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Teacher Identity and the Role of Relational Coaching

Melinda R. Ehmer
Purdue University

TEACHER IDENTITY AND THE ROLE OF RELATIONAL COACHING

by

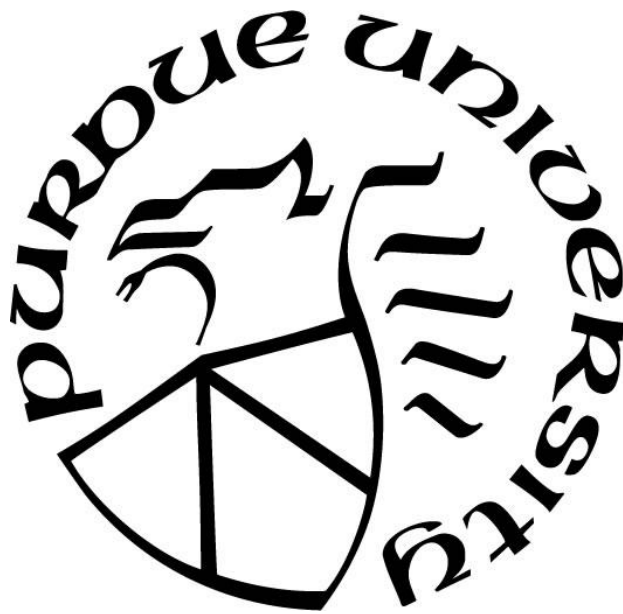**Melinda R. Ehmer**

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THE PURDUE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Dr. Marilyn A. Hirth, Chair

     Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Dr. James H. Freeland

     Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Dr. F. Richard Olenchak

     Department of Educational Studies

Dr. Blake Allan

     Department of Counseling Psychology

Approved by:

     Dr. F. Richard Olenchak

       Head of the Graduate Program

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the hundreds of students I have worked with over the past 23 years. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to love and support you as a teacher, principal, mentor, and friend.

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For years I had pondered when I would go back to school to get my Ph.D. It was not a question of if, but a question of when. The years just kept rolling by, and I finally realized one day I just needed to do it. What was I waiting for? I have adopted Nike's trademark slogan, "Just Do It" as my life's motto. The decision to move forward with acquiring my Ph.D. set the wheels in motion to "just do it" in other areas of my life as well and as I reflect on the journey, I realize I have become braver, stronger, more resilient, and in many ways, wiser. During this journey, I have gone through a treacherous divorce, changed positions in my principal career leaving a small, tiny elementary school of 350 to a large urban middle school of nearly 850, sent my first child off to college, embraced my twin boys entering high school, lost one of my closest and dearest companions, my dog Chloe, to diabetes, and most recently, rekindled with the love of my life and am now planning a wedding. Without the support and encouragement of my dearest family and friends, pursuing this degree amidst all life had in store for me these past four years, would not have been possible.

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PREFACE

In my third year of principalship, the superintendent in my school district initiated a corporation wide initiative to facilitate professional growth and improvement through the Adaptive Schools Cognitive Coaching approach to professional learning. The goal of the Adaptive School's (2017) philosophy "is to develop the collective identity and capacity of organizational members as collaborators and inquirers and leaders" (Collaborative Thinking). According to Adaptive Schools Collaborative Thinking (2017), "Human organizations and individuals can be adapted to a specific niche or can become adaptive, flexing to meet the challenges of a changing world. To be adaptive means to change form while clarifying identity." I was asked to select a teacher within my school to serve as my learning partner throughout the Adaptive Schools learning process. Together, we would explore professional growth and learning together by presuming positive supposition, listening, responding and reflecting upon our work. I intentionally selected a teacher that I was struggling to form a positive relationship with. This particular teacher was resistant to my leadership style and had not been open to change within the building. In turn, I was becoming frustrated, even sometimes, more directive and less collaborative in my approach with the teacher. My thought process was that if the teacher and I were placed into a professional learning environment and in some ways "forced" to work closely together, our relationship might improve. Simultaneously, the teacher began to experience extreme behavior difficulties with a second grade African American male student in her classroom. As a result, the student was being sent out of the classroom almost on a daily basis. In my meetings with the teacher regarding discipline issues with the child, I began using the techniques and coaching strategies that were offered to us in Adaptive Schools with the hopes that the teacher would start employing them directly with the student. However, what occurred was that the teacher was becoming less tolerant and patient with the child, and quite frankly, very rude and disrespectful to him. A pinnacle moment occurred in a parent-teacher conference when the teacher told the child's mother the boy had ADHD, needed testing for an emotional impairment, needed to be retained and that there was absolutely nothing she could do to help him. Her tone was condescending, intimidating and mean spirited. In that moment, I realized that the months we had spent together in Adaptive Schools training did not lead to a change or "adaptivity" in her mindset or behaviors. As a principal, I had the imperative duty to

remove the child from her classroom and seek direct consequences for the teacher's actions which were extremely inappropriate. Due to the small weight assigned to student-teacher relationships on the district evaluation tool, I was not able to recommend removal or termination for this teacher. Instead, I had to continue to find ways to support the teacher in relationship building, including a more directive, punitive approach, until she decided to retire at the end of the year.

Since that time, I have encountered similar situations. One of my greatest struggles as a principal has been working with teachers who are proficient teaching content, but have great difficulty in forming positive relationships with students. As a principal, I am constantly seeking strategies and techniques for assisting teachers with their mindset and attitude. I have also experienced difficulty with teachers who negatively impact staff morale by their constant cynicism and criticism regarding students, their peers and their profession in general. This struggle may be based upon the teacher's own identity, values, and capacity to be relational. A teacher's own identity to be relational may be hindered by their own personal experiences. When a teacher struggles to form a positive relationship with a student, the result is often an increase in discipline issues, a decrease in student achievement, and an increase in the frustration level and ultimate success of both the teacher and student.

Hattie (2009) poignantly describes passion in education. In the world of teaching, successful teachers have great depth of knowledge and passion for the subject they teach as well as a love and passion for connecting with students. According to Hattie (2009), "passion reflects the thrills as well as frustrations of learning - it can be infectious, it can be taught, it can be modeled, and it can be learnt. It is among the most prized outcomes of schooling . . . it requires a love of the content, an ethical caring stance to wish to imbue others with a liking or even love of the discipline being taught" (p. 24). Hall and Simeral (2015) state, "In an age where data drive all that we do, it's easy to forget that education is a people-centered business. Teachers are human, and that's a good thing. Even the push for online learning, virtual classes, and a computer for every child relies heavily on the fact that there's a person behind it all. Robots, even those with artificial intelligence capabilities, cannot replicate a teacher's ability to build relationships, create dynamic learning experiences, provide differentiated feedback, and spur students' love of learning" (p. 5). True teachers are those who have both a love for the content they teach and a love for the children whom they serve. One passion cannot exist without the

other. If this theory is true, why is it then that some teachers struggle in building positive relationships with students?

