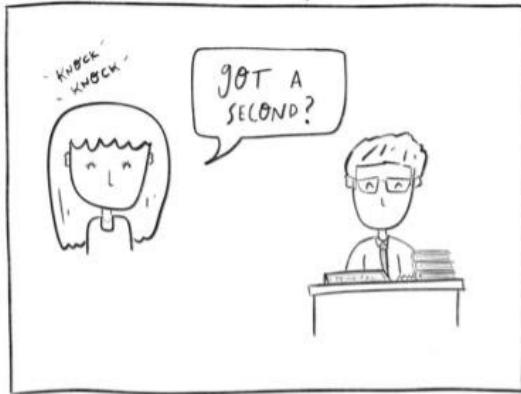


Figure 4. Sergio's Comic 2

## Susan

Susan and I met in a study carrel in one of the hallways because her room did not have a good space to meet and record. Susan spoke glowingly of how it felt to be a part of the OHHS team for her tenure there compared to where she was before, both as a teacher and as a professional. She brought context to what it meant to work for and with trusting administrators. Much like Sergio, Susan mentioned early on that OHHS was a “destination school” for her. The notion that *School Selectivity of Staff Shapes Culture* is embodied in her story of journeying from her previous district, Fieldview Park, to OHHS. Knowing that she is among a cadre of other high quality professionals may have meant that her leaders were able to more evenly and efficaciously distribute duties and challenges to lesser effect, as Wahlstrom and Lewis (2008) wrote. In an environment where all those around you contribute to the increased quality of leadership, it could be said there is an **Ecology of Excellence** in which people can thrive.

In composing Comic 1 with me, Susan expressed a feeling of mild discomfort due to the off-task behavior portrayed in the first panel, but ultimately she felt she would be given the benefit of the doubt by the observer because they would see her address the concern in the moment.

I would not—with an administrator coming in, I would not want, you know, misbehavior which looks like you’re in the back and there’s little paper airplane being tossed, and so I would feel—I would feel a little uncomfortable if that was going on but I would also kind of like, assume that they know that not every student is maybe perfectly on task all the time.

But I would probably be addressing that behavior. I encourage talking in my classroom amongst peers to myself as long as it’s focused and on task and things like that, but, you know, I would not like the fact that I was sitting there and they were misbehaving when an administrator walks in.

I felt a sense of connection to Susan as she worked to compose her response to these panels. I could easily sympathize with the teacher in the picture and feel that sense of “things can and should be better.” We all have those moments, as she describes below, and we are lucky if our superiors are committed to contextualizing what we are going through. In an instance like this, it seems like she can surely sympathize with a character like the one in the comic who appears to be experiencing his **Role Rapport Harmony** with his principal as a result of a fear of *enforcement* and *evaluation* at that moment.

I really feel like our principals understand that not every day of every moment is perfect, and so I think they would—they just know that there might be little things that are not perfect, but overall I would hope that they trust that what is going on in our classroom is good.

But I probably would be a little bit like unsatisfied that there was some misbehaviors or some off-topic conversations going on and I was not actively trying to stop that. Like, I would feel like aw, man. They caught me in an off moment. That’s too bad, but I think that they understand that we’re only human, I guess, and that there may be times like that.

In composing the second frame, Susan did not feel like there would be much conversation or exchange between her and an observing principal, so positioning her dialogue where there would be more nonverbal, in her case, was a minor challenge.

I would say after being here for seven years I can knock on the door, pop in, and really go to any of our administrators with any concerns that I have, and I have, and sometimes it’s just to kind of be proactive if I foresee a student situation or a parent who is upset about something.

And, you know, typically they’re always very willing to listen, and it’s not all the time there’s maybe sometimes where you feel like you are bothering them with stuff that maybe they did not have time to deal with. But for the most part, I feel like I can pop in and really talk to them about anything.

One of the themes presented in Susan’s stories was the notion that her administration here at OHHS operated in an open and benevolent fashion. In the exchange represented in

Comic 1: "The Unscheduled Observation"



Figure 5. Susan's Comic 1

Susan's Comic 2, it's apparent that she knows her principal—the one she imagines is most likely to evaluate or observe her—is on her side in a disarming way. Susan's perception of her principal's openness echoes McGregor's (2003) notion that space is inherently relational. She felt comfortable both in her principal's space as well as with them occupying her space, possibly as a result of the personal dimension of their relationship. Susan's stories of her principals also showed evidence of **Eleemosynary Presence** when she shared how her principals work to bridge the gaps between parent understanding and teacher frustrations: "come to a compromise that works for both the teachers and the parents, honestly. I do think they want to make us both happy." Moye, Henkin, and Egley (2005) and Weiner (2003) explained that principals who promote teacher autonomy in ways like this empower and build trust. Clearly, Susan's experience of her administration is one where *competency and follow through* are cultural touchstones.

Comic 2: "The Drop-In"



Figure 6. Susan's Comic 2

## Linda

A fairly new teacher, both to the profession and to the staff at OHHS, Linda was welcoming and friendly when I came to her room. She and I talked about our pets, and she seemed open to the coming conversation in my study. The story that Linda told me focused on her position as a graduate of the Fieldview Park School District (FPSD), but not of OHHS: “I’m a little bit of a traitor over here!,” as the daughter of a FPSD teacher, and a new teacher in general. Her experiences centered on the high expectations she placed on herself, similarly high expectations placed onto her and her students by the community, and the overwhelming feeling of support from her colleagues in her department and building. Linda exuded a strong sense of pride and accomplishment for having been a graduate of the district and now an employee who teaches some of the same type of strong academic achievers.

One important thing I took away from Linda’s stories about being observed by her principals is that she has an overwhelming sense of confidence in herself, her administrators, and in their shared roles on the same team. She maintains a healthy sense of optimism that appears to be drawn from her self-confidence and her view of the *benevolence* of her observing principals. Others around her—perhaps her teachers when she was a student in the district, her mom, and her departmental peers—have helped to *shape the culture* of which she is an inhabitant. Linda’s confidence in the culture of the school is clearly illustrated in *School Selectivity of Staff Shapes Culture* that contributes to an **Ecology of Excellence**. Just as Cosner (2009) explained how difficult it can be to overcome previously broken trust in an educational hierarchy, Linda’s story seems to exude a sense that the opposite must be true to a degree as well.

In imagining her potential experience of the scenario of Comic 1, she described both what her most likely reactions and thoughts would be like as well as her most extreme ones.

I feel probably mostly normal, but still like a little bit, “okay, got to be on my best behavior and really make it sound like I know exactly what I’m doing” but not necessarily in a bad way, not too much pressure, maybe would be more conscious of, like, when I’m questioning students or how I’m questioning them and making sure they’re involved.

This apprehension, which is almost automatic in Linda, appears independent of her highly self-efficacious views. So, even in the most high-trust and highly selective of environments, as OHHS is viewed by its teachers, there is still a role-based sense of nervousness tied to the *principal as evaluator* which is hard to shake off. Linda remarks that a principal’s presence makes her adjust her behavior and her thinking, perhaps not to a defensive degree as Bottery (2004) suggested, but at least to a degree that is noticeable. When she reflected on the comic and thought of the kid in the back being off-task, she explained, “you know usually on some days you might kind of ignore [them], I’m kind of trying to figure out if I ignore them now... how does that affect my scores or whatever.”

Even in the context of a not-so-perfect day, as the comic suggests, Linda expressed a sense of confidence about the trust she has in her principal and how she is viewed professionally: “but in my experiences, I always have felt like the principal is, like, on my side, not there to find things to critique on...I generally feel pretty good about [observations].” In the context of such a potentially difficult conversation, where an observation has not gone so well, she seems to know that her principals will extend a sort of trust to her that is merited, in part, because of their expectation that she is and will be vulnerable to them and vice versa (Hoy et al., 2006). Linda knows she is being quantitatively evaluated, but knows there will be context given to her story and the snapshot of her



Comic 1: "The Unscheduled Observation"

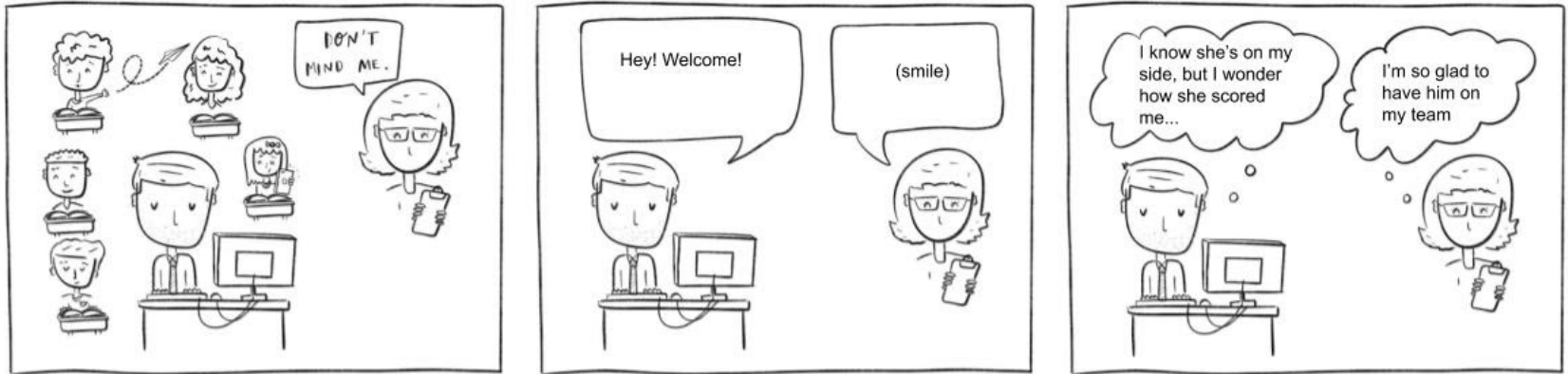


Figure 7. Linda's Comic 1

individual observations as they occur, “part of me thinks the score, the number, does not really matter because it’s fluid.” If she felt she were being capriciously “monitored” and “scrutinized” rather than trusted, she may feel differently (McAllister, 1995; Moller, 2008). Linda went on to express, “I would hope that they’re thinking that there probably is stuff that they notice I can improve or address but overall they’re glad I’m on their team.” A controlling theme in her story was the notion that she felt connected to her principals personally and professionally in a way that expanded her trust of their presence. “I also assume or hope at least that they remember what it was like to be in the classroom and that those conversations sometimes did not go as smoothly as you hoped.” This representation of **Eleemosynary Presence** means she felt they were charitable in their willingness to be available and authentic in their interactions with her. Linda felt very certain that “they have been in my shoes before” and that she could be comfortable reaching out to her administration if she needed to do so: “asking for help can be a good thing too.” She explained that unlike in her previous school, she did not feel that her current principals at OHHS had a “checklist” of items that they simply needed to go through in order to keep an eye on her, but rather, they looked closely at what she was doing and provided real feedback based on what they saw in the context of all their knowledge of her skills.

In general, Linda exuded a sense of pride about how she came through a fairly meritocratic school system from which she benefitted, and in which her mother taught, that turned her into an equally passionate and engaged teacher. She showed great evidence that she feels she is a part of an **Ecology of Excellence** that exists beyond the scope of any one snapshot. So, as Nicklaus and Ebmeier (1999) claimed, having a collaborative rather than

punitive view of supervision should correlate in increased trust in the principal. That is exactly what Linda's story seems to tell, considering her history as a student, daughter, and current teacher of the district.

In Linda's construction of the Comic 2 narrative, it was clear her story was about comfort and *openness* while entering the principal's domain. She explained, "a lot of it is body language" when I asked her to tell me how she knew if she was welcome and heard: "they're turning away from, like, their computer." She clearly views the administrative offices as a place where she is welcome and has agency. The **Space** is *healthy* and **Invitational** as constructed by her administrators, according to her depictions of them.

Comic 2: "The Drop-In"



Figure 8. Linda's Comic 2

## **Gina**

Gina invited me to her classroom and we set up at one of her groupings of desks where she said she would be most comfortable. I told Gina in advance that I was still getting the hang of the interview guide and to grant me some grace if I paused and had to check my notes as we went. I wanted to convey that this was a personal and imperfect process through which we could search for meaning together. Gina gave off an air of a teacher who really embodied the ethos of what OHHS looks for in their faculty. She was composed, detailed, honest, and forthright. She had almost nothing even slightly negative to say about anything and took a great deal of responsibility upon herself to be professional, stopping several times to make sure it was okay to continue speaking.

The narratives that emerged from our conversation surrounding her experience were composed, but still lively and temporal rather than rehearsed. When I asked her about her colleagues and department, she seemed to exude positivity. “Our collab [sic] groups are pretty cohesive, work well together, and are all about sharing too...I enjoy working with them.” I felt as Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) suggested, a sense of distributed leadership was powerfully present in the way she spoke of them. The *Horizontal Mediation of Trust* reflected in *horizontal* relationships, as she described them, seemed to offer a *mediation* of the vertical ones because she seemed to feel so connected to them, establishing an **Ecology of Excellence**. That confidence and satisfaction spilled over to how she talked about her evaluating principal, on whom she reflected when she considered the cartoon ethnographs. “I’ve had really good success with my evaluator here.”

Comic 1: "The Unscheduled Observation"



Figure 9. Gina's Comic 1

Comic 1 shows a sense of comfort in her principal's presence that is evocative of the comfort she spoke of with her professional peers in her department. She used the word "co-facilitator" to describe the principal who is coming in to observe because of how invested her evaluator was in engaging with her kids. "I think it's cool when principals come in and they ask kids, like they talk to kids instead of just silently observing because you are not going to really get a sense of balance unless you have a conversation." Even in the case of the comic where there is a little bit of distraction and disengagement, Gina was able to offer context to me, because she imagined that same context would be sought by her principal: "they're not robots and kids need to be able to learn at their pace and do those things because that's the real world." And so, the moments where a kid may be on her phone or talking to a friend do not seem as scary to Gina from supervision and evaluation standpoints because she knows her principal seeks meaningful context.

That is what I like about my principal when she evaluated me. She would talk to the kids and if there were kids that seemed kind of off, she would try to talk to that kid...try to talk to that kid and take care of them as opposed to use it against me. I would probably do the same thing if I were coming around to conference with a kid... I think that's good that the principals are seen more as a co-facilitator, somebody to work with a teacher if they come in and not just like an observer that's silently writing everything down, like it's more dynamic and integrated into it.

The notion that she was able to be vulnerable to her principal without an undue or unfair consequence (or the fear of one) seems huge for her. As Zand (1972) and others (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999) asserted, trust increases directly as one's ability to be vulnerable to another party does. As Gina's story of trust and connection unfolded, it became clear to me that one context for her presented a greater need for cover story thinking, and her current role at OHHS allowed her to be more relaxed and open because she knew she was not expected to be her idealized self all the time.

Gina's story of a previous principal in another district showed just how powerful the contrast was for her. She described how confusing and unhelpful it was to feel like the mere presence of her evaluating principal changed the nature of the **space** she operated in.