ABSTRACT

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Committee Chair: Marilyn A. Hirth

The purpose of this study was to identify specific strategies that principals use when coaching teachers who struggle to develop positive relationships with students. Using a qualitative case study design, six principals were identified through the use of a demographic survey. The principals were interviewed about their experiences. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded for data analysis. The principals' narratives, emerging themes and sub themes provide insight into their experiences with both relational and non-relational teachers. The emerging themes are: (a) relationship building for teachers and students; (b) coaching strategies; (c) roadblocks and deficiencies; and (d) identity and belief systems. Dilts Nested Levels of Learning provide the conceptual framework for this study. There were four Dilts areas that emerged as themes throughout the principals responses: (a) behavior; (b) capabilities; (c) belief systems; and (d) identity. Principal narratives provide evidence for how the nested levels coincide with the formation of identity. Three assertions serve as the foundation to provide specific coaching strategies to teachers who struggle in the area of building positive relationships with students: (a) In order for teachers to even consider working on relationship building with students, they must first have a trusting, positive, respectful and supportive relationship with their principal; (b) Teachers can be classified as "relationship teachers" or "instructional/content teachers." A master teacher has both the ability to master both of these areas effectively. An instructional teacher can become more relational through coaching if they are open and willing to make changes; (c) While coaching and working with teachers, a principal must often "dance" between providing support as well as being more directive with teachers. The researcher created two theories based on the assertions. EDIRS provides a model of teachers ability to be instructional, relational, or both. Ehmer's theory of the dance represents principals' skill to dance between providing supportive and directive approaches.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

What exactly does it mean to be relational? Furthermore, does a teacher really need to have relational qualities in order for learning to occur? In the big picture, do students learn anyway with non-relational teachers? Research varies on defining exactly what relational teachers do differently than non-relational teachers, but there are definite patterns of relational behaviors that support relational teachers do have an impact on student success more so than non-relational teachers.

For some, relational can be described as displaying warmth, affection, kindness and caring through body language. It is not uncommon for primary grade teachers, especially those in preschool and Kindergarten to hug their students and not think twice about it. According to Ostrosky and Jung, "In early childhood settings, each moment that teachers and children interact with one another is an opportunity to develop positive relationships" (Ostrosky and Jung, para. 2). These interactions include making eye contact, have face-to-face interactions with children, talking in a calm, pleasant voice, using simple language and greeting students warmly. For young children, "teachers let children know they care about them through warm, responsive, physical contact such as giving pats on the back, hugging, and holding young children in their laps." Through these positive interactions, teachers are modeling for children how to interact positively with others. According to the researchers, children who have secure teacher-student relationships early on go on to build healthy relationships with future teachers as well as their peers (Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning).

For others, the thought of hugging a child is uncomfortable. Some teachers are very cognizant about not wanting to send a wrong message and are cautious about showing any type of physical attention towards a student for fear of being misunderstood or accused of sexual

abuse. Bancroft (1997) addresses this issue as a legitimate concern when discussing teachers' fears about liability. Teachers' fears are heightened by media stories which create paranoia and anxiety. Some teachers simply do not show affection in this manner because they themselves are uncomfortable with any type of physical displays of affection. Gender certainly comes into play here. Both male and female teachers may feel uncomfortable hugging a student of the opposite sex, although research shows that men seem to feel this pressure more so than women. Johnson (2008) addresses this issue when discussing why so few men go into the field of education. Men specifically feel pressure and stress to avoid physical contact with students "for fear of perceived impropriety" (p. 5). Johnson also points out that there is especially fear amongst new teachers and pre-service teachers to show physical affection. Although this fear certainly exists with legitimate social concerns about child abuse tied to educators, there is certainly a concern that children are deprived of necessary physical touch for children. Sapon-Shevin (2009) describe no-touch policies in schools as "dehumanizing" and driving "loving, caring and affectionate" teachers away from the profession (p. 175). Sapon-Sheven (2009) offer personal accounts from both a male teacher and a male guidance counselor who both report the no-touch policy within their school district only applies to male teachers. The guidance counselor states, "Not being able to touch kids is the most frustrating part of my job. . . it makes me feel not authentic with them" (p. 175). Carlson and Nelson (2006) argue that lack of physical touch creates "insecure attachment" which can be described as the outcome of lack of love, nurturing and affection often leading to aggressive behaviors, rage, violence, lack of self-esteem and empathy for others. Hence, teachers who wish to be relational by showing affection hold back due to fear about being judged and misperceived.

Relational teachers allow students to see them as human beings. Wolk (2003) states that students need to view and understand their teachers as real people. When teachers share their personal hopes, dreams, and stories about life experiences, students connect with them. Growing relationships with students through personal stories about life helps students to develop their own traits of empathy and relational skills. In addition, humor is one of the best ways to promote relationship building.

Wolk (2003) also points out that for some teachers "relationships are their teaching"(p. 14). Wolk describes these classrooms as democratic classrooms in which "teachers win their students' hearts *while* they are getting inside their students' heads. How they teach and what they teach play integral roles in developing their relationships with students" (p.14). Wolk points out that in democratic classrooms good teaching and good curriculum create good discipline. In democratic classrooms, classroom management, relationships, a mutual respect between the teacher and students, as well as classroom engagement all work in unity to create a positive atmosphere, which in turn, leads to positive relationship building.

Yet, teachers who hold very high expectations, are strict, and do not let students slide can also be described as relational in a different way. Even though these particular teachers are strict, they have established a sense of trust in the classroom and students know they care. These teachers have been called "warm demanders." Bondy and Ross (2008) describe empathy in the form of a "warm demander." Warm demanders are teachers who have "unconditional positive regard" for their students. "At the heart of unconditional positive regard is a belief in the individual's capacity to succeed" (p.65). According to Bondy and Ross (2008) there are three actions that the warm demander takes: build relationships deliberately, learn about students' cultures and communicate an expectation of success. Warm demanders may be misunderstood at

first because their communication style may be firm, creating the misconception of a no-nonsense and structured environment without compassion or care for students. The difference between warm demanders and non-empathetic teachers is that the warm demanders have already created those personal, strong relationships with students balanced with high expectations and positive regard for student learning and achievement.

Marzano and Marzano (2003) state that effective teacher-student relationships have nothing to do with the teacher's personality at all, but rather specific teacher behaviors; teachers who display good classroom management, exhibit appropriate levels of cooperation and are aware of high needs students. The researchers point to three specific components of relationship that result in positive classroom dynamics: balance between dominance, cooperation, and having an awareness of at-risk students and their needs. In this context, the concept of relational is not based upon a teacher's personality which may be warm, kind and caring. Rather, in these classrooms, a teacher creates a relational environment by exhibiting good classroom management skills and displaying an understanding of how to react to students and support students who display inappropriate or challenging behaviors.

The bottom line for educators is that relationship matters. The research is extensive on the impact of positive teacher student relationships and many models are offered to support teachers in relationship building (Boynton & Boynton 2005; Erwin 2010; Wolk 2003; Mendes 2003; Moustakas 1994; Petty 2015; Schaps 2003; Garfield 2014; Doubet & Hockett 2015; Kelly 2003; Sullo 2009; Fisher and Frey 2016; Tucker 2016; Kuntz 2011; Fornaciari 2016; Aust and Vine 2003, Mendler 2001; Wubbels, Levy & Brekelmans 1997). However, what occurs when a teacher lacks the natural instinct, tendency and ability to build positive relationships with students? Can relationship skills be taught? What specific characteristics are present in teachers

who have the capacity to build relationships with students? What specifically do "relationship teachers" do in the classroom that is different than a "non-relational" teacher? What can be done to coach non-relational teachers to be more effective in building and maintaining positive relationships? What specific strategies can principals offer to support teachers who struggle with relationship building?

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to discover what specific strategies are useful in supporting a principal to improve a teacher who struggles with building positive relationships with students though the instrumental case design. Intrinsic case studies (Johnson & Christensen 2014) seek to understand the "inner workings" of a single case while instrumental case studies (Johnson & Christensen 2014) seek to understand how the case applies to a larger or more general context. According to Johnson and Christensen, "the researcher chooses the case to develop and/or test a theory or to understand some important issue better" (p. 436). The important issue identified in this particular case study can be applied across the broad spectrum of education and allow researchers to discern whether or not relational coaching can positively impact a teacher's ability to build positive relationships with students or if teachers truly are inhibited by the formation of their own identity. This case study was chosen based on the researcher's own experience with supporting non-relational teachers and the researcher's desire to work in the field.

Phenomenological research (Johnson & Christensen 2014) seeks to delve into the participant's experience, in essence, to study the participant's experience through their "inner world of consciousness" (p. 444). One assumption of the participant is that the participant already has developed a "core identity" made up of beliefs, values, morals, behaviors, opinions, fears, and emotions that derive from the participant's personal experience and environment.

Phenomenological research is appropriate in this study to actively observe and experience right alongside the participant their reactions, feelings, emotional responses, beliefs, and perspectives related to specific relational qualities observable in a classroom juxtaposed with the absence of relational qualities that are non-existent in a classroom.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers who struggle to form positive relationships with students negatively impact likelihood for student achievement and success, most specifically with academically at-risk students and those students displaying at-risk behaviors. Principals struggle to find support and assistance for teachers who are non-relational, especially if teachers have a natural disposition to be non-relational. Evaluative tools may assist principals in holding teachers accountable for negative attitudes, having the ability to work well with peers, and classroom management; however, most evaluative tools are geared towards instructional skills and the weights in each evaluative area do not support terminating a teacher simply based on the lack of the ability to develop positive relationships. Coaching models do offer some supports in having conversations with teachers regarding specific areas of growth, but most coaching models also tend to be concentrated on instruction.

Significance

This study will provide research about what specific strategies principals can use to work with teachers who have a natural disposition to be non-relational. Principals can use these specific strategies to facilitate teacher growth and change which will ultimately lead to greater success for students. When teachers are able to form positive relationships with students, students are more likely to perform at higher levels of success, remain in school, and decrease at

risk behaviors. Often times, the only tool a principal has to assist with relational issues is the actual evaluation instrument which can be viewed as a punitive measure depending on a teacher's mindset regarding growth and development. This study seeks to provide a principal with additional specific coaching techniques directly from the field that have the potential to increase a teacher's ability to become more relational with students.

Research Question

The current study seeks to understand specifically what strategies are useful in supporting a principal to improve a teacher who struggles with building positive relationships with students through the following question:

1. What specific strategies have been useful for a principal to coach a teacher who has been identified as non-relational?

Conceptual Framework

Robert Dilts (1990) "Nested Levels of Learning" will provide the conceptual framework for this study. Dilts research derives from Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), the three most valuable components that make up an individual's human experience: neurology, language, and programming. According to Dilts (2016), NLP describes the "fundamental dynamics between mind (neuro) and language (linguistic) and how their interplay affects our body and behavior (programming)." Dilts (1990) five nested levels of learning include five biological and social systems that individuals work with most often: environment, behavior, capabilities, belief systems, and identity. Garmston and Wellman (2013) explain that the nested levels are embedded in one another and "each level is more abstract than the next but has a greater degree of impact on the individual" (p. 121).

At the most basic level, Dilts explains (2014) that the environment provides the context and constraints under which people operate. This might be an individual's home environment or workplace. Behaviors define what an individual does, most specifically, what behaviors, interactions, patterns, and communications exist within the particular environment. Strategies, skills, and capabilities define how individuals guide and direct their behaviors within a particular context. Individuals may ask how can I use the skills I have within this situation or environment. Values and beliefs are formulated and determine meaning based on motivations and guidelines behind an individual's capabilities. Finally, values and beliefs make up and individual's identity which provides the individual's sense of role and mission within respect to the larger system.

Dilts (2014) provides very basic examples for understanding how the nested levels represent the makeup of an individual's identity.

- That object in your environment is dangerous. *(Environment)*

- Your actions in that particular context were dangerous. *(Behavior)*

- Your inability to make effective judgments is dangerous. *(Capability)*

- Your beliefs and values are dangerous. *(Belief System)*

- You are a dangerous person. *(Identity)*

To better understand how the nested levels apply to the makeup of a teacher's identity, the following example is provided in an educational context.

- Environment: That object in your classroom is comforting. *(e.g. Themed picture books, stuffed animals, journals, positive messages and bulletin board displays make up a positive environment.)*

- Behavior: Your actions in the classroom are comforting. *(e.g. Kind words and gestures, physical touch, hugs, soothing voice, calm demeanor are comforting behaviors.)*

- Capability: Your ability as a teacher to make effective judgments. *(e.g. Understanding about when to talk to a student who is upset or leave the student alone, understanding about when to give a student physical space or when to approach a student represent the teacher's capability to make good decisions.)*

- Belief System: You value making students feel comfortable in the classroom. *(e.g. You believe as an educator that all students should feel safe and welcomed into the classroom.)*

- Identity: You are a comforting teacher. *(e.g. You value making students feel welcome and comforted and so you identify as a comforting teacher.)*

In a larger context, Dilts work with NLP and the Nested Levels of Learning in particular have been applied to coaching and training models, most specifically the Adaptive Schools Model for effectively training groups and organizations. Garmston and Wellman (2013) contend that all levels must be addressed in group or organization change. From the standpoint of providing professional development in organizations, "without attention to these multiple levels of learning, professional development efforts ineffectively operate as activity level thinking" (p. 122). Garmston and Wellman (2014) contend that change within organizations comes with identity which is a deep level of personal change. They state, "Beliefs, values, mental models, and assumptions are derived from experience interpreted through the lens of identity" (p. 123). According to Garmston and Wellman change occurs over time with deep metacognition and thought connected to a crisis situation. Individuals must be placed in a new environment, a new situation to recreate their nested levels of learning. A new environment creates a new condition for behaviors, capabilities, belief systems, and then a new identity. "A group will tend to cling to

existing models unless a crisis intervenes. . . it is not enough to understand new mental models; they must be acted upon and put into practice" (p. 124).

Garmston and Wellman (2013) explore ways in which groups apply the principles of the "Nested Levels of Learning" to facilitate organizational change. In mediating teacher growth and change, requirements for facilitators of growth include being an informed participant, being skilled in the area of norms development for meetings (establishing and holding to group norms), being intentional about meeting time, and making good use of meeting time. Facilitators become the driving force behind asking key processing questions that consistently "focus group members' conscious attention on multiple levels of nested learning" (p. 126).

Within this particular study, a teacher's lack of relational skills serves as the crisis. Dilts "Nested Levels of Learning" provide the lens for determining which characteristics make up a teacher's identity and how this mental model impacts relationships with students. The principal serves as the facilitator of growth, the driving force behind asking key processing questions to determine if a teacher's non-relational identity can be altered or changed.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this study, the following terms will be used to represent the concepts as defined:

Identity - An individual's identity seeks to answer the question, "Who am I?" A personal identity is made of up an individual's environment, experiences, personal beliefs, values, capabilities and actions. A personal identity is a concept an individual develops about oneself and evolves throughout life. It is ever changing depending on changes in one's environment, experiences, personal beliefs, values, capabilities and actions.

Teacher Identity - A teacher identity seeks to answer the question, "Who am I as a teacher?" A teacher's identity is a combination of their own personal identity tied to environment, experiences, personal beliefs, values, capabilities and actions as well as their professional identities tied to environment (where a teacher works), experiences

(what types of experiences a teacher has had within the environment), personal beliefs (beliefs about teaching tied to the teacher's own teaching and learning experiences), values (professional values), capabilities (what professional capabilities the teacher embodies) and actions (how the teacher performs in the classroom).