The first place I worked, I felt more like I was being judged really hard because I did not have like a solid position at that school...I left like everything I did, if I wanted to get hired, I had to be perfect...she would just sit there and scribble in her notebook and seemed kind of to be scrutinizing everything and then when—I remember I changed something in the middle of my instruction because I was like, Oh I did not think this looks good or—and she stopped and turned around when I did that before she was going to leave and noticed it and wrote it down, and she liked that, but I felt like I kind of did it for her at that moment; so it was not necessarily for the kids, and yeah, definitely a different dynamic there than it was here.

I pressed her on the word “scrutinizing” as we talked. I wanted to know what she felt the opposite was. Gina felt “collaborating” was the best word for this one evaluator. She said she felt apprehensive about switching to a new person, though, because of how good her current dynamic was: “She’s very good at, like, building you up but also like asking questions that are constructive criticism as well because it feels more like a partnership.” The feelings she expresses in moments like this, in my reading of her narrative, show the importance of an administrative *benevolence* and an expectation of a trusting proximity.

Seemingly, the dynamic constructed by her and her principal is one where the **Authoring of Invitational Space** springs naturally from both Gina and her principal. The expectation and trust facilitated by that sort of space, in my reading of this narrative, is not only professionally conducive to positive risk taking, but also generative of future learning, as Nolan and Molla (2017) suggested, which grows out of their conversations and co-authored musings. Overall, Gina's approach both to kids and to her professional relationships are focused on giving grace and the benefit of the doubt paired with what appears to be an acute skill for her content area.



Comic 2: "The Drop-In"

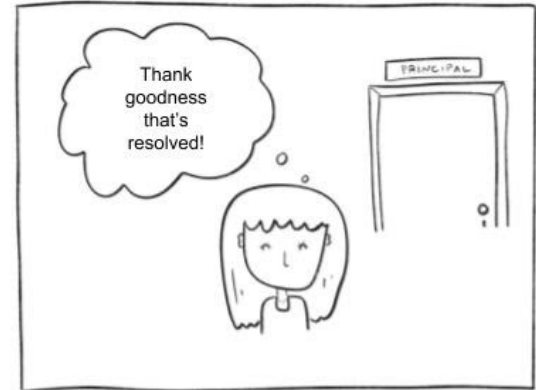


Figure 10. Gina's Comic 2

## Marcy

I was welcomed to Marcy's room, and our interactions seemed to be an open book from the start. She was reflective and offered musings about her state of mind comfortably as we moved through the questions. Marcy had a lot to share about her own experiences as they felt to her emotionally. I felt that she was sincere and detailed in her expression of interactions and doubts related to her administrative interactions. She offered no uncorroborated criticisms—a common theme at OHHS—but still gave real context to moments she felt there were breaches in confidence. “Our admin team is pretty great in general. I would say about half and half are like super great advocates and then the other half like to have a job.” So early in our conversation, I felt captured by such a signature detail, such voice in her emerging narrative. “The other half like to have a job” was like the depressing of a tremolo bar on an electric guitar, and it shifted the tone.

After conducting the previous five interviews, I was beginning to get a sense for how and where different paeans of OHHS's greatness would emerge, but Marcy's story was different right off the bat with that sharp and distinct departure. She described her department as “incredibly supportive” in various ways. Her colleagues share resources, are socially connected, care about kids, and all do what's best for kids “even though we all think what is best for kids is different.” I thought that last part was a powerful testament to Marcy's views of her fellow teachers, and it seemed she had many more *stories of healthy organizational items* ready if I were to keep asking.

In regard to crafting a response to the first cartoon ethnograph, Marcy said she usually would not even talk to her administrator, that she would get an encouraging note on

her desk and then a follow-up email with a numerical score with some comments, sort of “detached” and “objective.”

I did not think much about what the administrator is thinking. I have such—like a—so much like our students, a mindset that I’m like worried what if I get a blah blah blah, which the rating system that we use...The rating system that we use in NEE is like a five—a four or five. I cannot remember. That’s how much I think about. It is like a solid teacher. It’s what most teachers should be. I think it’s five, and then six, seven, are exceptional teachers. So I’m sitting at my desk wondering why I did not get a 7 realizing that’s an exceptional teacher. I’m going to kind of process it myself. The achiever in me is like, Well, what do I needed to differently? But I did not generally ask my principal.

That being said, it was hard for me to determine how to construct the cartoon ethnograph of her experience for Comic 1 - “The Unscheduled Observation.” To me, it seemed inappropriate to put words where there were none, in her experience. So, in this instance, I deleted the second panel and allowed Marcy’s story to be summarized more succinctly.



Figure 11. Marcy’s Comic 1

Marcy’s story is special because it shows simultaneously that she is critical in her own self-reflection during the imagined observation, and that she is generous in her view of the principal observing her. She knows her *role* and knows how her *role* is understood by her

principal. Together, her view of both their **Roles** is in **Harmony** with an authentic sense of **Rapport** it seems has been co-created.

As we moved on to the second scenario, Marcy explained a similar difference in how she approached different principals in her building, which signaled the narrative dimension of interactions or relationships: “For half my principals, I’ll knock...hey, I just wanted to tell you about this.” For the other half, she described a less open relationship “I only go to them for larger problems, like only if I have to.” The dichotomy of these two sorts of spaces is perhaps indicative of what Honig (2012) found about principals—that they often need more support in developing relationships with teachers. I find that it is one thing to say that invitations are more powerful than commands, as Hoerr (1996) did, but it is another to actually show a principal why that is true. Some of her principals, Marcy described, “have really gone out of their way to establish strong relationships, and I think the three that I feel less comfortable with are just focused elsewhere.”

With others she said the relationship was more like mentorship than supervision where she could go to them and say:

Hey I had this crazy idea...that administrator went above and beyond...I could go to them and say Hey, I have this personal career goal, what do you think of it?...there have been times where I’ve been in that office for 30 minutes and it’s a use of their personal time. It feels like they are giving—investing I guess is a good word, investing their personal time, career advice, or teaching strategies or any of that kind of stuff.

Comic 2: "The Drop-In"

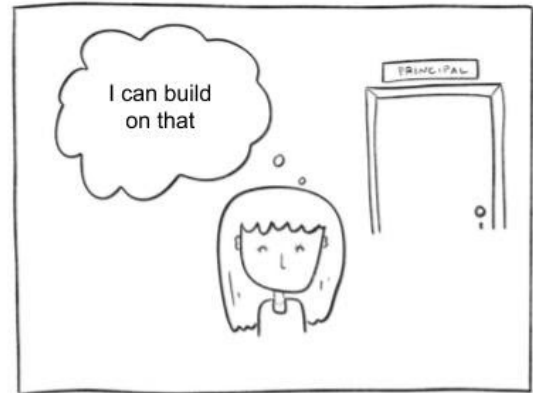


Figure 12. Marcy's Comic 2

She explained that other principals simply did not offer that. Going to them for career advice would cross a “professional boundary,” in her words. To Marcy, the investment of the administrator’s time is important, and she values that greatly because she knows it is such a hard thing to give for most. Marcy says of the time invested in her: “I think this is a part of feeling encouraged and supported.” Not only is there a sense her three most trusted administrators are *open and benevolent*, but that their role in her professional life is *pedagogical*. Not only that, their time is not only open to her in helpful ways, but generously given—**Eleemosynary Presence**.

### **Bella**

I met Bella in her office in the counseling and student services suite at OHHS. When I came in, we chatted a bit about her two kids, whose framed smiles I was admiring behind her desk. She apologized for the appearance of her “mess of a desk” and seemed goofily embarrassed, but I assured her mine looked no better, if not worse. We proceeded effortlessly from small talk into the interview guide, of which I had a solid command after the previous six interviews. During our session, Bella was open and detailed in her replies, often expounding at length about my slightest probes. Bella’s was one of the more fruitful interviews in terms of its depth, breadth, and wide-ranging responses. The narrative threads she weaved together were bright and richly textured with anecdotes representing a variety of dimensions and experiences.

She began by telling stories of how her relationships with administration shifted over the course of her early career, moving from one of obliviousness to one of anxiety and even panic and then evolving into confidence and openness. “Pop-in visits from administrators certainly get easier as more time goes by. As a new teacher, I think I was really very

nervous.” Moments like these are often secret and kept safe inside ourselves (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), but Bella was at a point in her career where she had been positively impacted by leadership who built trust with her and confidence in her, and so such stories bubbled up to the surface easily as we explored the three-dimensional space of the questions. When these secret stories are revealed, they become stories to live by that are “multiple, fluid, and shifting... stories to live by offer possibilities for change through retelling and reliving” (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 9).

When examining the first comic, she said it “evokes a lot of panic in a young teacher” to think of being observed in such a situation with an airplane flying around. She further explained:

The more I taught, the more comfortable I got... I realized that they’re [administrators] not really there to—they’re only there to support you and see what the kids are learning, not to attack you and get you in any way.

Her realization of the *Openness & Benevolence* of her principal for **Authoring Invitational Space** was a key moment for her. Before this shift in Bella’s lens, she spoke about how two of her principals early in her career had a “different demeanor,” and her experience of them was a sort of “personality conflict,” of which she had to make sense. With her head principal, there was a sense that he was welcome and safe, whereas the assistant principals were “always the ones looking for misbehaviors and things like that,” and so just by virtue of their roles, operated with a different tenor.

Comic 1: "The Unscheduled Observation"



Figure 13. Bella's Comic 1



I recall one time that individual assistant principal stepped into my classroom and berated me in front of the classroom because my kids were too loud coming back from lunch, and the principal overheard that situation, and then called me to their office later to talk to me about that and actually apologized for the behavior and said that's not the way they want to do business and they were going to talk to the assistant principal.

Not only was there a divergence in the operating styles of these two leaders, there was a divergence in expectations about how they each viewed the appropriate way to operate and support teachers. Bella elaborated deftly how she came to understand this: "it took me a long time to understand that, that really—again, the assistant principal's goal is to manage that behavior." Even in examining a moment of failure and stress, Bella was able to look for context and give grace to the person she spoke about in various complex situations. Rather than expressing feelings of righteous indignation or overt shame, she concluded that person simply had a different way of operating.

Bella's view of her current administration, when prompted about what actions contributed to the climate of her school, was portrayed as a welcoming and personable one.

Gosh, I hate to use the word fun, but I think the administrative team here—I mean, they are down to business. They are very serious when they need to be, and they take care of matters...but at the same time, they're not afraid to have fun, and everyone sees their personality.

The story of her administration's offices, in Comic 2 - The Drop-In, reveals a series of likely interactions between what she views as a welcoming set of principals and their teachers.

Comic 2: "The Drop-In"



Figure 14. Bella's Comic 2

I think that I'm able to see a lot of things that administrators are doing behind the scenes and the hard work that they're putting in; so I think a lot of times I will be pro-administrator and I will say even on my own team that I work on, I'm way more pro-administrator than I think the rest of my team are.

When pressed on this, Bella expressed a previous state of mind where she was considering becoming a principal, but there was a facet of the job that changed her course. She was afraid of being “the bad guy” when it came to meting out discipline, “but the longer that I've worked with administrators, I think I realize that...you did not have to be the bad guy to be the person administering discipline. There is just a rule, and you enforce the rule.” In hearing her talk about such positionality, I thought about how many times I had felt like I had failed in accidentally making a disciplinary action feel overly personal to a student or, that I had heard a colleague described in such a way. In fact, in listening to Bella talk about this, I felt there was a seminal truth bubbling to the surface about understanding discipline—when it did not work, it was likely that understanding the nature of the rule was the primary problem, and the feeling of the relationship, the second.

Bella's understanding of how her principals worked was an intersectional view of the rules, their veracity, the roles established by policy, and the personal commitment of each individual leader to hold true in her view to their intentions. Bella's embodiment of **Invitational Space**, perhaps due to her role as a counselor attuned to *seeking context*, directly calls attention to her “pro-administrator” biases, in her words. Just as Witherspoon (1996) wrote of the inextricable nature of leadership and communication, so too does Bella's story call attention to the power of a principal who sends out such an *open* and *benevolent* tone when working with staff.

## **Amanda**

I came to Amanda's classroom at the end of a long week (for us both), I could tell she was exhausted, so I tried to move expeditiously through the procedural parts of getting the interview set up. My efforts to open up and generate some rapport in the microcosmic space of our scheduled interview did not seem to be landing well. Negative vibes were absent during our interactions together, but I did not feel that we ever really clicked fully. Amanda's posture was not closed-off, but she did not smile much either. During the last few minutes of the interview I landed on a question and received a dynamic and nuanced response from her that felt light and personal. This is an important facet of our conversation. I felt as though she was weathered in a way, maybe even jaded, but still confident in herself and the work she was doing. I perceived her attitude as not an aura of world-weary resignation, but rather a carefully constructed suit of armor guarding the prized machinery of her teacher's heart, which was a muscle greatly exercised and strengthened. She seemed to be unwilling to reveal secret stories, which are generally told freely to other teachers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). In this instance, these stories seemed to be closely guarded due to my researcher role.

During our brief sound check before I dug into the interview guide, Amanda answered the same test question as my other eight participants, "tell me what you had for breakfast today." Most everyone else had yogurt or a banana, Amanda was the only one who had breakfast pizza, which is a regional specialty of some small chain gas stations near the metropolitan area where she lives.

She referred to the scenario of Comic 1, while I was explaining it to her: "Okay. So I am sitting—just to verify, I'm sitting at my desk. My students are working. Somebody pops in?" I clarified "It's not perfect, but it's not crazy." She nodded, "Right. It's just a day,

like...a day.” She exuded a sense of familiarity with the notion, which was unlike some of the other teachers who gave disclaimers before they started as if to evoke that they are rarely *merely* at their desk.

I think initially you’re like, “Oh crud. Today is the day I’m doing this and not, you know, some fabulous thing.” At the same time, I’m always a person who’s not going to really change if you’re in my room; so I’m the person who is still sitting at my desk. I am not going to hop up and pretend that all of a sudden I’m doing something.

Amanda’s unfazed reaction to the pop-in observation matched up well with my own mental model of a 25-year veteran of the classroom. She felt okay about how her evaluator might view her, but could not be certain about exactly how much grace she had been given: “I think that’s just reality. Like—I’m okay not being a seven every day. That sounds terrible, but it means—there are days that’s just what we’re doing.” Being a seven at Fieldview Park means you are at the top of the rubric for teacher evaluations in whatever categories being measured. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015a, 2015b) found that discernment of the intentions of others is a crucial part of navigating the path to trust. When Amanda spoke of how each of her principals were a bit different, she seemed to be speaking from not just a place of institutional knowledge about specific individuals she had worked for, but from a personal and professional understanding that the roles of each principal differed, as did their personalities. Amanda’s stories may have been brief, but they clearly showed a principal’s **Eleemosynary Presence**, which is constituted of expectations of *follow through* and *competency*, at least when she “follows the steps” and goes to the right person for the task.

Comic 1: "The Unscheduled Observation"

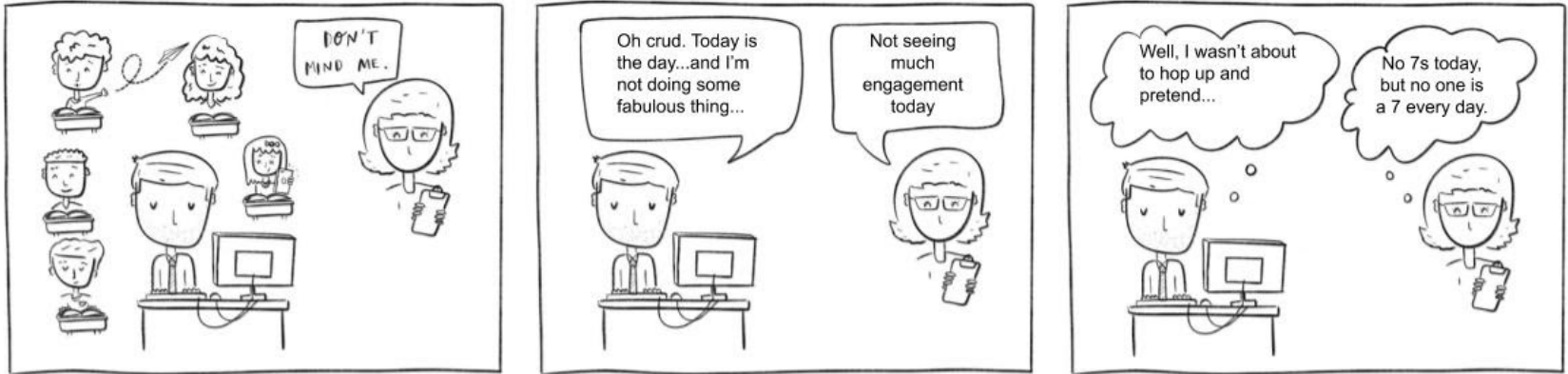


Figure 15. Amanda's Comic 1

Comic 2: "The Drop-In"

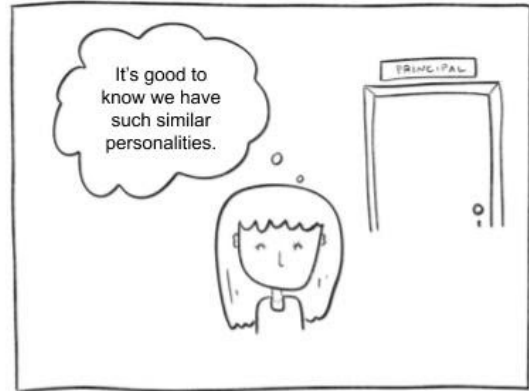


Figure 16. Amanda's Comic 2

Unlike the more positive situation drawn out in Comic 2, Amanda described an unfortunate moment when she felt her trust in a principal was breached. “Really? I shut the door...” She described a moment where her confidence was betrayed by an administrator with whom she thought she was speaking in confidence, but whom she discovered shared her conversation with a peer who later came to her offering to help. “I felt attacked.” She went back and let them know how much it upset her and they apologized. “You could have done it without my name.”

Still, she said, she’s not much of a grudge holder. She just wants *follow through* and confidentiality in her leaders, and she did not get that in this instance. She said she needs to see and feel there is a “pattern” of support or space given so she can do her job in the way she feels is best. Overall, Amanda perceives the climate as a positive one, but she feels it has changed in the time she’s taught at OHHS. She explained:

You’re going to see a change in your climate just by design whether it’s a shift in staff or whatnot—so as their expectations change, so I think there’s some frustration that was not here a few years ago. It’s different than the frustration that was not here.

Amanda described going from a more managerial principal to a personable one and then to the current head principal, who is a mixture of both, in her opinion. Amanda had a hard time with some shifting norms, like about how cell phones were treated in the classroom.

Everything ran very tight, all the rules; so I think the climate, that was not a negative thing. It’s just that was the expectation... The next one who came in was more of a people person, super friendly, outgoing, easy to talk to, a lot more laid back; so then people start to react to that and become a little more lackadaisical [sic] so then there is a frustration that flows amongst the staff of “oh my gosh, why are we doing that?”

She described how it became noticeable under the newer principal—administration was more lenient on passes, dress code, and a few other small changes. Still, she felt she had more freedom than she had in her previous job. “In my previous school, if you wanted to try



something, they were not a super big fan...which is part of the reason I left.” Feeling able to try new things, like her colleagues are doing, is a key facet of the high trust environment.

### **Narrative Inquiry 3-D Space Analysis**

The findings of this study are presented in the following section. The teachers’ narratives are drawn out into what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) called the “three-dimensional narrative inquiry space,” wherein each participant’s storied experiences are examined inward, outward, backward, and forward. Each story inhabits meaning in a temporal, socio-personal, and situational dimension all of which provide helpful points of abstraction from the deepest moments of their experience. Considering, through this analytical process, how their stories’ context and texture can embody meaning outside of the moment of events or their telling is a powerful tool for understanding who they are as teachers so the study’s thematic weight can rest with real people. In order to better understand and consider the great depth of these participants’ teacher knowledge in the time and place of their telling without confining them there, I employed the following dimensional analysis.

#### **Interaction**

Just as Polanyi and Knowledge (1958) explained that the knowledge sought by scientists was “tinged by the personal,” the stories of teachers must be explored and considered in a personal/existential dimension. John Dewey famously wrote of the nature of experience over the course of his career in education, and Clandinin and Connelly (2006) focused on the dimension of “interaction” as an important criterion of the personal dimension. This dimension is a composition, an intentional weaving together of how we view ourselves and how we make meaning of the experiences of our lives and professional

practice. Understanding the social, moral, and even aesthetic contexts of stories gives them a reflective quality that can shine light inward and outward from the storyteller to the world (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006, p. 50).

### **Temporality**

In order to enjoy a parade, it is helpful to consider that each float is one of many wheeling past in a chain with various actors and cast members, some seen and some hidden beneath layers of tissue and steel. Clandinin and Connelly (2006) explained that narrative inquiry sees time like this sort of parade; however, the narrative inquirer is not there at the whistle of the grand marshal, but rather bumping through the crowd to catch a glimpse partway through. Dewey (1938) explained we should consider “continuity” in experience so we can grasp the fact that every expression of teacher knowledge has a past, present, and future worth considering. Even the composition of this study has a temporal dimension, as the researcher has grown, changed, and reflected upon its impacts. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explained that knowledge is not primitive at one time or complete at another since one singular type of knowledge is never “replaced by another” (p. 319).

### **Situation**

Each study and story has some “topological boundaries” where there is meaningful termination of space and landscape that presents natural compartmentalization to a teller’s tale (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The teachers involved each provided settings, often a classroom, hallway, or school-related one, when storying their experience, and this represented the core of the third dimension of narrative inquiry. In a metaphorical understanding of a story’s landscape, we can draw notions about culture, some explicit, some implicit or hidden. The words themselves share etymological space: culture and landscape.

These teachers tell stories that may be primarily located in and around schools, but those are not the only places from which they are drawing meaning. This dimension, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explained, is also existential and personal, but it is one where these two may overlap in a way that can transform a story.

Table 6 gives a summary of each participant's interaction, temporality, and situation in the narrative space. Each facet of these crystals is reflected again in various ways through the subsequent discussion of themes that emerged from their narratives when situated among the experiences of the researcher.

The idea that trust in schools can be understood solely with quantitative data is lacking (Heller, 1993; Walker et al., 2011). In order to fully portray this phenomenon efficaciously and capture some of its complexity, narrative and qualitative components were needed. Telling the story of this research and of these participants is inherently a task that is personal to me. Just as Clandinin and Connelly (1994) described it, this journey of story took me in four dimensions both personally and temporally, and I moved forward and backward, inward and outward to work the narrative like saltwater taffy, being pulled until ready. The "tying of the final knot" of the handkerchief (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p. 8) of this presentation was the comic/ethnographs. The use of the cartoon as a knot in the fabric connected positivist science and literature/art, breaking the dissociation, and emphasizing human experience.

Geertz's thick description stated that (paraphrasing for pronoun use) human beings are animals suspended in webs of significance they themselves have spun. Ethnography is "establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping field, keeping a diary, and so on" (p. 145). In the section that follows, I distinguish the

differences in participant narratives' twitching and winking as their stories have unfolded (Geertz, 2003). This means the difference in participant actions which are being broadcast intentionally and those being potentially meaningful but subtly hidden or subconscious. The discussion of the presence of themes elicited from the many-layered participant narratives is where I call attention to the thickness of this ethnographic and storying effort. As in cultural analysis, I draw from the method of "guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses" in order to draw out the most meaningful conclusions from those better guesses rather than, as they describe, discover the entire "Continent of Meaning" (p. 159).

Appendix D contains the interpretive code frequencies for each participant, which were used, in part, to help construct and describe the presence of each theme as the narratives held them. Those code frequencies were put into ranges of mild, moderate, and strong for each theme's subsequent parts. Each tranche of frequencies was unique to the theme it composed. In the subsections that follow, four themes are laid out as the study presented them.

### **Theme One: Role Rapport Harmony**

As seen in Table 5, this theme is most represented in Marcy's and Bella's narratives. Both wove stories where barriers to building trust were central and the relationship between teachers and their principals (at least one) was characterized primarily by a disciplinary and evaluative tone. Their comics and transcripts reveal that stories of past and current leaders embodied elements of enforcement, a lack of support, and some adverse perceptions. However, with both Marcy and Bella, these sub-narratives were offered as counters to their current experiences at OHHS that clarified, in many ways, why they felt so good about their current administration.

These foil narratives provided indicators of the importance of how they needed to be seen and trusted in the roles they are assigned. Syntactically, I wanted to stress that “Role Rapport Harmony” is one complex phrase or grammatical unit and not something that should be parsed, because that would delineate a hierarchy between the parts which I do not intend to communicate. In my reading of the participant narratives, “Role” is an inextricable and equal portion of this theme in relation to “Rapport,” since one modifies the other.

### **Theme Two: Eleemosynary Presence**

The notion of a charitable and generous person can often connote visions of monetary giving, but in this sense, the theme of an eleemosynary present principal is one centered on a commodity even more precious than money: a person’s time. Amanda, Bella, and Marcy all shared stories that contained and embodied this theme of leaders who were genuinely giving of their time and present in just the right ways. This theme includes the notions that administrators are competent at their jobs and fulfill their commitments and that they are pedagogically engaging with their teachers in a way that matches their competencies. Stories of principals who were *consistent* and *followed through* with results gave texture to this theme. The right kind of presence, for many of these participants, needed to be not just one that got the job done when necessary (mundane school business requests like sub days and clear agendas for meetings) but one with a higher dimension of availability. In other words, the principal crafted a *pedagogical*, mentoring, and dynamic relationship beyond just being accountable for the basic organizational tasks.

### **Theme Three: Ecology of Excellence**

The first two themes recognized in the stories of these participants are largely evidenced via the absence of negatives (I am so glad my current principals did not do *that*).

This theme is about supportive facets of the OHHS environment which are facilitative of either building teacher-principal trust or protecting against its erosion and buffering negative impacts. Jill, Linda, and Bella each provided extensive thematic context to showcase how teacher-principal trust was represented as a part of the ecology of the organization's expectations. I called attention to the *horizontal mediation of trust* as evidence of how important the culture of a department could be to the vertical relationships in a building. In these narratives, teacher-to-teacher accountability is a mediating factor that protected against teacher-principal trust attrition. Stories of trust between teachers and departmental culture both evidenced the contextual necessity of those phenomena for the presence of trust with their principals. They felt that they were hired among the best in the area and placed among good people and then were graciously extended autonomy by administration, and that was huge for them. From the administrators' perspective, in the teachers' eyes, there was a great deal of inherent trust in their **Excellence** because of the district's reputation as a destination.

Another interesting facet was that several participants mentioned the degree to which they felt their building culture could be ascribed to how difficult it was to be hired in their building. They not only took pride in that fact (Sergio even explained he had tried to get hired here for years and finally achieved his goal); but they felt that principals could help set the cultural tone in interviews and via the staff selection process. In addition, the selectivity of the staff filtered into the observation process because there was a set, assumed level of excellence baked in and reinforced, not by administrators as much as by their department colleagues. Furthermore, there was a great deal of talk from Sergio, Susan, Jill, and Linda about the school as a family. Beyond that, the school community itself was mentioned as a factor that transferred the excellence burden from principals to parents in the community;

that is, teachers knew that stakeholders outside of their building were counting on them to deliver.

#### **Theme Four: Authoring Invitational Space**

Bella and Gina's narratives most strongly represented this theme where principal *benevolence* and *openness* were key. Their stories showed that a teacher's perception of administrator approachability was one of the most important features for trustworthiness. The notions of a principal being on your side and being there to help you develop or solve problems for students were key dimensions of their stories. Together they showed how a teacher's perception of principal *benevolence* allowed a more generative collaboration to take place. If you are more open to talking to and being open with your principal, you are more likely to take risks and to know that they are with you if things are not perfect. If a principal embodies what these participants described, they open dialogues rather than confer admonishments, listen carefully rather than wait to talk, and are vulnerable and genuine in their own personal sharing about life and their educational practices. The presence of this theme in a participant narrative meant they were able to view one or more of their principals as someone who *sought context*, mutuality in understanding, and worked to earn trust through clear communication sprinkled with levity and voice.