Reflection - The process of examination, thought and consideration given to oneself used to promote growth and change.

Relational - The natural ability or inclination to form positive relationships with others.

Non-Relational - The natural ability or inclination to not form positive relationships with others.

Relationships - An intentional investment of time and energy into forming connections or partnerships with others.

Empathy - The act of caring; showing kindness, forgiveness and understanding towards others; giving others a second chance when they have failed.

Coaching - The act of providing assistance, support, guidance and help to an individual in specific identified growth areas or to an individual who is struggling.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the overwhelming amount of research regarding the value and necessity of positive teacher-student relationships, there is still an archaic school of thought centered around a model of punishment as a means to correct student behaviors and attitudes. Dr. Robert Brooks (2016) explains that teachers are "caught between the two models," caught between using punishment to get students to behave or choosing to build relationships with children, especially in those children who demonstrate the most challenging of behaviors. A teacher's own identity and mindset will determine which model they will choose. Despite the research that supports the importance of student-teacher relationships, school discipline systems are still set up to punish students with very little rehabilitation or restoration. A teacher with a punitive mindset and identity, situated in a school with a negative discipline system only exacerbates discipline issues and further separates teachers and students from forming strong relationships.

A big challenge faced by school administrators is holding teachers accountable for their negative attitudes. A teacher can be exceptional at delivering instruction, yet lack relational skills. Administrators can document and evaluate teachers appropriately regarding relational concerns; however, when a teacher is good at instruction, there is usually not enough weight on an evaluation tool to terminate a teacher for lacking in the area of relationship building. Marzano (2012) addresses this issue when discussing the purposes of teacher evaluation. Marzano evaluated the Rapid Assessment of Teacher Effectiveness (RATE) teacher evaluation tool that was created to measure teacher competence in a classroom. He concluded that the RATE model efficiently identified skills related directly to pedagogy but was absent of skills related to classroom management and building student relationships. Marzano points out that research adamantly recognizes that both classroom management and relationship building are

cornerstones of effective teaching, yet the RATE model correlates student success directly with achievement tied to strong instruction which does not include these two pinnacle areas. How then can a principal effectively evaluate a teacher on student-relationship building if the tool they are using does not place enough emphasis on this particular skill?

Hence a principal's only recourse is to provide support, professional development and coaching for the teacher. In recent years, coaching has been a popular model for teacher improvement and growth, yet many coaching models center on instruction. Instructional coaching positions have even been created so that teachers can work one on one with a coach to improve instructional practice. Many principals have also been trained to instructional coaching models in an effort to support teachers. Hence, there seems to be a gap for those teachers who have mastered areas of instruction, yet need support and development in their ability to form relationships with students in the form of relational coaching.

The following literature examines, first and foremost, why relationships are so critical to student success and transformation, the negative impact that punitive measures have on students' overall attitudes and emotional well-being, the significance of a teacher's empathetic mindset, the creation of a teacher's identity, and finally, the important role of relational coaching.

Why Relationships Matter

The core of all educational success begins with relationships. Tomlinson (2016) discusses the "real essence" of teaching as transformative in which a teacher is able to look at each individual student, despite shortcomings, behaviors and challenges to seeing the "uniqueness of each child" and helping that child to see their own uniqueness as well. Immordino-Yang (2015) researched the connection between emotion and learning. She suggests that emotions are a motivator for learning and that thinking and learning are connected

directly to emotion because students think deeply about things they care about. According to Immordino-Yang (2015), "emotion steers our thinking." Teachers, then, must find ways to engage students with emotional learning.

The power of relationship is even more critical for at risk students (Wormeli 2016). According to Joyce (2015), "strong connections to school and positive student-teacher relationships offer numerous social, emotional, and academic benefits for youths" (p. 185). Joyce's (2015) study examined sexual minority youths and their connectedness to school and student-teacher experiences. The study included 20,745 adolescents who were identified as sexual minority youths. The participants were surveyed as to their perceptions of belonging, safety and prejudice. Without the support of caring teachers, less harsh discipline policies, and teachers who are fair, the study revealed that sexual minority youths have low school connectedness, less student-teacher relationships, and are at risk for negative health behaviors such as drinking and drug use.

Emdin (2016) addresses the issue of student teacher relationships related to identity and culture. Teacher who do not share similar cultural experiences to their students, do not exhibit the same knowledge or understanding as those teachers who live and work in similar cultures of their students. Emdin (2016) further points that even in schools where students get good grades, students who lack similar culture experiences with teachers, do not push themselves to higher levels of academic rigor, " . . . a natural relationship to students is hampered by the teachers' unfamiliarity with their culture" (Emdin, 2016, para. 3). Emdin specifically discusses cultural differences between teachers who are predominantly white and students who are of a different race and ethnic background. "For teachers who may be unfamiliar with the everyday realities of youth who don't look, talk, dress, or act like the teacher, a natural relationship to students is

hampered by the teachers' unfamiliarity with their culture" (Emdin, 2016, para.3). Students may get good grades, but in reality, are underperforming due to the absence of relationship and a disconnect from the curriculum. Students who see themselves within the curriculum and share their own connections and experiences within the curriculum will reach higher levels of academic performance and rigor.

Reichert and Hawley (2014) discuss what relationships means to boys in looking at two particular studies related to why boys struggle in school. These studies look at what Reichert and Hawley refer to as "relational pedagogy" (p. 32). "In 2009, the International Boys' Schools Coalition contracted with the Center for the Study of Boys' and Girls' Lives at the University of Pennsylvania's graduate school of education to conduct a study of successful teaching practices with boys in 18 schools in six countries." When the boys were asked to discuss particular lessons that were successful for them, they could not do so without describing the way the teacher presented the lesson. In the second study, including boys from 35 schools and representing a wider economic and ethnic mix, boys and teachers were asked to provide feedback on what both the outcomes of both successful and failed relationships. Data was collected through written narratives, focus groups, interviews and workshops. Teachers reported negative experiences with boys based on their anxiety related to the subject matter, students' negative experiences and poor performance in previous years, and the reputation that students' had already determined of the course and of the teacher. Positive relationships centered around behavioral characteristics including a teacher's willingness to reach out to a student beyond classroom protocols, sharing a common interest, background, or specific characteristic, being willing to talk about and share personal experiences and being able to address and handle difficult discipline issues while showing personal vulnerability (p. 32-33). This research reveals

that relationship is the core of how successful teaching and learning are carried out. Relational characteristics of these types of teachers include those who reach out way beyond the regular teaching expectations, spark students' interests and choice, and are willing to accept and work with opposition.

Capern and Hammond (2014) studied student-teacher relationships by surveying secondary gifted students compared to secondary students with emotional behavioral disorders (EBD) to learn which behaviors were most important in identifying positive student teacher relationships. Using a mixed-methods approach, both surveys and focus groups were used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Focus groups consisted of both gifted and EBD students. Probing questions were used during the focus group discussions to triangulate the data from the surveys as well as uncover any new data. Survey results revealed ten primary behaviors that students feel are the most important in teachers establishing positive relationships with students. Some of the key behaviors described by students in both groups included teachers being non-discriminatory "against certain students due to race, ability level, etc.", teachers treating students with respect, teachers going beyond the textbook, sharing personal stories, having a sense of humor and not using punishment (p. 60).