Table 6

*3-D Narrative Analysis of Themes*

Participant	Interaction	Temporality	Situation
Jill	<p>Jill’s personal and social dimension shows her as a teacher thankful for having a principal who gives her the benefit of the doubt and searches for the right approach given the situation. She is glad too, to connect with her leaders outside of school in personal, human contexts, like at a restaurant mingling and socializing amicably. Jill’s relationships with her colleagues are very important to her and she feels glad to be a part of a team. She expressed that it is important to know your colleagues are respected and heard by administration even if she’s not affected directly.</p>	<p>Jill’s knowledge of herself grew as she experienced what it felt like to be a part of the OHHS staff, compared to working as an occupational therapist with less firm community ties to one school. Her current context is linked to this past in a way that cannot be ignored. Jill’s previous experience made it harder for her to build connections that were deep and sustainable. In her current position, the history of that feeling impacts how fortunate she feels to be where she is. Now she feels well known and trusted by her administration, whereas that was missing before. When Jill was thinking of changing jobs earlier in her career, the impact of the environment and the principal’s reputation impacted her.</p>	<p>Trust manifested itself in her current context because of how differently she felt before coming to OHHS. For Jill, seeing students every day was one key to her comfort, which was not the case when she was in her previous role. Knowing the position she inhabits in OHHS as a special education teacher in a suburban high school provides a sense of the continuum of her context across the various topological boundaries of her experience.</p>

Table continues



Participant	Interaction	Temporality	Situation
Sergio	Sergio's story was one of total alignment, faith, and trust in his principals as well as the whole district. I saw in him a cheerleader and true team member. Sergio's understanding of himself greatly impacts his view of those around him with whom he socializes. Evidence of his social and personal dedication to his students and colleagues appears to be ever present in his narrative. He chooses to know others well and presents himself to be known openly and benevolently, which may be a key to understanding his strong trust in all dimensions of his school, including his principals.	Sergio's view of himself was at odds in his previous position. Joining OHHS confirmed a self-narrative he was crafting about working toward a goal of improvement and achievement. Being a member of his department seems to be a point of pride for him and it is situated along the continuum of his narrative journey from one district to the next.	Trust appears present in his knowledge that he and his colleagues, his community, and his principals are all in agreement on his role and those things resonate in harmony where he is. Sergio said he feels like a part of a family, invested in the local community, and part of a trusted core of professionals who expect a lot of him. His sense of place shifts from his neighborhood to events where he watches or coaches students, to his classroom throughout his story.
Susan	Susan and I shared a similar sense of caution and optimism about our experiences with administration. Susan expressed that her stories of past broken trust were mended by the OHHS administration's actions and attitude.	Susan's experience of being uncomfortably pitted against her colleagues seems to be contrasted with her current collegial contentment. Her previously guarded sense of professional trust was situated in a more open and benevolent context where administrator roles were not simply disciplinarians or evaluators out to get teachers.	For Susan, the presence of trust between her administration and her peers appears most meaningful. It may mean she will not be singled out to speak against them. She feels personally known and valued by colleagues, and knows her administration supports her as well as her professional peers. The presence of administrators who are mentors and pedagogues helps this.

Table continues

Participant	Interaction	Temporality	Situation
Linda	Linda's social connection with her neighbor teacher down the hall is strong, and she gets to do a lot outside of school with her department socially, but not really with administration. As a graduate of FPSD with family connections, she feels a part of its social fabric in many ways. She feels things are mostly very positive here.	As a fairly new teacher, Linda says she hopes her principals remember what it feels like to be in the classroom. That searching backward through time allows meaningful context for her, and knowing she can expect them to sympathize with her helps a lot. In a previous job, she felt feedback was derivative and impersonal, but the principals at OHHS make things positive and meaningful when they can.	Teaching where there are fewer barriers to trust is a huge plus for her. She says the climate is overall very trusting, in her experience. Teachers' doors are open, expectations are high.  Having so much experience situated in the FPSD, her sense of place is rooted in its community. Linda's classroom is a bit far from others in the space of the campus, so her nearby teacher neighbor is an important social connection.
Gina	Gina enjoys working with both her collaborative group of teachers and with her evaluative principal, with whom she gets along very well both socially and professionally. She loves it when her principal comes in and engages directly with students because they strive to strike a balance. If a kid is acting up, it is not a gotcha	Gina's experience in a previous district as a new teacher shaped her sense of longing for a real mentor relationship with a pedagogically driven principal who valued her thoughts and where she was on her journey. She feels very fortunate to be where she is at this time in her career.	Being in a place where she knows kids are taken care of and well known by administration beyond just discipline is helpful. She knows the situation of principals entering your room and crossing a boundary does not change who they are. Gina expressed thanks that her evaluator is

Table continues

Participant	Interaction	Temporality	Situation
	<p>moment, but a chance for the principal to take care of the kid's needs. She is glad to have many of her colleague's and principals' cell phone numbers to reach out if she needs.</p>		<p>more of a co-facilitator who jumps right into teaching mode when she comes in to visit. The situation of an observation is less formal because it is situated along a greater continuum of professional contact and conversation.</p>
Marcy	<p>As a newer teacher, Marcy was influenced by her cooperating teacher, who told her the story of how many things really worked at OHHS and how various roles operated. She sees many people adopting the school mascot and colors in the guise of a family but feels it is a little silly to her, but it works. All things considered, she likes and trusts about half of the administration, but the other half has work to do to move from neutral to positive.</p>	<p>Marcy's experience with broken trust at OHHS comes from a time she felt her autonomy and professional judgment were interceded upon by an assistant principal and a parent. Her experience in that moment has an unclear future narrative component where the mending of trust will need to take place over time. She feels that some principals are simply doing the minimum, while others are excellent advocates.</p>	<p>Marcy knows she teaches in a very wealthy and successful suburban community where there are high expectations at home. This truth is reflected strongly in her experiences with her students and their parents. She feels that parents want more than they are getting, even with the current levels of achievement and trust in the school.</p>
Bella	<p>Bella feels socially connected to almost everyone around her. She is easy to talk to and exudes what you would expect from a counselor who seeks to present openness and benevolence. Part of her personal reflection centers on a time in her</p>	<p>As a veteran of both the classroom and the counseling office, Bella's experiences and stories stretch across a wide swath of temporal space situated in several districts, culminating in her current role at OHHS. She has a mixture of good</p>	<p>Bella's situational experience is partially in the classroom, partially in the administrative suite of offices where she works, and partially down the road where she lives in a nearby rural community. She is from a small</p>

Table continues

Participant	Interaction	Temporality	Situation
	<p>career where she considered going into administration but chose not to. She feels a personal connection to the weight they carry due to their responsibilities and roles as the sometimes-bad-guys in certain situations.</p>	<p>and bad memories from her past that she carries with her, including many lessons she has learned that still form her actions today.</p>	<p>town, and that sense of place has influence over how she interacts. Her overlapping sense of rural and suburban identities gives her a strong way to connect with all types of people in her school.</p>
Amanda	<p>As one of the more veteran teachers in the building, Amanda's social and personal aura are unique in comparison to the other participants. She does more by herself it seems because of some of the courses she teaches. Her stories evoked a more private sense of who she was, but she still said the climate was very positive overall in her time at OHHS.</p>	<p>Amanda offered a great deal of context about the changes in climate over her time there. She had seen several different administrations come and go, each with varying degrees of personality styles and dispositions. Some she liked much better than others. She gave a sense of the larger shifting landscape of how norms of discipline, behavior, and communication had changed over time, some not for the better.</p>	<p>As a veteran of the district, Amanda's kids actually go to school in a smaller school nearby, where she lives.</p>

## **Relationship of Themes to Research Questions and Sub-questions**

This study sought to seek the answer to two questions about how teachers make meaning of their relationships with principals. The evidence collected in each phase of the study from questionnaire to interview to artifacts all provided insights into how these questions could best be addressed in a way situated in both the literature as well as the experiences of the participants and author. In analyzing the survey data, transcripts of interviews, and the cartoon ethnograph artifacts, the following summaries of the research questions and sub-questions are appropriate.

### **Research Question 1: How do teachers characterize trusting professional relationships?**

Answering the first research question centers on some of the more common notions of trust brought up by each participant. They all expressed that defining trust was a challenging endeavor, but each seemed to latch onto similar ideas about what trust felt like: autonomy; knowing what to expect with common decisions; encouragement; being supported, informed, known, and heard. They all agreed that trust is complex and varies based on the context and person. Great principals who understand the nature of relational trust (either implicitly or explicitly) seemed to be present in stories where **Role Rapport Harmony** showed up as a strong theme. In Marcy's narrative, the notion of two different factions of principals who each represented opposing views of autonomy struck me as representative. The storying of her experience in the two cartoon ethnographs shows two different lively answers to this research question. Her characterization of trust is clearly shown in that dynamic with her most trusted principals.

### **Sub-question 1.1: What Stories Do Teachers Tell about Interactions with their Principals?**

In examining the three teachers who rated their trust in principals the lowest (Gina, Marcy, and Amanda), I found some similar desires in their different stories. Amanda, being the long-serving veteran of the group, drew heavily upon her experience with a great variety of leaders she had served under, and used that temporally situated knowledge to make comparisons. The old saying “this too shall pass” comes to my mind in reading her story, but ultimately she expressed a desire for trust measured in terms of safety, support, and openness. Marcy, on the other hand, is much newer to the profession and to OHHS. Her stories of professional relationships are more nascent, still taking shape in the landscape around her. She greatly valued administrators who gave freely of their time, offered career and mentoring advice, and listened to her concerns. Not everyone had done that for her, and a sense of broken trust and unmet expectations lingered around some, but not all, of her principals. Time, she said, was all that would help. Lastly, Linda explained how feeling you needed to be on your extra best behavior during an observation were summoned, but not necessarily in a bad way. She felt the administration here offered real and personalized feedback to her beyond a checklist, which is not the case everywhere else.

### **Sub-question 1.2: How Do Teachers Respond to Different Metaphorical Depictions of Principal-teacher Relationships?**

As I worked through discussing and reflecting on participant perceptions of the cartoon ethnographs, I found a totally different experience with each person. As is evident in the documents produced from this study, the comics represent two perfectly representative experiences of being observed, something that happens to everyone each year at least once or twice, and of seeking information directly from your principal. In general, the participant

narratives show it was harder for some than others to imagine a classroom where there would be a paper airplane flying around or that a teacher would dare sit at their desk. These responses, grimaces, and pauses during the interviews made me think back to Geertz's (1973) discussion of the vast difference between twitches and winks in ethnographic work. I feel that I saw a bit of fake-winking and wink parodying in my participants' responses. If we look just at the third panel of Comic 1: "The Unscheduled Observation," we can glimpse the rich depth of responses participants provided in storying their experience.

Compare Linda's reluctantly filled thought bubble "I know she's on my side, but I wonder how she scored me..." to Gina's excited and hopeful "It's so great that she came in. I love getting her perspective." Or Amanda's resigned and dismissive, "Well, I wasn't about to hop up and pretend..." Each of these teachers showcased a unique and personally embodied truth in their story, which I worked to represent with verbatim-adjacent language drawn right from their interview transcripts. In addition to considering the words of the participants, representing their thoughts, fears, or hopes, I wanted to represent a fair expression of their view of administration in the comic. That being said, each of Linda, Gina, and Amanda's post-observation thoughts are shown representing their attitudes and dispositions, and their principal's thoughts are based on their words as well.



Figure 17. Linda's Comic 3

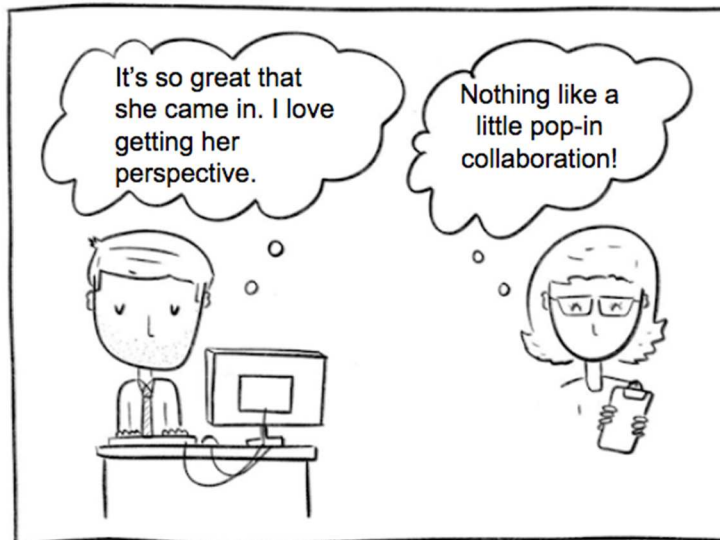


Figure 17. Gina's Comic 3





Figure 18. Amanda's Comic 3

### **Research Question 2: What Does It Mean for Teachers to Develop Trust in a Professional Context with Principals?**

Beyond the conceptions of each participant's professional trust with their principal is a bigger picture, from which I think we can draw some useful meaning. Judging from Bella's story, it seems that this question is best answered through her. The story she tells of the administrators she worked with early on clearly shaped her in a meaningful way that led her to view her current administration in such a supportive and rose-colored fashion. As I returned to my journal, I explored my experience with Bella: "She seems to realize administrators have a hard job and deserve the benefit of the doubt. She obviously values reflecting on her own experience and struggles as a way to see others more fully" (Personal Journal, Feb. 22, 2020). These narratives show that a principal's presence and relational trust can have a lasting impression on teachers that can inform their interactions with all future principals with whom they may work. In her experience, there seems to be the potential for what could have been a negative coloring of her lenses, but which turned out amenable to her

because her leader attended to the bumping places between the narrative of what leadership was from one principal to the corrective narrative she experienced over time. Her story provides a granular view of the experience of developing trust, which meant a teacher stayed motivated and connected to serving her students.

**Sub-question 2.1: What Meanings Do Teachers Attach to the Development of Relational Trust with Principals?**

Of the eight participants, there was not a single teacher who expressed disinterest or devalued the importance of trust with their principals. Marcy and Susan, for example, both expressed the nature of the FPSD and OHHS's high expectations for students and teachers alike. Both said it was important that principals support teachers with parents and colleagues through open doors, valuing their time, and acting as a source of encouragement. Marcy specifically expressed gratitude, for the half of her principals she experienced positively, for their leadership and investments in her personally and professionally. While she and Susan both have experiences of broken trust in various parts of their journey, each was able to dig into their craft, lean on their colleagues, and do what was best for kids in their opinion. A teacher like Sergio needs to know his administration is operating on just as high a level as he is morally. A story he told me of a previous principal in another district who wanted to hold off on a hotline call irked him in many ways and breached his sense of trust in the rightness of his decision making.

**Sub-question 2.2: What Do Teachers Think are Factors that Impact Trust in the School Context?**

Bella and Jill have both been in education a long time in a variety of roles, including classroom teacher, counselor, and occupational therapist. Their stories embody some truths about factors that impact trust in the school context, including being personally engaging and

extending grace. Jill's initial reaction to a principal saying "Don't mind me!" while entering to observe is one of an almost eye-rolling smirk. "Of course I mind," she said. Still, she rated her principals very high on all the OTS items, only being outscored in teacher-principal trust by Sergio's perfect 6. Her explanation of this and my interpretation of the entirety of her contextualized narrative is that being well known by many of your administrators and colleagues is a buffer to the unavoidably negative aspects that come with the necessary duty of supervision and evaluation. Principals must do certain things in order to meet their obligations, but that does not mean they need to leave a net negative feeling with their staff. Jill's experience is one in which not only does she feel seen and valued, but she knows her colleagues have much of the same experience with administration. So even when she is being observed on a day when "maybe I didn't sleep well last night," her net emotional reaction to the situation is that she will be given the benefit of the doubt.

Bella's story suggests that teachers have work to do in order to see and value administrators in the complex and stressful roles they play. When you fail to see how hard some of your principals are working on tasks that are invisible to you, it will be harder to engender a sense of trust, Bella's story implies. As a counselor who considered, but ultimately did not go into administration, her perspective is one of graceful withholding of judgment when considering signs of stress with administration. True too, in her story, is the fact that a personal and charming presence by administration can be disarming and humanizing.

### **Conclusion**

As I reviewed my field journal, I found that one of the more important lessons I have learned as a teacher is that leadership is not about titles, official duties, or assigned roles in a

professional context. Leadership is about a response to the needs of students, colleagues, and context. When I finished my Master's degree and started thinking more about what the transition to an administrative position would require, it was imperative, I was told, that I first find ways to exercise leadership in my current position. If you cannot take charge as a leader in your classroom and beyond as a teacher, you cannot be an effective leader of others in meaningful ways that impact and empower teachers in their classrooms. Furthermore, I was told to seek out leaders and mentors who share leadership opportunities rather than those who act to ingratiate themselves, seek credit, and operate as individual great men or women. The best leaders, I found, were ones who made leaders of others.

This shift in my thinking did not change just how I thought about my prospective career shift, but how I viewed my relationship with my students and my curriculum. I began to see every interaction with my students as an opportunity to make them leaders. I did not change a lot about the things I did, but changing my mindset and framing my teaching as such helped me to better discern the vertical linkages in my professional space. Trying to make my students and parents better advocates and leaders for their own sake (as readers, writers, and thinkers, for example) changed how I perceived my interactions with the leaders above me in and beyond my building. Thus, my interest in a trust-rich and capacity-building style of leadership grew. This section explores definitions, discussions, and data about effective leadership as it relates to the teacher-principal relationship—perhaps the most important dynamic for me in understanding my journey and growth as a teacher seeking to best reach the most students. As this section explores, effective leaders are not just good managers, but brokers of a collegial culture, thickeners of trust, and elevators of effective practice.

In this section, I reviewed each participant who played a vital role in shaping this research journey and addressing the two research questions. I detailed the process and places relevant to drawing meaning from their stories and given context to the things that informed that process for me personally, as a heuristic inquirer and experiential collaborator. I have shared notes from my reflective journey as participant stories and meanings unfolded. Themes were analyzed and held up to the light so the facets they each represented could be struck by the light of relevant literature as well as the experiences of my participants. Finally, research questions were tied tightly to distinct moments in participant data that provided both an off-ramp to their situated truths and a signpost for future work and questions. I discuss both of those dimensions in the following and final chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this narratological heuristic inquiry was to explore the stories teachers tell about relational trust and its role in the facilitation of interdependent relationships with principals. A key intent was to uncover how trust develops and is mitigated or strengthened in teacher-principal relationships. For this study, the teacher-principals relationship was defined as a bond that is professionally enabling, collegial, and facilitative. “Relational trust” was understood using Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) three-level theory for school contexts, and Hoy and Tschannen-Moran’s Omnibus T-Scale (2007) was utilized to provide a supplementary quantitative context for the qualitative data. Particularly, the subscale scores for participants chosen for interviews were examined and considered for what they said about their trust in the principal. Also useful was the general notion of the entire selected site’s sense of trust in the three areas measured: trust in clients (students), colleagues (other teachers), and principals.

Of particular interest to this study was the exploration of how the formation of trust relates to hierarchical structures of power in schools, particularly the dynamic between school leaders and teachers. The unit of analysis were the stories of relational trust between teachers, and principals. Using the three dimensions of narrative described in Chapter 3, I sought to understand how the stories teachers tell were embedded in their narratives of trust.

As a heuristic narratological inquiry, this study involved an approach that actuated the experience of the researcher as a substantial source of meaning for addressing the research questions in the context of the participants and their data. Flood (2010) remarked on the value of “inner subjectivity” in the use of a phenomenological inquiry (p. 7). Patton (2002b)

noted the value of an “intense personal interest” in subject and phenomenon (p. 107). This study aimed to explore the three-dimensional inquiry space using the lamp of teacher stories to light the way. Narrative inquiry allows the researcher to explore the lived experience of participants and acknowledge and value both their role and the role of the researcher as a narrator in an ongoing and meaningful story with structure from which themes can be withdrawn and co-authored (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

With the research questions in mind, I briefly return to the intent of its qualitative research traditions, as well as the limited role of its use of descriptive statistical data. Several central questions and sub-questions guided my inquiry:

1. How do teachers characterize trusting professional relationships?
  1. What stories do teachers tell about interactions with their principals?
  2. How do teachers respond to different metaphorical depictions of principal-teacher relationships?
2. What does it mean for teachers to develop trust in a professional context with principals?
  1. What meanings do teachers attach to the development of relational trust with principals?
  2. What do teachers think are factors that impact trust in the school context?

The site surveyed proved to have elements which I anticipated prior to data collection. In many ways, I expected Oleander Heights High School to be a very high trust environment across the board. As an affluent, moderately diverse, suburban school with high academic achievement in a mid-sized metropolitan area in the Midwest, I felt there would be a great deal of institutional pride buffering it. What the Omnibus T-Scale’s results (see Table

2) showed was that trust in colleagues was very high, while the trust in administrators and clients (students) were both average.

The sections that follow present the implications of these findings along with their potential influence for professional practice and recommendations for future scholarship extending from this study's design and findings. I conclude with reflections regarding how the work has shaped me and my future practices.

### **Qualitative Research Traditions and Study Design**

Qualitative research is particularly suited to the in-depth and focused study of a small group of individuals whose “small-t” truths cannot be easily generalized but can help provide meaningful context for better understanding the nature of particular phenomena, such as, in this case, relational trust. Maxwell (2013) explained that eschewing our personal goals as researchers is “neither possible nor necessary” and should be done openly so the researcher can examine their shaping of the work. Further, Creswell (2013) suggested that such an approach “is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives” (p. 18). This requires a philosophical disposition about the process and not just the method. Discovering the essence within lived experiences means eliciting and solidifying our knowledge of things precisely “through the subjective experiences of people” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 21).

Creswell and Poth (2018) assert that “qualitative researchers need to ‘position’ themselves in their writings. This is the concept of reflexivity in which the writer engages in self-understanding about the biases, values, and experiences that he or she brings to a qualitative research study” (p. 229). An interdisciplinary mindset guided the design of this inquiry and its implications reflect dimensions of instructional leadership, curriculum



planning, and the management of organizational changes in schools. The study utilized Moustakian heuristic inquiry in order to properly position the researcher appropriately in order to draw out a richer and more descriptive picture of the experiences of the researcher and this study's participants. Sultan (2018) described the heuristic interview as a narrative document of sorts, although "not necessarily as privileged as the superlative source of data" (p. 33). Qualitative traditions such as these were right for this study because they were the most suitable for deeply exploring the fabric of participant stories in how they intersected with my own. Jennifer Green (2019) explained that the power of heuristic inquiry is its flexibility and empathy in the ways it allows researchers to engage in participant dialogue.

This study's collection of participant narratives through interviews, and my own construction of artifacts, as the researcher, derived from both my experience and the words and feelings of my participants to create a tapestry of meaningful bricolage (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Lastly, it is important to note that this work operates on the notion that participant and researcher narrative should hold special value outside of theory, coded frequency counts, or descriptive statistics (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Indeed, one of the most important reasons for this study and my selection of narrative inquiry was to privilege the voices of these teachers and help give life to them through contextualizing them among the rest of the data and situating my own self-inquiry alongside them.

### **Implications for Practice**

When I reflect on this process and my journey through exploring the phenomenon of relational trust between teachers and their principals, I am confronted not only by the expansive stories of my participants, but by my own experience in the same space. Both of these dimensions give different meaning and heft to the findings of this study and the

answers to the research questions. The reflection that follows in this section is my own personal examination of how the work of this study has changed me and how I am working to assess its power in my practice and beyond. In it, I make an attempt to extend a bridge between the answers of my research questions, as powered by my participants' stories, and the situatedness of my own, specifically in relation to what I see as a temporally relevant issue in education.

Looking back at my journal, I reflected upon the data analysis phase of the research:

I've spent time unpacking my biases before, but after more than a decade in the classroom my views are clearer and their context more richly layered. I think I can basically put my beliefs into two categories, "what I used to think..." like colorblindness being helpful or racism only existing in overt forms, and "now I consider..." like notions of the architecture of structural and covert racism, microaggressions, and de jure and de facto racism in housing and school boundaries. (Personal Journal, November 2019).

I wrote more about how I felt one of the most important challenges facing teachers today is how they navigate challenging conversations with their leaders. In the district I work for, there has been significant fallout over and confusion about how white teachers, principals, students, and community members can come to terms with their own privilege and place in history. I saw the first Black superintendent of my district come and go in less than two years simply for wanting to start a conversation about equity that named the issue of privilege. When I think about trust, I think about issues like this that permeate our schools' most pressing needs.

Annette Baier (1994) wrote that trust is a quality akin to the very air we breathe, and only when it is sullied or in short supply do we notice how vital it is to our functioning. When there is a dearth of trust and a lack of will to build it, conversations about all sorts of small issues (what professional development is needed, how observation scores are really

calculated, and so forth) can get muddied. But you definitely cannot tackle the seismic events a district or building may be going through if there is not an ironclad firmament of trust running like rebar through the concrete foundations of the community.

Cherniss (2000) explained that “in leadership positions, almost 90% of the competencies necessary for success are social and emotional in nature” (p. 434), and later (2010) further distinguished “social competence” from “emotional intelligence,” which clarified how each is measured and considered. Recent research by Leithwood, Sun, and McCullough (2019) named teacher trust in district initiatives, several times over, as a key reason that novel approaches to complex problems can succeed or fail. Their meta-analysis concluded that “teacher trust, in particular, fosters the development of teachers’ social capital,” which Coburn and Russell (2008) noted has the promise of increasing their impact through their professional and contextual social networks.

The current study in relational trust certainly overlaps and intersects with notions of emotional and social competencies, in that leadership cannot be understood without their presence. The emotional and social struggles I have seen recently have a lot to do with topics where conveying a real sense of trust through Tschannen-Moran’s dimensions of honesty, openness, benevolence, and competence are complicated by topics that feel too big to tackle for many of us (2003).

According to Burns’s (1978) seminal definition of transformational leadership, it is a style that “transforms follower attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, to a higher realm of motivation” (p. 69). In reflecting on both Burns’s writing as well as that of Bass (1985) and Leithwood (1994), I realize there are intersections and overlapping ideas I have left out of this research. Bass’s four guidelines for transformational daily practice include “idealized

influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation” (p. 14). One particular area of overlapping I see is in how Sergiovanni (2007) recommended that transformative leaders work to distribute power among teachers. This is an important distinction that power distributed and tasks delegated are connected to a purposeful empowerment and do not just feel like a leader getting work off their plate they can take credit for later. I see this as a combination of Role Rapport Harmony and Authoring Invitational Space, as this study defines them.

There are those such as Van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013) and Berkovich (2016) who offer counter-narratives on transformational leadership, even saying it “border[s] on the tautological” (p. 5) due to questionable definitional boundaries, but the absence of a negative proof does not dissuade me that charismatic leadership is as powerfully relevant today as it was 20 or more years ago. I find it is worth holding up to the light to examine. Criticisms and means-testing of its causal origins are worth considering, but ultimately the efficacy of a transformational leader should be weighed by other less positivist criteria. The two themes mentioned in the previous paragraph show that an equitable distribution of empowered power, as Sergiovanni (2007) suggested, aligns well with a leader who understands the notion of creating invitational space for teachers and who seeks to build that role rapport harmony.

Each of the four themes my participant narratives evoked map onto one or more of these identified transformational practices. Role Rapport Harmony compares well to idealized influence and inspirational motivation. Eleemosynary Presence and Ecology of Excellence both echo the idea of intellectual stimulation, and the notions of both

Eleemosynary Presence and Authoring Invitational Space align fairly well with Bass's notion of individualized consideration.

Despite the length of time since its inception, the notion of transformational leadership in schools still applies greatly today (Anderson, 2017). Perhaps the work of this study and its participant narratives can help point the way to the recognition of relational trust as a facet of transformational leadership. In fact, Kwan (2016) pointed out that there is a relationship between understanding and building trust in schools and using transformational leadership to advance instructional leadership causes.

Conversations about education reform often center mostly in the context of schools with few white children and community members. Bryk and Schneider's (2002) deep examination of trust in schools can be viewed as racially adjacent in terms of how it should be read—many immediately and unfairly equate Chicago's schools with the concerns and ills of the Black community in America, rather than as one part of the larger mosaic of our country's history of oppression and racial inequity. Rather than reform, total quality management, and expansive testing, I believe transformational leadership and trust are foci which should undergird the next generation of educational leaders. Specifically, we need to view the major challenges of our school community in the context of our nation as a whole. In my opinion, that is through a lens of the promotion of educational equity in all schools, no matter their level of demographic diversity.

I pulled on a lot of threads through this study and its placement in my own journey as an educator. To summarize, there are many reasons this research has been powerful for me and I think relevant to a much wider audience: relational trust between teachers and principals is an area which needs a great deal more attention in general, but specifically at the

secondary level and via at least some qualitative means. In addition, viewing and working to understand the power of the positive trusting relationships and the causes of ones characterized as weak, should be re-examined and analyzed through a broader lens of racial equity in schools

### **Recommendations for Future Research Needs**

As I was winding down my reflections, I revisited the work of Lincoln and Denzin (2003) and considered their voice of acclamation for works of art to be both disciplinary exhibits as well as scholarly contribution. This inquiry clarified the great potential in the work of expanding the use of the cartoon ethnograph Manuel Herrera and I devised for this study. Just as others have recently done work in narrative photovoice and participatory, visual narrative inquiry (Bach, 2008; Mitchell, 2011; Simmonds, 2013; Simmonds, Roux, & Avest, 2015), so too have I begun a branch of my own in how visual prompting can play a role in participant inquiry.

I imagine one possible next step to be continued work with the cartoonist—or on my own as a novice doodler—to expand and represent the experiences of participants in less literal and verbatim research-generated documents. Readings of Mienczakowski (1995) and Lincoln and Denzin (2003) prompted me to consider, after the fact of this study, the idea of using a later stage animation of participant narrative through the cartoon ethnograph, but to do so untethered from the duty to verbatim representation, which I felt I needed to adhere to in this case. Mienczakowski's notions about the ethnodrama and its value in post-positivist research challenge what we think of as representation. His work on vraisemblance, the capturing of an essence of participant meaning analogous to their own experience, shows that ethnodrama can “emancipatory” as well as “educative” in its aims (p. 428). In reflecting, I

did not realize until later how wedded to a positivist notion like using verbatim participant language I was in my research-generated document. A future step in this direction would include stating at the outset that artifacts would be created in the spirit of their stories, and then re-examined through a secondary member-checking process where participants could play a role as co-constructors.

Another possible direction this research points future scholars is in the expansion of a study in this vein outward in terms of scope. Originally, this study was designed to include multiple schools with vertical alignment (middle school feeders to a high school, for example). I find it potentially valuable to consider how student stories, especially, were similar or different across a continuum in different buildings. There, it could be fruitful to compare students of the same cohort, for example, as they transition from one building to the next as they move from one leadership context to another. Similarly, it would be potentially meaningful to expand the study to all the buildings in one district so as to examine the possible district level implications of stories of trust between buildings and within the larger context.