Merritt, Wanless, Rimm-Kaufman and Cameron (2012) studied the impact of teacher's emotional support to students in the context of an early learning classroom in first grade over the course of two years. Data for this study were gathered from three sources: 333 kindergarten parents, 36 first-grade teachers, and classroom observations of 178 students conducted by research assistants. First, parents completed brief demographic questionnaires at kindergarten enrollment. Later, first-grade teachers rated student participants on their adjustment to school after the first 3 weeks of school. In the spring of first grade, teachers also rated students on three

social behaviors (aggression, rejection by peers, and prosocial behavior) and behavioral self-control. Classroom observations were made throughout the first-grade school year. The researchers concluded that emotionally supportive teachers are kind, warm, sensitive to the needs of each child and intentional and thoughtful in their responses to children. "They offer gentle guidance to students, engage in positive communication, and demonstrate respect through eye contact, respectful language and a warm and calm voice" (p. 143). Those teachers who are non-emotionally supportive show characteristics of "controlling behaviors, criticizing students, or using sarcastic language or punitive approaches" (p. 144). The results of this study show that children had lower aggression when placed with teachers who offered higher levels of emotional support. Furthermore, results of the study indicate that the emotional support of the teacher was vitally important for all children regardless of their socio demographic risks. This study supports the belief that children do need emotionally supportive adults in their lives which later inhabits children from being aggressive and non-empathetic to other adults and peers.

Cooper & Miness (2014) studied high school students and their perceptions related to their relationships with teachers. The researchers wanted to know if there is a relationship between teacher care and understanding and how understanding is necessary for care. In essence, the researchers wanted to know "if caring and understanding could be reciprocal, such that a teacher who cares about students tries to understand them and that a high level of understanding in turn gives teachers the information they need in order to care more effectively"(p. 265). Researchers received survey responses from 1,132 students from a racially and socioeconomically diverse student body from a large high school in Texas. The survey focused on student perceptions and engagement of their classes. From the survey results, five classes were selected to serve as instrumental case studies. Six to eight students from each of

these classes were then interviewed and asked to share their perceptions of teacher care and understanding. Findings show that students desire teachers who care and that teachers who care will demonstrate an understanding of the students they teach. The researchers make many recommendations that teachers must make to develop one on one relationships through "personal gestures." According to Cooper and Miness (2014) personal gestures include

> Checking in with students if they seem upset, expressing an interest in learning about individual students and their interests, following students' extra-curricular pursuits, and acknowledging their accomplishments outside the classroom. Individual academic gestures of care include letting students know if they are behind in class and providing means for catching up, encouraging students to work harder and expressing belief in their academic abilities, and circulating and helping students during independent work time (p. 285).

Teachers must also use time wisely to develop relationships with students and truly embrace understanding their students as a virtue. A school leader's responsibility is to provide time and opportunity for teachers to develop relationships with students which involve helping teachers to learn what relationships look and feel like. Administrators are also encouraged to match students and teachers appropriately and be willing to make student-teacher changes when relationships are not going well. This study is important in first showing how critical it is for teachers to truly understand their students' needs. If students feel deep, genuine concern and caring from a teacher, they will demonstrate success. Second, this study is helpful in assisting administrators with knowing how to support teachers needing help in the area of relationship building.

Rimm-Kaufman and Sandilos (2017) discuss the characteristics of both positive and negative student-teacher relationships. Positive relationships are characterized by students who feel strong connectedness to a teacher, openly share personal experiences, are motivated to perform better (even those who struggle academically), behave better in class and are more engaged in the learning process. Teachers who do not feel connected to students display

negativity through snide, sarcastic remarks. They often hone in on one or two students who are always "causing all of the trouble" or make generalized statements about being tired or worn out. Teachers who struggle with positive relationships will resort to more punitive measures in a classroom or whole group punishment.

Klem and Connell (2004) studied the connection between student engagement, relationship, and achievement in students at all three academic levels: elementary, middle and high school. The researchers used student records and survey data to look at how teacher support and engagement are critical to the future success of students. Using surveys from the Institute for Research and Reform in Education, data was collected from six elementary schools, three middle schools and one high school, all in an urban school district. In total, the sample size included 1,846 elementary students and 2,430 secondary students. Survey questions focused on finding links between teacher support, engagement, and academic success. Findings indicate that "teacher support is important to student engagement in school" (p. 270). Furthermore, "students who perceive their teachers as creating a caring, well-structured learning environment in which expectations are high, clear, and fair are more likely to report engagement in school" (p.270). Klern and Connell (2004) discerned that elementary students were much more likely to disengage in school than middle school students, probably due to the fact that elementary school students primarily have one instructor during the school day while middle school and high school students have opportunities to form relationships with several different teachers. If elementary students disengage early on, there is greater likelihood they will continue to disengage which is why it is so paramount for teachers at every grade level to develop positive, caring relationships with the students they teach.

Bonner (2014) studied the practices of highly successful mathematics teachers working with underserved students. The researched engaged in qualitative work by first conducting meetings within the neighborhood and the school community at churches, school events, and after school programs to identify teachers and to gain insight as to community perceptions of successful teachers within the school. Parents within the school community as well as other important community members provided the names of who they felt were successful math teachers. Once three teachers were identified, the researcher then conducted classroom observations and interviews with the specific teachers for 4-6 weeks spanning several years. All three teachers were female, each representing a different race - African American, White, and Mexican/Arab. All worked with low-income, remedial math students. Findings indicated that there were five emerging themes or patterns that contributed to the success of these teachers - relationship building and trust, communication, knowledge, reflection and revision, and finally pedagogy and discipline. All of the teachers within the study were also described as "warm demanders." Some of the characteristics of these teachers was their understanding of cultural norms balanced with their no-nonsense approach. For example, one teacher gave a student a lecture about not returning homework and talked about the situation in the context of church and preaching. She used words like "mama and grandmamma." Another teacher allowed students to talk in a more conversational tone during class allowing them to speak freely in their native language. This study supports the idea that relationship building is essential and comes in many different forms and personalities.

Boynton and Boynton (2005) posit that in order to promote a positive classroom environment, relationship building amongst students and teachers is essential. According to the authors, teachers must realize that the relationship is far more important than the rules. Finally,

Holloway (2003) discusses the need for teachers and administrators to fully grasp an understanding of cultural differences that exist amongst students in an effort to avoid administering punitive measures for discipline infractions which result in students feeling alienated and excluded.

Impact of Punitive Consequences on Relationship

Relationships are perhaps most critical for students who display early academic or behavioral issues as early as preschool (Hamre & Pianta 2006). Students form their school identities early on from their very first experiences in a classroom. Punitive consequences tied to school discipline procedures hinder relationship building skills during this critical time of development. Yet, a majority of school systems continue to employ harsh discipline practices and procedures to address challenging behaviors. Ladd and Birch (1999) suggest that relational stressors in kindergarten students related directly to student-teacher relationships have the potential to impact a student's long term verbal and aggression towards teachers and peers. Relationships are also critical during difficult educational transition periods - from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school. During these transitions and especially in the middle and high school grades, punishment and discipline are common forms of reaction to address challenging behaviors.

Mullet (2014) compares common school discipline systems to that of the criminal justice system. Within these negative systems, the adults who dole out the punishments have all of the power while students feel powerless. As a result, students continue to form harmful emotional responses such as acting out, doing harm to others, and forming negative attitudes towards the adults who assign the punishments. Mullet (2014) advocates for restorative discipline programs which create caring climates that prevent harm. Within these types of environments, students

have the opportunity to repair relationships and make "things" right, however, the adults in charge must also be willing to forgive and repair relationships as well. Without the ability to forgive and restore, the punishment cycle continues with no hope for restoration. Hyman and Snook (2000) study harsh and punitive disciplinary practices in schools that are considered dangerous. The authors believe that harsh policies, like zero-tolerance, actually promote climates that increase school violence and crime. Hyman and Snook advocate for democratic schools in which all community stakeholders participate in policy making and reaching consensus. In their study, the authors selected both authoritarian teachers as well as democratic teachers. For a short length of time, these teachers were asked to leave their classrooms. The students in the authoritarian classroom behaved terribly displaying threats, fighting and bullying while the students in the democratic classrooms followed the rules. It was as if the regular teacher was still in the room. The study suggests that students who are given a stake and a say in their learning will internalize the values of the classroom rather than those who feel powerless and lack relationships with their teachers.

In recent years, the term "school to prison pipeline" has been used often by educators to describe the structures that have been put in place within school systems to push students out and directly into the criminal justice system. Elias (2013) describes characteristics that schools employ to create a prison-like environment within a school setting. These characteristics include policies that encourage police presence, physical restraint, and zero-tolerance policies that immediately remove students from class. Mallett (2016) describes "the criminalization of education" as including school security guards, security cameras, inflexible discipline codes and rigid punishment. Mallett (2016) contends that harsh punitive measures, which are meant to keep a school safe, actually have the reverse effect and create environments that are less safe.

In 2012, Illinois Senator Dick Durbin addressed the school to prison pipeline for the first time in a federal hearing to address, "the critical nature of disparities in school discipline practices" (National Juvenile Justice Network, para. 5). Officials looked at the high rates of incarceration of adolescents due to mandatory minimum sentences and concluded that an "overreliance on disciplinary practices led to justice system involvement based on minor acts of misconduct that could be more effectively handled through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports" (National Justice Network, para. 6). Mallett (2016) describes numerous student groups impacted by the school-to-prison pipeline including students of poverty and students who have been abused or neglected, especially in the primary years when there is more likelihood these children may be held back due to low performance and poor discipline in school. Elias (2013) includes two other major student groups including minority students and those students who have learning disabilities. According to Mallett (2016), contrary to popular belief, the relationship between poverty and school disruption is quite small. In fact, school is the safest environment and provides the most supports for all students, regardless of their socio-economic status.

The data on suspension and expulsion rates are alarming beginning even in preschool. In 2016, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) made reference to a policy statement written by the US Department of Health and Human Services and the US Department of Education to address the 8,710 pre-school students, ages 3 and 4, who are kicked out of state funded preschool programs per year:

> We know that young children thrive in the context of stable, supportive relationships with adults who love, teach, and care for them. Expulsions and suspensions in early childhood education both threaten the development of these positive relationships and are a result of the lack of positive relationships between educators, families, and children. Expelling preschoolers is not an intervention. Rather, it disrupts the learning process,

> pushing a child out the door of one early care and education program, only for him or her to be enrolled somewhere else, continuing a negative cycle of revolving doors that increases inequality and hides the child and family from access to meaningful supports (p.2).

The NAEYC goes on to advocate for "culturally responsive" professional development focused on relationship building and allowing teachers to be aware of their biases.

The U.S. Department of Education reports the most recent statistics for suspensions and expulsions for the 2011-2012 school year for public schools. Statistics are as follows: "3.5 million students were suspended in-school, 3.45 million students were suspended out-of-school and 130,000 students were expelled" (U.S. Department of Education, para. 1). According to the data, black students and students with disabilities are suspended and expelled at a much greater rate than white students and students who are non-disabled. Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles (2006) conducted a study to understand suspension trends specifically related to minority and students with disabilities. They looked specifically at suspension rates in the state of Maryland. Despite zero-tolerance policies that worsen student behaviors and solutions, zero-tolerance policies still dominate public schools. The researchers found that African American students and students with disabilities, most specifically students labeled as emotionally handicapped, were largely overrepresented.

Costenbader and Markson (1998) question the purpose of suspension as a means to appropriate discipline practice. The researchers surveyed 620 middle and high school students in both urban and rural school settings regarding their perceptions about suspension policies. Overall, 32% of students found suspension to be of little help and expressed they would probably be suspended again while 37% found suspension not helpful at all. The researchers also discuss the negative impacts of suspensions directly to students. When students are suspended from school they go right back into the streets which just compounds behavior

problems even worse, rather than seeking support for the underlying causes of the initial behaviors in the first place. Students build negative reputations amongst teachers and peers, a stigma that is difficult to absolve. In addition, students who are absent from the school setting continue to lag further behind academically as valuable instructional time is lost.

So, if we know as educators that zero-discipline policies create the bridge to the school to prison pipeline, why then do so many school corporations continue to enforce them? As educators, we realize the enormity of school violence that continues to threaten our schools nationwide. Many students have accessibility to technology, social media, the Internet, video games and other venues that provide exposure to violence. Now more than ever, there is more onus on parents to monitor their children's technology. To a large extent schools must have preventative safety structures in place as well as response systems to plan for emergencies and, unfortunately, some of these structures do indeed mimic the makeup of prisons. Schools do have security monitoring systems, cameras, and police officers who are purposely put in place to maintain order. However, although from a safety standpoint these measures are necessary, educators still must recognize, reconsider, and reevaluate zero tolerance discipline policies and behavior consequences that send students out of school into the very environments that are plaguing them in the first place. As educators, we must start with relationship building and becoming empathetic to our students' conditions and their needs. We must truly put ourselves in their shoes and look deep within to build a sense of compassion and care for our youth.

Teacher Empathy

According to Hoerr (2017) "True empathy begins with listening - taking the time not just to hear but to understand what someone else is thinking and feeling" (p. 36). Empathy fosters trust and when teachers act in an empathetic manner, students are more likely to respond in a

positive manner. Mendes (2003) shows that empathy can serve many functions, such as responding to high situations of conflict creating a more peaceful and calmer state of resolution.

Teacher attitudes and empathetic mindset, or lack thereof, have a direct impact on student performance and relationships. Okonofua, Paunesku and Walton (2016) studied teachers' mindsets by randomly assigning two groups of teachers two different articles. The first article was entitled "good teacher-student relationships are critical for students to learn self-control." The second article was entitled, "punishment is critical for teachers to take control of the classroom." After the teachers read the articles, they were given scenarios based on a hypothetical student named Darrell. Those teachers who read the empathetic article embodied empathetic mindset characteristics and assigned non-punitive responses to Darrell's actions as opposed to those teachers who read the punitive article and assigned far more punitive consequences to Darrell's behaviors. The researchers then applied this same theory to real-life situations. Underwood (2016) explains that two groups of teachers were asked to read and respond in writing to online prompts. The first set of prompts dealt with relationship and research about the impact of caring adults on students. The second prompts focused on how technology contributed to student development. Again, those teachers who read and studied about the importance of teacher empathy and student relationships only suspended 4.6% of students as opposed to those teachers who read and focused on technology whose suspension rates totaled 9.8%. This study shows that just a slight alteration in teachers' mindset, as evidenced by those teachers who developed characteristics of empathy, significantly reduced suspension rates, ultimately improving students' success in school.