Lastly, expanding the scope of the study to different diverse districts in terms of communities and students being served would help situate potential findings across a wider band of meaning socially and culturally. This includes a broader interdisciplinary approach into others relevant areas as well. Ideally, I believe it would be most valuable to maintain the artistic disposition of the inquiry, as its generative potential for representation of participant voice is a powerful partner for the buoying quantitative and rich narrative data which it accompanies.

## Conclusion

This study poses questions about the stories teachers tell about their trust in building administration and the inherent meanings contained in those stories. As a heuristic inquiry, my own journey as an educator was brought to bear as well, and my own experiences were situated alongside those of the participants as the analyses of data were being completed and research documents were being generated. Initially, the descriptive statistical data from the OTS survey of OHHS teachers painted a picture of a generally high trust school environment in each of the three areas measured: trust in colleagues, trust in clients (students), and trust in the principal(s). The four themes which were revealed through the data gathered from participant interviews were stories of teachers and their **Role Rapport Harmony** with principals, stories of principals at OHHS who were **Authors of Invitational Space** in how they worked and were perceived, teachers telling stories of principals who exhibited an **Eleemosynary Presence** through charitable use of time and mentoring actions, and lastly, the stories which evoked a general conception of the Fieldview Park School District and Oleander Heights High School as one exhibiting an **Ecology of Excellence** among teaching staff and in the community supporting them.

Each of these themes, along with the results from the OTS provided their own layers of meaning—elevated from the participants—was then constructed into a series of two cartoon ethnographs, showcasing a brief but powerful glimpse into potential moments of tension or representations of trust made manifest through participants' own experiences with their leaders. In these artistic and graphical representations, we see an ethnodramatic presentation of something with both scholarly and aesthetic value that works alongside the quantitative data and the full participant narratives to create a dialogic bridge between the



researcher and participants to the academy and general public alike. In other words, these are results that have scholarly merit and heft, while simultaneously presenting layers of accessible and digestible meaning to the lay community.

### **Final Reflections**

When I think about the implications of this study and how it has impacted me, it is easy to say there is a great need for more research in secondary trust between teachers and principals in the United States because the majority of work has been quantitative, at the elementary level, or done internationally. What I find hard to do and struggled with while I was writing this chapter, is imagining how to carry this conversation into a new realm, like one where I have to be as vulnerable and open as the research implies is necessary. I know the best research emboldens us to live, teach, and lead differently, so how could I settle for a safe, inert, and removed reflection on one of the most important implications for my own practice?

Dealing with the realities of racism, privilege, sexism, misogyny, and divergent political alignments in schools requires a great deal of will and a commitment to trust. The themes that emerged from this research through my participants' stories speak to this. A charitable and benevolent presence rooted in a shared vision of growth is hard to evoke when there are de facto factions and tribes formed before any conversation can start. Yet, I am afraid that as soon as the specter of the most challenging social issues is conjured, that fracturing can occur. When I think back to what my participants taught me about their relationships and their teaching, I come away with the hopeful message that in such a high trust district, they are able to put their attention on their students and their curriculum. Jonathan Kozol (2005) reminds me about lines of demarcation drawn even within districts

that cordon off racial and social groups except for the most acceptable token students of color. When I consider those sorts of boundaries in the context of this study, I am curious how conversations of challenging topics, like race, equity, and perceived political alignment interact with trust.

My situated understanding and experience in this school, OHHS, and its district, FPSD, intersects with my own experience in teaching in this area and tells me that a significant strain could be put on these relationships when the “destination district” label is challenged. I find it worth considering that term not just in a professional light, but in a sociopolitical one. Most suburban communities and their schools have been a destination for social groups fleeing diversifying urban neighborhoods (Gotham, 2014).

The safer version of this reflection does not mention the words race or equity; instead, it relents and stays safe within the confines of my own bubble of privilege which serves me so well. Like the wealthy New York mother in Kozol’s book, I am perfectly willing to use my connections, unearned and invisible privileges, and strategic silence on hot-button issues to navigate unscathed as it suits me. But this study—in part, a tool of my own credentialing and advancement—offers an inflection point for me as I consider what I would do differently if I could go back to square one and do it again. The study started out, generally, as an effort to understand the ways that great leaders shape their schools and influence their staff, and ended with some discussion of trust leading to risk-taking and innovation. I cannot, in good conscience, ask others to take risks and to be open and honest if I do not start with my own journey down that path. For me, that means continuing a critical self-dialogue about the issues I see challenging school communities most: not just trust, but the very architecture of schools themselves and whom they serve and who is left out.

Another important implication from this study is related to my own temporally situated experience as it relates to educational leadership: and this feels like a priority leadership item—to process and facilitate such discussions which affect our most underrepresented students. Matthew R. Kay’s writing on conversations about race in the classroom (2019) has shaped my thinking and informed my practice lately. When I face my own privilege, I think about how the work in this study relates to conversations about race, vulnerability, and openness, both with teachers and with students. Working through this cloud of issues and striving to see my research questions through the fog has been my challenge in looking back so I can look forward with better sight.

This study leaves me positioned to be a better leader than I was before it began. As a facilitator of challenging conversations, a person predisposed in new ways to listen and attend to teacher stories, and as a newly empowered storyteller myself, I feel strongly about the merits of this research given both my own professional context and the implications for how the work will propel me forward into new spaces of inquiry, leadership, and challenge.

APPENDIX A

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE: THE OMNIBUS T-SCALE

Omnibus T-Scale

**Directions:** Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about your school from **strongly disagree** to **strongly agree**. Your answers are confidential.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Teachers in this school trust the principal.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Teachers in this school trust each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Teachers in this school trust their students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The teachers in this school are suspicious of most of the principal's actions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Teachers in this school typically look out for each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Teachers in this school trust the parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of the principal.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Teachers in this school are suspicious of each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. The principal in this school typically acts in the best interests of teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Students in this school care about each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. The principal of this school does not show concern for the teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Even in difficult situations, teachers in this school can depend on each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Teachers in this school do their jobs well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Parents in this school are reliable in their commitments.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Teachers in this school can rely on the principal.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of their colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Students in this school can be counted on to do their work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. The principal in this school is competent in doing his or her job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. The teachers in this school are open with each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Teachers can count on parental support.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. When teachers in this school tell you something, you can believe it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Teachers here believe students are competent learners.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. The principal doesn't tell teachers what is really going on.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Teachers think that most of the parents do a good job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. Teachers can believe what parents tell them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Students here are secretive.	1	2	3	4	5	6

(Copyright© Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003)

APPENDIX B  
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Teacher Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction**

1. Tell me about yourself.
  - a. Follow-up/Probe
  - b. How many years of experience in teaching do you have?
  - c. What course(s) do you teach?
  - d. Tell me about your school.
  
2. Now that I've gotten to know a bit more about you, here are copies of two scenarios I'd like you to consider for a minute. We'll do them one at a time. I'll walk you through the scenes and just inquire a bit about how you interpret the images and how they relate to your own experiences. You can write on them if you like. I will make notes on my own copy as I listen. If you'd just like to talk, that is fine too.

**a. Introduce Cartoon Scenario #1 - "The Unannounced Observation"**

*Imagine the following, shown here in "Scenario #1": It is a normal day in your classroom. You happen to be sitting at your desk. The room is fairly quiet, but not impressively so. Some people are on task, but you cannot be sure if everyone is. Your principal appears in the doorway with a clipboard. Consider each panel and what*

*you imagine thinking or saying aloud or being thought or said aloud by or between you and that principal. What is said aloud by each of you as you make eye contact? What goes unsaid by each of you? Is there anything you wish was different in what you did or said? Is there anything you wish was different about what was seen? What do you imagine your principal was thinking?*

**b. Introduce Cartoon Scenario #2 - “The Drop-In”**

*In “Scenario 2,” consider a totally separate and isolated interaction. There is no connection intended to “Scenario 1.” What would you normally go to your principal’s office for? When was the last time you did so? If you did not usually, or would not, why not? What would it look and sound like if you did, in your imagination? Imagine this: You walk into the office to make a routine request. You knock on the door and your principal looks up from their desk. What does the greeting look, sound, and feel like? When you leave, how do you usually feel? What do you normally think about the interaction?*

**Framing Questions**

3. Give me a definition of trust as you understand it in terms of your work as a teacher.
4. Tell me about a time when someone broke your trust.
5. Tell me about something that would make you distrust someone.
6. How does someone earn or earn back your trust?
7. Tell me about how you would describe the culture and climate of your school.
8. Tell me about the relationship between teachers and other teachers here.

9. Tell me about the dynamic between principals and teachers here.
10. Tell me about your principal(s).
11. What does it mean to feel supported by your principal?
12. How does it feel to see your principal outside your door, in the hallways, or elsewhere?
13. Has mistrust or broken trust ever stopped you from doing something professionally?
14. Has mistrust or broken trust ever impeded you from speaking out about something you say that was wrong?
15. In the cartoon scenarios, what part or parts are most interesting to you?
16. How usual or unusual do you feel each of these scenarios is in your building?
17. In the survey you took prior to your selection for this interview, was there any question that struck you as particularly interesting or surprising?
18. Are there any items that you can imagine will tilt mostly one way for a majority of the teachers here?
19. [Share specific data] Ask for reply/context/commentary.

APPENDIX C  
MEMBER CHECKING EMAIL

Dear [Participant Name],

I wanted to take this time to share your interview transcript with you. This portion of the qualitative research process is called “member checking” and is intended to give you voice and provide you with the chance to give feedback if needed.

My goal is to ensure that your experiences and stories are accurately captured here. If you have any comment, changes, or questions regarding your transcript, please reply to this email.

Again, thank you so much for giving your time to make this research possible, personal, and powerful!

Steve J. Moore

PhD Candidate in Education | UMKC

Ed Leadership, Policy & Foundations

Curriculum & Instructional Leadership

(816) 806-0613

[sjmc65@mail.umkc.edu](mailto:sjmc65@mail.umkc.edu)



APPENDIX D

INTERPRETIVE CODE FREQUENCY TABLE

Interp. Code	Freq.	Jill	Sergio	Susan	Linda	Gina	Marcy	Bella	Amanda
Stories of Barriers to Trust	15	6	0	0	1	1	5	0	2
Relationship Defined by Role as Disciplinarian/Evaluator	59	5	4	3	5	3	12	19	8
Admin Competency & Follow-through	40	9	5	2	2	1	6	9	6
Admin Relationship is Pedagogical	22	3	2	0	3	2	3	1	3
Horizontal Mediation of Trust	5	5	3	0	6	3	11	3	4
School Selectivity of Staff Shapes Culture	61	9	8	3	13	6	6	11	6
Stories of Healthy Organizational Items	89	9	8	4	7	4	4	10	2
Admin Openness & Benevolence	113	12	5	6	13	17	15	35	10
Stories of Seeking Context	58	8	8	3	5	12	6	12	4
Trust is Variable, Complex, Multifaceted, & Vital	46	7	2	2	5	4	4	21	1

## REFERENCES

- Adams, S. A. (2017). *Leadership and trust: A mixed methods study of the rural elementary principal* (Doctoral dissertation). Northwest Nazarene University, Nampa, ID.
- Alvesson, M. (2002). *Understanding organizational culture*. London, UK: Sage.
- Anderson, M. (2017). Transformational leadership in education: A review of existing literature. *International Social Science Review*, 93(1), 4.
- Angelis, J. I., Gregory, K., & Durand, F. T. (2017). A climate of trust. In K. C. Wilcox, H. A. Lawson, J. Angelis, F. Schiller, K. Gregory, & S. Zuckerman (Eds.), *Innovation in odds-beating schools: Exemplars for getting better at getting better* (pp. 19–35). New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Angelis, J. I., & Wilcox, K. C. (2011). Poverty, performance, and frog ponds: What best-practice research tells us about their connections. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 93(3), 26–31.
- Apple, M. W. (1971). The hidden curriculum and the nature of conflict. *Interchange*, 2(4), 27–40.
- Ärlestig, H. (2007, September). Principals' communication inside schools: A contribution to school improvement? *The Educational Forum*, 70(3), 262–273.
- Ärlestig, H. (2008). *Communication between principals and teachers in successful schools* (Doctoral dissertation). Umeå University, Sweden.
- Bach, H. (2008). Visual narrative inquiry. In *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Baier, A. (1995). *Moral prejudices: Essays on ethics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Ball, S. J. (1987). The micropolitics of the school: Towards a theory of school organization. In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan, & D. Hopkins (Eds.), *International handbook of educational change* (pp. 544–557). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Ball, S. J. (1988). Staff relations during the teachers' industrial action: Context, conflict and proletarianisation. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 9(3), 289–306.
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28(2), 117–148.
- Banta, K., & Sapp, B. (2010). *The ripple effect of principal behavior: Improving teacher instructional practices through principal-teacher interactions*. Louisville, KY: University of Louisville.
- Barber, B. (1983). *The logic and limits of trust*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Battiste, M. (2004, May 29). *Animating sites of postcolonial education: Indigenous knowledge and the humanities*. Plenary Address.
- Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers* (4th ed.). Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Berkovich, I. (2016). School leaders and transformational leadership theory: Time to part ways? *Journal of Educational Administration*, 54(5), 609–622.
- Blasé, J. (1997). The micropolitics of teaching. In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan, & D. Hopkins (Eds.), *International handbook of teachers and teaching* (pp. 939–970). Netherlands: Springer.

- Blasé, J., & Blasé, J. (1997). The micropolitical orientation of facilitative school principals and its effects on teachers' sense of empowerment. *Journal of Educational Administration, 35*(2), 138–164.
- Blasé, J., & Blasé, J. (2001). The teacher's principal. *Journal of Staff Development, 22*(1), 22–25.
- Boon, S. D., Holmes, J. G., Hinde, R. A., & Groebel, J. (1991). *Cooperation and prosocial behavior*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bottery, M. (2003). The management and mismanagement of trust. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 31*(3), 245–261.
- Bottery, M. (2004). *The challenges of educational leadership*. London, UK: Paul Chapman.
- Bredeson, P. V. (1989). *Empowered teachers-empowered principals: Principals' perceptions of leadership in schools*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administrators, Scottsdale, AZ.
- Bromley, P., & St. Cummings, L. L. (1995) Transaction costs in organizations with trust. In R. Bies, B. Sheppard, & R. Lewicki (Eds.), *Research on negotiations in organizations* (Vol. 5, pp. 219–247). Greenwich, CT: IAI.
- Brower, H. H., Schoorman, F. D., & Tan, H. H. (2000). A model of relational leadership: The integration of trust and leader-member exchange. *The Leadership Quarterly, 11*(2), 227–250.
- Brown III, G. (2015). Strong one, lasting one: An elementary school principal's ability to establish a positive school culture by building trust. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, 18*(4), 309–316.

- Brown, M., Boyle, B., & Boyle, T. (1999). Commonalities between perception and practice in models of school decision-making in secondary schools. *School Leadership & Management, 19*(3), 319–330.
- Browning, P. D. (2013). *Why trust the head? Key strategies for transformational school leaders for building a purposeful relationship of trust* (Doctoral dissertation). Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.
- Bryk, A., Camburn, E., & Louis, K. S. (1999). Professional community in Chicago elementary schools: Facilitating factors and organizational consequences. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 35*(5), 751–781.
- Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership, 60*(6), 40–45.
- Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Easton, J. Q., & Luppescu, S. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Bumgarner, B. L. (2012). *Digital storytelling in writing: A case study of student teacher attitudes toward teaching with technology* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Missouri-Columbia.
- Burns, J.M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Carless, D. (2009). Trust, distrust and their impact on assessment reform. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 34*(1), 79–89.
- Cherniss, C. (2000, April). *Emotional intelligence: What it is and why it matters*. Annual Meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, New Orleans, LA (Vol. 15).

- Cherniss, C. (2010). Emotional intelligence: Toward clarification of a concept. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 3*(2), 110–126.
- Clandinin, D. J. (2015). Stories to live by on the professional knowledge landscape. *Waikato Journal of Education, 183*. doi: 10.15663/wje.v20i3.233
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1994). Personal experience methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 413–427). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1995). *Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1996). Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes: Teacher stories—stories of teachers—school stories—stories of schools. *Educational Researcher, 25*(3), 24–30.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Clandinin, D. J., Huber, J., Huber, M., Murphy, M. S., Orr, A. M., Pearce, M., & Steeves, P. (2006). *Composing diverse identities: Narrative inquiries into the interwoven lives of children and teachers*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Coburn, C., & Russell, J. (2008). Getting the most out of professional learning communities and coaching: Promoting interactions that support instructional improvement. *University of Pittsburgh Learning Policy Brief, 1*(3), 1-5.
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology, 94*, S95–S120.

- Connelly, F. M. (2008). *The Sage handbook of curriculum and instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1999). *Shaping a professional identity: Stories of educational practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In J. Green, G. Camilli, & P. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (pp. 375-385). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Connelly, F. M., Phillion, J., & He, M. F. (2008). Hidden research in the curriculum. In F. M. Connelly (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of curriculum and instruction* (pp. 431–439). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Conquergood, D. (1991). Rethinking ethnography: Towards a critical cultural politics. *Communications Monographs*, 58(2), 179–194.
- Cook, T. D., Murphy, R. F., & Hunt, H. D. (2000). Comer's School Development Program in Chicago: A theory-based evaluation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(2), 535–597.
- Cosner, S. (2009). Building organizational capacity through trust. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 45(2), 248–291.
- Cranston, J. (2011). Relational trust: The glue that binds a professional learning community. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 57(1), 59–72.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). A framework for design. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J.W. (2008). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J., & Miller, D. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory Into Practice, 39*(3), 124.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cruikshank, J. (1990). *Life lived like a story: Life stories of three Yukon elders*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Cruikshank, J. (1995). Imperfect translations: Rethinking objects of ethnographic collections. *Museum Anthropology, 19*(1), 25–38.
- Czarniawska, B. (2004). *Narratives in social science research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Daly, A. J., Liou, Y. H., & Moolenaar, N. M. (2014). The principal connection: Trust and innovative climate in a network of reform. In D. Van Maele, P. B. Forsyth, & M. Van Houtte (Eds.), *Trust and school life: The role of trust for learning, teaching, leading, and bridging* (pp. 285–311). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Daly, A. J., Moolenaar, N. M., Bolivar, J. M., & Burke, P. (2010). Relationships in reform: The role of teachers' social networks. *Journal of Educational Administration, 48*(3), 359–391.
- De Jong, B. A., & Elfring, T. (2010). How does trust affect the performance of ongoing teams? The mediating role of reflexivity, monitoring, and effort. *Academy of Management Journal, 53*(3), 535–549.
- deMarrais, K. (2004). Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience. In K. deMarrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in*



- education and social sciences* (pp. 51–68). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive Interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *Handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2018). *Missouri comprehensive data system*. Retrieved from <https://apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/Home.aspx>
- Dewey, J. (1902). The school as social center. *The Elementary School Teacher*, 3(2), 73–86.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York, NY: Collier.
- Douglass, B. G., & Moustakas, C. (1985). Heuristic inquiry: The internal search to know. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 25(3), 39–55.
- Drake, N. M. (1992). *The association between principal influence on teachers and student achievement* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (Accession Order no. 9321022)
- Driscoll, J. W. (1978). Trust and participation in organizational decision making as predictors of satisfaction. *Academy of Management Journal*, 21(1), 44–56.
- Dunlap, D. M., & Goldman, P. (1991). Rethinking power in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 27(1), 5–29.
- Earl, L. M., & Katz, S. (Eds.). (2006). *Leading schools in a data-rich world: Harnessing data for school improvement*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Ebmeier, H. (2003). How supervision influences teacher efficacy and commitment: An investigation of a path model. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 18(2), 110–141.

- Edgeron, D. E., Kritsonis, W. A., & Herrington, D. (2006). *The critical role of the teacher-principal relationship in the improvement of student achievement in public schools of the United States*.
- Ellingson, L. L. (2009). *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Enns, R. (1993). Experiencing the fourth wall: A narrative of graduate teacher education in curriculum. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 23(1), 37–61.
- Enns, R. J. (2007). There is an alternative stream of inquiry in curriculum that is mostly hidden to curriculum. In F. M. Connelly (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of curriculum and instruction* (pp. 431–439). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Firestone, W. A. (1988). Building commitment in urban high schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 10(4), 285–299.
- Fishbein, S., & Osterman, K. (2001). *Crossing over: Learning the roles and rules of the teacher-administrator relationship*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 463 276)
- Flood, A. (2010). Understanding phenomenology. *Nurse Researcher*, 17(2).
- Flood, L. D., & Angelle, P. S. (2017). Organizational influences of collective efficacy and trust on teacher leadership. *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management)*, 45(3).
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. (M. Bergman Ramos, Trans.). New York, NY: Continuum.

- Freire, C., & Fernandes, A. (2016). Search for trustful leadership in secondary schools: Is empowerment the solution? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 44(6), 892–916.
- Friend, J. I., & Thompson, S. C. (2010). The politics and sustainability of middle grades reforms. *Middle School Journal*, 41(5), 4–11.
- Fullan, M. G. (1995). The limits and the potential of professional development. In T. R. Guskey & M. Huberman (Eds.), *Professional development in education: New paradigms and practices* (pp. 253–267). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M. (2014). *Teacher development and educational change*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1996). *What's worth fighting for in your school?* (Rev. ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (2012). Reviving teaching with “professional capital.” *Education Week*, 31(33), 30–36.
- Fullan, M., Rincón-Gallardo, S., & Hargreaves, A. (2015). Professional capital as accountability. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 23, 15.
- Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust: The social virtues and the creation of prosperity* (Vol. 99). New York, NY: Free Press.
- Gambetta, D. (1998). Concatenations of mechanisms. In P. Hedström & R. Swedberg (Eds.), *Social mechanisms: An analytical approach to social theory* (pp. 102–124). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Geertz, C. (2003). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. *Culture: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, 1, 173–196.

- Geertz, C. (2008). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In T. Oakes (Ed.), *The cultural geography reader* (pp. 41–51). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Geertz, M. (1994). Thick description: Toward an interpretative theory of culture. In M. Martin & I. McIntyre (Eds.), *Readings in the philosophy of social science* (pp. 213–232). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Geijsel, F. P., Slegers, P. J., Stoel, R. D., & Krüger, M. L. (2009). The effect of teacher psychological and school organizational and leadership factors on teachers' professional learning in Dutch schools. *The Elementary School Journal, 109*(4), 406–427.
- Glaw, X., Inder, K., Kable, A., & Hazelton, M. (2017). Visual methodologies in qualitative research: Autophotography and photo elicitation applied to mental health research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*(1), 1609406917748215.
- Goddard, R. D., Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. K. (2001). A multilevel examination of the distribution and effects of teacher trust in students and parents in urban elementary schools. *The Elementary School Journal, 102*(1), 3–17.
- Gotham, K. F. (2014). *Race, real estate, and uneven development: The Kansas City experience, 1900-2000* (2nd ed.). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Grbich, C. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Green, J. (2019). Cross-cultural confusions amongst diverse colleagues: What teachers' narratives reveal about intergroup communication. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 40*(3), 386–398.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2004). Competing paradigms in qualitative research: Theories and issues. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice* (pp. 17–38). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hallam, P. R., & Hausman, C. (2009). Principal and teachers relations: Trust at the core of school improvement. In L. Saha & A. G. Dworkin (Eds.), *International handbook of research on teachers and teaching* (pp. 403–416). Boston, MA: Springer.
- Halpin, A.W., & Croft, D. B. (1963). *The organizational climate of schools*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Hargreaves, A. (2001a). Emotional geographies of teaching. *Teachers College Record*, 103(6), 1056–1080.
- Hargreaves, A. (2001b). The emotional geographies of teachers' relations with colleagues. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 35(5), 503–527.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2013). The power of professional capital: With an investment in collaboration, teachers become nation builders. *Journal of Staff Development*, 34(3), 36–39.
- Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. L. (2012). *The global fourth way: The quest for educational excellence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (1995). School culture, school effectiveness and school improvement. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 6(1), 23–46.
- Hayes, A. E. (1973). *A reappraisal of the Halpin-Croft Model of the Organizational Climate of Schools*. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED075934.pdf>
- Heide, M., Clarén, A., Johansson, C., & Simonsson, C. (2005). *Kommunikation & organisation* [Communication & organization; in Swedish]. Malmö: Liber.

- Heller, H. W. (1993). The relationship between teacher job satisfaction and principal leadership style. *Journal of School Leadership*, 3(1), 74–86.
- Hoerr, T. R. (1996). Collegiality: A new way to define instructional leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 77(5), 380–381.
- Holme, J. J., & Rangel, V. S. (2012). Putting school reform in its place: Social geography, organizational social capital, and school performance. *American Educational Research Journal*, 49(2), 257–283. doi: 10.3102/0002831211423316
- Holste, J. S., & Fields, D. (2010). Trust and tacit knowledge sharing and use. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 14(1), 128-140.
- Honig, M. I. (2012). District central office leadership as teacher: How central office administrators support principals' development as instructional leaders. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(4), 733–774. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Höög, J., Johansson, O., & Olofsson, A. (2005). Successful principalship: The Swedish case. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(6), 595–606.
- Höög, J., Johansson, O., & Olofsson, A. (2009). Swedish successful schools revisited. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 47(6), 742–752.
- Hosmer, L. T. (1995). Trust: The connecting link between organizational theory and philosophical ethics. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(2), 379–403.
- Hoy, W. K. (n.d.). *Faculty trust: The Omnibus T-scale – Scoring key*. Retrieved from <https://www.waynehoy.com/faculty-trust/>
- Hoy, W. K. (1992). Faculty trust in colleagues: Linking the principal with school effectiveness. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 26(1), 38–45.

- Hoy, W. K., Gage III, C. Q., & Tarter, C. J. (2006). School mindfulness and faculty trust: Necessary conditions for each other? *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(2), 236–255.
- Hoy, W. K., Gage III, C. Q., & Tarter, C. J. (2007). School mindfulness and faculty trust. In W. K. Hoy & M. DiPaola (Eds.), *Essential ideas for the reform of American schools* (pp. 315–336). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Hoy, W. K., Hannum, J., & Tschannen-Moran, M. (1998). Organizational climate and student achievement: A parsimonious and longitudinal view. *Journal of School Leadership*, 8(4), 336–359.
- Hoy, W. K., & Sabo, D. J. (1998). *Quality middle schools: Open and healthy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Hoy, W. K., Smith, P. A., & Sweetland, S. R. (2002). The development of the organizational climate index for high schools: Its measure and relationship to faculty trust. *The High School Journal*, 86(2), 38–49.
- Hoy, W. K., & Tarter, J. (1997). *The road to open and healthy schools: A handbook for change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Hoy, W. K., Tarter, C. J., & Kottkamp, R. B. (1991). *Open schools/healthy schools*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Hoy, W. K., & Tschannen-Moran, M. (1999). Five faces of trust: An empirical confirmation in urban elementary schools. *Journal of School Leadership*, 9(3), 184–208.
- Hoy, W. K., & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2007). The conceptualization and measurement of faculty trust. In C. Miskel & W. K. Hoy (Eds.), *Studies in leading and organizing schools* (pp. 87–114). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

- Huber, J., Caine, V., Huber, M., & Steeves, P. (2013). Narrative inquiry as pedagogy in education: The extraordinary potential of living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories of experience. *Review of Research in Education, 37*(1), 212–242.
- Husserl, E. (1913/1982) (Ideas 1) *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy* (F. Kersten, Trans.). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Husserl, E. (1990). *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy: Second book studies in the phenomenology of constitution* (Vol. 3). Switzerland: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Ibarra, H. (1993). Personal networks of women and minorities in management—A conceptual framework. *Academy of Management Review, 18*(1), 56–87.
- Ibarra, H. (1995). Race, opportunity, and diversity of social circles in managerial networks. *Academy of Management Journal, 38*, 673–703.
- Inkpen, A. C., & Tsang, E. W. (2005). Social capital, networks, and knowledge transfer. *Academy of Management Review, 30*(1), 146–165.
- Jackson, P. (1968). *Life in classrooms*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Jacobson, S. (2011). Leadership effects on student achievement and sustained school success. *International Journal of Educational Management, 25*(1), 33–44.
- Jacobson, S. L., Brooks, S., Giles, C., Johnson, L., & Ylimaki, R. (2007). Successful leadership in three high-poverty urban elementary schools. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 6*(4), 291–317.
- James, L. R., & Jones, A. P. (1974). Organizational climate. *Psychological Bulletin, 81*(12), 1096.



- Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research, 79*(1), 491–525.
- Johnson, H. H. (2008). Mental models and transformative learning: The key to leadership development? *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 19*(1), 85–89.
- Johnson, L., Møller, J., Jacobson, S. L., & Wong, K. C. (2008). Cross-national comparisons in the international successful school principalship project (ISSPP): The USA, Norway and China. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 52*(4), 407–422.
- Josselson, R. (2007). The ethical attitude in narrative research: Principles and practices. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 537–566). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kanter, R. M. (1993). *Men and women of the corporation* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Kay, M. R. (2018). *Not light, but fire: How to lead meaningful race conversations in the classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Kincheloe, J. L. (2001). Describing the bricolage: Conceptualizing a new rigor in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 7*(6), 679–692.
- Kilicoglu, G., Kilicoglu, D. Y., & Karadag, E. (2017). Do schools fail to “walk their talk”? Development and validation of a scale measuring organizational hypocrisy. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 1*–31.
- Kozol, J. (2005). *The shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.