Crowley and Saide (2016) discuss the complexity of empathy and why teachers struggle to embody an empathetic mindset. Teachers who are empathetic risk being viewed by their peers

as soft or weak. Even teachers who have the best of intentions, especially at the beginning of the school year, quickly become bogged down with grading, lesson plans, parent meetings, and all of the other duties that encompass a teacher's obligations. Developing empathy and taking time to truly understand students and their cultures as well as invest in the time and energy it takes to build a positive classroom atmosphere, often gets set aside. Crowley and Saide (2016) state that, "Teachers' own behaviors and actions are the culture and climate control in the room once the bell rings" (Crowley & Saide, 2016, para.7)   It is the responsibility of the adult in the classroom to accept students, find ways to model empathy and teach students the skills needed to cope and handle their own emotions, no matter "what baggage they (or we) bring in each day" (Crowley & Saide, 2016, para. 7). Empathetic emotions are truly human responses, and should never include punitive measures. The researchers push teachers to remember a time in their lives when they sought an empathetic response to a personal situation and in turn, display humility.

Peck, Maude and Brotherson (2015) studied empathy in the context of early childhood educators. The researchers conducted eighteen interviews with preschool teachers to better understand empathetic traits. Characteristics included the teachers' beliefs about inclusion for all students regardless of race, socioeconomic background or disability. Empathetic teachers created warm environments in their classroom and used their own personal stories to connect with parents and family members. Teachers truly understood how to balance professionalism with building trust through personalizing conversations and sharing personal stories. Teachers also embraced cultural differences by integrating different cultural practices into the room. Empathetic teachers used multiple forms of communication with parents and went out their way to communicate including home visits. Finally, empathetic teachers looked at students as

"strength-based" as opposed to a "deficit view." Teachers were able to look at what a child could do as opposed to what they could not.

Bondy and Ross (2008) describe empathy in the form of a "warm demander." Warm demanders are teachers who have "unconditional positive regard" for their students. "At the heart of unconditional positive regard is a belief in the individual's capacity to succeed" (p.65). According to Bondy and Ross (2008) there are three actions that the warm demander takes: build relationships deliberately, learn about students' cultures and communicate an expectation of success. Warm demanders may be misunderstood at first because their communication style may be firm creating the misconception of a no-nonsense and structured environment without compassion or care for students. The difference between warm demanders and non-empathetic teachers is that the warm demanders have already created those personal, strong relationships with students balanced with high expectations and positive regard for student learning and achievement.

Warren (2013) studied empathy in the context of culturally responsive interactions between White female teachers' interactions with black male students. The White teachers were selected based on their ability to have positive relationships with Black male students. Four White female teachers were selected by both their principal as well as Black male students. The selection process was based on the principal's perceptions of White female teachers who were culturally responsive to Black males as well as the results of focus meetings held with male students. Researchers selected the four White teachers whose names were brought up by both the principal and the students. Researchers then spent over five hundred minutes of classroom observation with each teacher recording student teacher interactions. Researchers looked specifically for models of empathy based on three major domains — antecedents, intrapersonal

outcomes, and interpersonal outcomes. The antecedents are defined as anything that just occurred before an actual interaction. Intrapersonal outcomes focus on the teacher's action with the student and interpersonal outcomes were the physical results of the interaction. Findings show that three very specific themes of empathy were prevalent in the White teachers' classrooms: trust and community building, risk taking and flexibility, and proactive interventions. Warren concludes by stating, "This research confirms that culturally responsive interactions are best negotiated in partnerships with students, not through power or control of students" (196). This study is very important in supporting the advantages that teacher empathy is useful and beneficial in creating positive and safe classroom environments. This study shows that culturally responsive interactions and interventions are a form of empathy.

Weissbourd and Jones (2014) contend that "empathy is not just a skill; it's a broad and deep sense of care and humanity" (p. 42). Educators must teach students commitment and responsibility within their own communities. Schools must become one community that students feel a deep commitment in which they have a responsibility to both their peers and the adults. Within the school community they must also have the courage to act on that responsibility. " . . . We must generate in them the moral capacity to truly value and care about diverse members of their communities, and we must help them overcome barriers to valuing others" (p. 44). As adults expect empathetic characteristics in children, they must also share this same commitment to their classrooms and have a deep sense of care and humanity for their own students. We cannot expect to teach students the skills of empathy without modeling those characteristics as well. Woodward-Young (2008) describes empathy development in the context of teachers who have had significant and unique experiences similar to those of their students; teachers who have lived through discrimination or who have lived in a different county. Empathy development

"involves the interest in and ability to not only see through another's eyes but to actively and purposefully take steps to walk in another's shoes" (p. 51).

Sager (2016) believes the inability for people to connect with others, especially those who are different, and especially those of a different color than we are, is called an empathy gap. According to Sager, this gap exists in many professions and forums, not just education. The empathy gap can be attributed to the way doctors treat patients or the way juries deliberate in trials. In education, Sager states, "The empathy gap is particularly acute for white people, when they try to imagine the feelings of black people" (p. 26). Sager looks at the research from the University of Virginia regarding empathy gap development. At what [particular age do individuals begin to develop an understanding, or lack thereof, of empathetic understanding? Dore, Hoffman, Lillard and Trawalter (2014) led the study with 159 children ages five to ten. All of the children rated their own pain as well as the pain of two additional targets - a White target child and a Black target child. Children were asked to complete a pain rating task in response to 12 events. Some of the events included, "You burn your tongue on some really hot food" and "You bang your toe on a chair" (p. 221). According to Sager research from this particular study shows "at the age of 5, children exhibited no differences in their empathic understanding of others pain. By age 7, however, the children in the study rated the pain of black children as less severe than the pain felt by their white counterparts. And the differences were even greater in the 10-year-old group" (p. 26-27). When students are suspended or expelled at an early age, especially in pre-school, perceptions and empathy development are already developing in children. This study supports the belief that when educators suspend children of color, we are already contributing to the empathy gap. We are already planting misconceptions in our students as well as with ourselves.

So, just as is it necessary for a doctor to have a deep understanding of deadly medical diseases and their symptoms, treatments causes and cures; it is also necessary for a doctor to have a caring, compassionate and empathetic bedside manner, should that doctor expect a patient to return for treatment. In the same regard, it is not only necessary for a teacher to demonstrate competency and knowledge around their particular content area and the methods for delivering instruction; it is also imperative that teachers develop an empathetic mindset to save children's lives in the realm of education.

Why then, if we already know that empathy is a deep, humanistic feature of a good teacher and we know that a student's life may depend on it, are there educators in classrooms that are not warm demanders, or do not embody a deep desire to understand or walk in the shoes of their own students? How does a person's identity impact their ability to form empathy or a lack thereof? Where exactly does a "teacher" identity come from?

Identify Formation

Impactful teachers must have two major skill sets. The first skill set is the ability for a teacher to be highly knowledgeable in their content area and be highly skilled in carrying out instruction. The second is the ability to build and maintain positive relationships with students. When a teacher has both skill sets, they are considered what one might refer to as "a master teacher." Alexandria Mageehon's (2006) qualitative study of nine women in prison revealed characteristics about what makes a "good" teacher "good." The women were interviewed and discussed not only how educators helped them inside of prison, but spoke about educators they had during their elementary, middle and high school years. The women identified that effective teachers were those who provided content knowledge, hands on learning and experimentation as well as teacher who demonstrates compassion and care. Taulbert (2006) discusses the notion of

teachers' embodying a nurturing attitude as a driving force of personal action and unselfish caring, "caring that reaches beyond our personal needs into the lives of others" (p. 34). The question still remains. Does this ability to embody care, compassion and a nurturing heart come from within, from a teacher's own personal identity or can it be taught?