- Kraft, M. A., Marinell, W. H., & Shen-Wei Yee, D. (2016). School organizational contexts, teacher turnover, and student achievement: Evidence from panel data. *American Educational Research Journal*, 53(5), 1411–1449.
- Kreisberg, S. (1992). *Transforming power: Domination, empowerment, and education*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Kutsyruba, B., & Walker, K. (2015). The lifecycle of trust in educational leadership: An ecological perspective. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 18(1), 106–121.
- Kutsyruba, B., & Walker, K. D. (2016). The destructive effects of distrust: Leaders as brokers of trust in organizations. In A. H. Normore & J. S. Brooks (Eds.), *The dark side of leadership: Identifying and overcoming unethical practice in organizations* (pp. 133–154). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Kutsyruba, B., Walker, K., & Noonan, B. (2011). Restoring broken trust in the work of school principals. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 39(2).
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kwan, P. (2016). The effect of trust on the relationship between instructional leadership and student outcomes in Hong Kong secondary schools. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 25(1), 111–121.
- Lako, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

- Lapenta, F. (2011). Some theoretical and methodological views on photo-elicitation. In L. Pauwels & D. Mannay (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of visual research methods* (pp. 201–213). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lawson, H., Durand, F., Wilcox, K. C., Gregory, K. M., Schiller, K. S., & Zuckerman, S. J. (2017). The role of district and school leaders' trust and communications in the simultaneous implementation of innovative policies. *Journal of School Leadership*, 27(1), 31–67.
- Leithwood, K. (1994). Leadership for school restructuring. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 30(4), 498–518.
- Leithwood, K., Patten, S., & Jantzi, D. (2010). Testing a conception of how school leadership influences student learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(5), 671–706.
- Leithwood, K., Sun, J., & McCullough, C. (2019, June 7). How school districts influence student achievement. *Journal of Educational Administration*.
- Lesinger, F. Y., Altinay, F., Altinay, Z., & Dagli, G. (2017). Examining the role of leadership, trust for school culture and policy. *Quality & Quantity*, 1–24.
- Lewicki, R. J. & Weithoff, C. (2000). Trust, trust development, and trust repair. In M. Deutsch, & P. T. Coleman (Eds.), *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice* (pp. 104–136). New York, NY: Wiley & Sons.
- Li, L., Hallinger, P., & Walker, A. (2016). Exploring the mediating effects of trust on principal leadership and teacher professional learning in Hong Kong primary schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 44(1), 20–42.
- Lin, N. (2002). *Social capital: A theory of social structure and action* (Vol. 19). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Lincoln, Y. S., & Denzin, N. K. (Eds.). (2003). *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief* (Vol. 2). New York, NY: Rowman Altamira.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Louis, K. S. (1992). Comparative perspectives on dissemination and knowledge use policies: Supporting school improvement. *Knowledge, 13*(3), 287–304.
- Louis, K. S. (2006). Changing the culture of schools: Professional community, organizational learning, and trust. *Journal of School Leadership, 16*(5), 477–489.
- Louis, K. S. (2007). Trust and improvement in schools. *Journal of Educational Change, 8*(1), 1–24.
- Louis, K. S., Dretzke, B., & Wahlstrom, K. (2010). How does leadership affect student achievement? Results from a national US survey. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 21*(3), 315–336.
- Louis, K. S., & Murphy, J. (2016). Trust, caring and organizational learning: The leader's role. *Journal of Educational Administration, 55*(1), 103–126. Retrieved from <http://proxy.library.umkc.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.umkc.edu/docview/1854787512?accountid=14589>
- Louis, K. S., & Murphy, J. (2017). Trust, caring and organizational learning: The leader's role. *Journal of Educational Administration, 55*(1), 103-126.
- Macmillan, R. B., Meyer, M. J., & Northfield, S. (2004). Trust and its role in principal succession: A preliminary examination of a continuum of trust. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 3*(4), 275–294.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1999). *Designing qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Applied Social Research Methods Series: Vol. 41. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(3), 709–734.
- McAllister, D. J. (1995). Affect- and cognition-based trust as foundations for interpersonal cooperation in organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(1), 24–59.
- McEwan, E. (2003). *7 steps to effective instructional leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- McGregor, J. (2003). Making spaces: Teacher workplace topologies. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 11(3), 353–377.
- McNamara, K. H. (2010). Fostering sustainability in higher education: A mixed-methods study of transformative leadership and change strategies. *Environmental Practice*, 12(1), 48–58.
- Meier, J. (1995). The importance of relationship management in establishing successful interorganizational systems. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 4(2), 135–148.
- Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Meyer, M. J., Macmillan, R. B., & Northfield, S. (2009). Principal succession and its impact on teacher morale. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 12(2), 171–185.

- Mienczakowski, J. (1995). The theater of ethnography: The reconstruction of ethnography into theater with emancipatory potential. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1(3), 360–375.
- Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mishra, A. (1996). Organizational responses to crisis: The centrality of trust. In R. M. Kramer & T. R. Tyler (Eds.), *Trust in organizations: Frontiers of theory and research* (pp. 261–287). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mitchell, C. (2011). *Doing visual research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Møller, J. (2008, April). *Scandinavian approaches to school leadership*. Improving School Leadership Conference, Copenhagen.
- Moolenaar, N. M., Daly, A. J., & Slegers, P. J. (2010). Occupying the principal position: Examining relationships between transformational leadership, social network position, and schools' innovative climate. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(5), 623–670.
- Moolenaar, N. M., & Slegers, P. J. (2010). Social networks, trust, and innovation: How social relationships support trust and innovative climates in Dutch Schools. *Social Network Theory and Educational Change*, 97–114.
- Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: Design, methodology, and applications*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moye, M. J., Henkin, A. B., & Egley, R. J. (2005). Teacher-principal relationships: Exploring linkages between empowerment and interpersonal trust. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(3), 260–277.

- Naphapiet, J., & Ghoshal, S. (1998). Social capital, intellectual capital, and the organizational advantage. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(2), 242–266.
- National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical & Behavioral Research. (1978). *The Belmont report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research* (Vol. 2). Washington, DC: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.
- Nicklaus, J., & Ebmeier, H. (1999). The impact of peer and principal collaborative supervision on teachers' trust, commitment, desire for collaboration, and efficacy. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 14(4), 351–378.
- Nolan, A., & Molla, T. (2017). Teacher confidence and professional capital. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 62, 10–18.
- Noonan, B., Walker, K., & Kutsyuruba, B. (2008). Trust in the contemporary principalship. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 85, 1–17.
- Northfield, S. (2014). Multi-dimensional trust: How beginning principals build trust with their staff during leader succession. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 17(4), 410–441.
- Odhiambo, G., & Hii, A. (2012). Key stakeholders' perceptions of effective school leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 40(2), 232–247.
- Ollerenshaw, J. A., & Creswell, J. W. (2002). Narrative research: A comparison of two restorying data analysis approaches. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(3), 329–347.
- O'Neill, O. (2002). *A question of trust*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Pace, C. R., & Stern, G. G. (1958). An approach to the measure of psychological characteristics of college environments. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 49*, 269–277.
- Pain, H. (2012). A literature review to evaluate the choice and use of visual methods. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 11*, 303–319.
- Patton, M. (2002a). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002b). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative Social Work, 1*(3), 261–283.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Penuel, W. R., Riel, M., Krause, A. E., & Frank, K. A. (2009). Analyzing teachers' professional interactions in a school as social capital: A social network approach. *Teachers College Record, 111*(1), 124–163.
- Phillion, J. (2002). *Narrative inquiry in a multicultural landscape: Multicultural teaching and learning*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Polanyi, M. (1967). *The tacit dimension*. Garden City, NY: Anchor.
- Polanyi, M., & Knowledge, P. (1958). *Towards a post-critical philosophy*. New York, NY: Harper Torchbooks.
- Poole, W. (1995). Reconstructing the teacher-administrator relationship to achieve systemic change. *Journal of School Leadership, 5*(6), 565–596.
- Power, M. (1994). *The audit explosion*. London, UK: Demos.



- Power, M. (1997). *The audit society: Rituals of verification*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Putnam, R. D. (1993). The prosperous community. *The American Prospect*, 4(13), 35–42.
- Rhodes, J. E., Camic, P. M., Milburn, M., & Lowe, S. R. (2009). Improving middle school climate through teacher-centered change. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 37(6), 711–724.
- Richardson, L. (2003). Writing: A method of inquiry. In Y. S. Lincoln & N. K. Denzin (Eds.), *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief* (pp. 379–396). New York, NY: Rowman Altamira.
- Robinson, V. M. (2010). From instructional leadership to leadership capabilities: Empirical findings and methodological challenges. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 9(1), 1–26.
- Rotter, J. B. (1967). A new scale for the measurement of interpersonal trust. *Journal of Personality*, 35(4), 651–665.
- Sallee, A. (2014). *Building meaningful relationships and enhancing teacher efficacy: A study of the quality of the leader follower relationship and its impact on teacher efficacy* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, TN.
- Scott, J. A., & Halkias, D. (2016). Consensus processes fostering relational trust among stakeholder leaders in a middle school: A multi-case study. *International Leadership Journal*, 8(3).
- Sebring, P., Allensworth, E., Bryk, A., Easton, J., & Luppescu, S. (2006). *The essential supports for school improvement* (Research Report). Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

- Sergiovanni, T. J. (2007). *Rethinking leadership: A collection of articles*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Simmonds, S. R. (2013). *Curriculum implications for gender equity in human rights education*. (Doctoral dissertation). NWU, Potchefstroom.
- Simmonds, S., Roux, C., & Avest, I. T. (2015). Blurring the boundaries between photovoice and narrative inquiry: A narrative-photovoice methodology for gender-based research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 14(3), 33–49.
- Smith, J. B., & Barclay, D. W. (1997). The effects of organizational differences and trust on the effectiveness of selling partner relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 61(1), 3–21.
- Stern, G. G. (1970). *People in context: Measuring person-environment in education and industry*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Stump, M. K. (2016). *Trust, transformational leadership, and collective teacher efficacy in an urban school setting*. Retrieved from <https://shareok.org/handle/11244/47033>
- Supovitz, J., Sirinides, P., & May, H. (2010). How principals and peers influence teaching and learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(1), 31–56.
- Sultan, N. (2018). *Heuristic inquiry: Researching human experience holistically*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sutcliffe, K., & Weick, K. E. (2009). Information overload revisited. In G. P. Hodgkinson, & W. H. Starbuck (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of organizational decision making*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Tarter, C. J., Bliss, J. R., & Hoy, W. K. (1989). School characteristics and faculty trust in secondary schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 25(3), 294–308.

- Thomas, A. R. (1976). The organizational climate of schools. *International Review of Education*, 22, 441–463.
- Trow, M. (1994). *Managerialism and the academic profession: Quality and control*. London, UK: Quality Support Centre.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (1998). *Trust and collaboration in urban elementary schools* (Doctoral dissertation). Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2003). Transformational leadership and trust. *Studies in Leading and Organizing Schools*, 2(11), 157–169.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2009). Fostering teacher professionalism in schools: The role of leadership orientation and trust. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 45(2), 217–247.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2014). *Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Barr, M. (2004). Fostering student learning: The relationship of collective teacher efficacy and student achievement. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 3(3), 189–209.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. & Gareis, C. R. (2015a). Faculty trust in the principal: An essential ingredient in high performing schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 53(1), 66–92.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. & Gareis, C. R. (2015b). Principals, trust, and cultivating vibrant schools. *Societies*, 5, 256–276.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. (1998). Trust in schools: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Journal of Educational Administration* 36(4), 334–352.

- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. K. (2000). A multidisciplinary analysis of the nature, meaning, and measurement of trust. *Review of Educational Research, 70*(4), 547–593.
- Van Knippenberg, D., & Sitkin, S. B. (2013). A critical assessment of charismatic-transformational leadership research: Back to the drawing board? *The Academy of Management Annals, 7*(1), 1–60.
- Van Maele, D., & Van Houtte, M. (2009). Faculty trust and organizational school characteristics: An exploration across secondary schools in Flanders. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 45*(4), 556–589.
- Vodicka, D. (2007). *Social capital in schools: Teacher trust for school principals and the social networks of teachers* (Doctoral dissertation). Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA.
- Wahlstrom, K. L., & Louis, K. S. (2008). How teachers experience principal leadership: The roles of professional community, trust, efficacy, and shared responsibility. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(4), 458–495.
- Walker, B., & Kutsyuruba, K. (2016, December 8). The seven deadly narratives of leadership. In A. H. Normore, & J. S. Brooks (Eds.), *The dark side of leadership: Identifying and overcoming unethical practice in organizations* (pp. 207–233). Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing.
- Walker, K., Kutsyuruba, B., & Noonan, B. (2011). The fragility of trust in the world of school principals. *Journal of Educational Administration, 49*(5), 471–494.
- Wang, H., Law, K. S., Hackett, R. D., Wang, D., & Chen, Z. X. (2005). Leader-member exchange as a mediator of the relationship between transformational leadership and

- followers' performance and organizational citizenship behavior. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(3), 420–432.
- Weick, K. E., & Sutcliffe, K. M. (2001). *Managing the unexpected* (Vol. 9). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 35(1), 89–106.
- Wilcox, K. C., Lawson, H. A., & Angelis, J. I. (2015). Classroom, school and district impacts on minority student literacy achievement. *Teachers College Record*, 117(10). Retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=18049>
- Witherspoon, P. D. (1996). *Communicating leadership: An organizational perspective*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zand, D. E. (1972). Trust and managerial problem solving. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 229–239.
- Zucker, L. G. (1986). Production of trust: Institutional sources of economic structure, 1840-1920. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 8, 53–111.

## VITA

Stephen Jackson Moore was born in Edina, Minnesota in November of 1984 to Stephen Douglas and Karen Louise Moore. He grew up in Blue Springs, Missouri, where he graduated from Blue Springs High School. After matriculating to Augustana University in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to study chemistry, Stephen transferred and completed a Bachelor of Science in English Education at Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri, where he was a member of education honors society, Kappa Delta Pi. Stephen finished a Master's of Science in Educational Administration shortly thereafter and completed his building administration credentials.

After teaching a year in Republic, Missouri, while finishing his Master's, Stephen moved with his wife, Eva, to the Kansas City area so she could pursue her entrepreneurial dreams and be closer to family. Stephen has spent time as an English teacher in urban, rural, and suburban schools, teaching almost every course imaginable in grades 6–12. During the course of study for his Ph.D., he has been blessed with two wonderful children, bought his first home, and run one full and three half marathons. He is active in his church community near the UMKC campus, Second Presbyterian Church, where he spent three years on the Board of Deacons organizing ways to reach out to people in need.

After completing his degree requirements, he plans to continue serving students in the Lee's Summit R-7 School District's alternative education program at Summit Ridge Academy. In the near future, his ambitions include moving into a building leadership role as an assistant principal, continuing consulting with the Greater Kansas City Writing Project, and possibly expanding upon research into teacher narratives of principal trust.