Garmston and Wellman (2013) look at identity in the context of developing collaborative groups. "Beliefs, values, mental models, and assumptions are derived from experience interpreted through the lens of identity" (p. 123). Dilts (1990) identifies what he calls six Neuro-Logical levels of biological and social systems that must be addressed before change can occur. The levels are spirituality, identity, belief systems, capabilities, behaviors, and environment. Individuals' values and beliefs dictate why people do what they do, and reinforce behaviors by giving "motivation and permission" to display particular behaviors. Thus values and beliefs make up individuals' identity which in turn contributes to individuals' purpose and mission within their environment. Newberry (2013) found that teacher identity is influenced by three factors with a primary factor being personal biography. An individual's "lived experience" has a powerful impact and lasting influence on both self and others. Zembylas (2003) looks at teacher identity formation in the context of emotions. Emotions and identity formation are interrelated in that an individual's emotional responses or lack thereof are responses to what has been taught as generally accepted or unaccepted. Furthermore, teacher identity and emotional responses are also bound by socially accepted norms of the teacher role itself. "Teachers must perform themselves in line with these familiar identities or they risk being seen as eccentric, if not outrageous" (p. 120). Emotional rules prescribe what a teacher can and cannot do. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) look at teacher identify as one that changes over time, a "constantly evolving phenomenon" influenced by many factors including both personal and professional changes,

growth and development of one's personal life experiences, professional advancement, and awareness. Gee (2000) cites four co-existent ways that make up a person's core identity: nature, institution, discourse, and affinity. All of these factors co-exist to make up "a certain kind of person." Through these co-existent experiences, once an individual creates "who they are" they look for recognition and acceptance from others to accept "who they are." Kitching (2009) discusses the notion of how teachers' regulate their emotions in school due to how teachers are "supposed to feel." Moral standards presume a teacher already embodies a sense of student betterment and care and negates particular stress factors that influence teachers' emotional responses and attitudes.

Graham and Phelps (2003) studied identity formation in the context of an Australian student teaching program. The researchers point to the complexities of the teaching profession as a whole " . . . the process of becoming (and staying) a teacher is increasingly being acknowledged as a multi-faceted process which involves the person intellectually, socially, emotionally, and aesthetically" (p. 2). Within this context, continued professional learning and self-reflection have remarkable implications in determining the professional success of future teachers and their identity formations as teachers. The researchers investigated specifically studied program design in the *Introduction to Teaching* course which has a metacognitive approach. Student teachers are required to keep a journal and reflect upon their experiences, observations and actions. Even at this early level of teacher identity formation, students struggle with metacognition. Graham and Phelps (2003) report that "Some students find reflection an uncomfortable process" (p. 8). Students made statements like, "I don't understand what my assumptions and beliefs have to do with teaching" (p. 8). The study concludes that reflection is honest practice. Students who do not engage in or are resistant to honest reflection take on the

attitude of, " . . . I don't have to change that which I don't see as wrong" (p. 8). If a teacher already has this natural inclination of resistance early on, during the earliest stages of professional practice, what are the implications for teacher improvement and growth later on, especially when the reflective process is such a key element in forming teacher identity?

Other studies indicate that teachers should have the right personality to teach children (DiRusso, Carney & Byran 1995) and that a teacher's personality is a direct predictor of teaching behavior (McCutcheon, Schmidt & Bolden 1991). Palmer (1998) describes identity in terms of selfhood:

> Face to face with my students, only one resource is at my immediate command: my identity, my selfhood, my sense of this "I" who teaches - without which I have no sense of the "Thou" who learns . . . good teacher cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher . . . in every class I teach, my ability to connect them with the subject, depends less on the methods I use than on the degree to which I know and trust my selfhood - and am willing to make it available and vulnerable in the service of learning (p. 10).

Palmer (1998) goes on to describe his own definition of identity as part genetic make-up, parental roles and influence, culture, both the good and bad ways an individual has been treated by others, both the good and bad ways individuals treat others, and all of the happiness and heartbreak life has to offer. All of these factors influence an individual's identity and define their sense of integrity. Palmer (1998) contends that good teachers are able to become selfless in their identity by showing vulnerability to both their peers and to students.

When teachers wrestle with this idea of selflessness and vulnerability, teacher-student relationships are hindered, which leads right back to the negative cycle of punitive measures to address challenging student behaviors. For some, the negativity and struggle to understand and accept student differences is more extreme and visible. For others, teacher responses and

behaviors are more passive aggressive. The great challenge for administrators is to know exactly how to address and support teachers. Administrators must have a skilled mindset about how to support teachers dealing with challenging students, while at the same time, holding teachers accountable for their own actions and relational difficulties.

Principal as Coach

The research related to coaching takes a twofold approach, either looking directly at principals serving as instructional coaches or looking at individual instructional coaches who work alongside a principal and consult with the principal to foster instructional growth within the school setting. Steiner and Kowal (2007) examine the direct interactions that coaches have with teachers. The more interaction a coach has directly with a teacher, the more likelihood for improvement. The more removed or distant coaches are in the classroom, the less impact they will have on what happens there. This idea of direct contact is one of the reasons principals cannot always fulfill the role of coach. Principals' time has many limitations due to the enormity of responsibilities and tasks that must be completed on a daily basis. It is not realistic to expect a principal to report to a teacher's classroom day after day to serve as a coach. In addition, much of the research is directed towards instructional coaching with very little emphasis on relational coaching with the exception of very general literature that encourages principals and teachers to work closely together for improvement in a specific area of growth, which could in fact be relational.

Williamson (2012) takes a broad approach when describing the role of principal as coach, yet still identifies the principal's coaching role as tied to instruction. Williamson points out that coaches are responsible for helping teachers identify an area of focus, supporting teachers in creating focus goals, and without telling teachers directly what to do, coaches facilitate collegial

conversation by asking key questions to help encourage teacher cognition and reflection. The desired outcome is that a teacher will move "from where they are to where they want to be" (Williamson, 2012, para. 10).

Hall and Simeral (2008) discuss a triangular relationship approach in looking at the context of relationship formation related directly to coaching. Teachers are at the center of the triangle and must foster strong relationships with peers, the instructional coach, and the administrator. This model assumes that a principal works with an instructional coach. The central theme of this model however is that relationship is key helping teachers improve. Teachers needing support may have natural tendencies to refuse help or to be open to learning new ideas. The crux of this approach is that teachers who have strong relationships with peers, an instructional coach and the administrator, they will in fact make long term changes. According to James Comer (1995), "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship." One question to ponder however is that if teachers need help in the area of relationship building with students and have the natural tendency to sway away from relationship, how do administrators, coaches, even peers establish these positive relationships to help bring about change for students?

Bookart and Moss (2015) study professional feedback as a means to support teacher growth and relationship. Feedback should take place in professional conversation between the teacher and principal and should guide the teacher in moving forward by focusing on very specific goals. The researchers emphasize that the entire process should be " . . . a joy, not an affliction . . . the process should be intentional, systematic, evidence based, and professional, but it should also be fun" (p. 26). Bookart and Moss (2015) believe that the evaluation process should only take place after the learning occurs so that the teacher does not feel controlled by the

process. The principal is responsible for providing professional feedback in a timely manner, focusing only on a few specific areas, on agreed upon areas of growth and improvement. The principal is also responsible for delivering the feedback in a positive, respectful tone.

Quaglia and Lande (2016) emphasize the importance of teacher voice that allows for trust in establishing a collegial atmosphere. Outside of the classroom, teachers feel as though their voices are not heard, respected, or valued. Teachers who feel safe to share their true opinions, ideas, and suggestions are far more likely to make improvements which will positively impact the learning environment. Too often, teachers feel that principals are not open to listening, learning and leading. Principals are encouraged to purposely seek out the opinions of others, not just those who are the loudest and most outspoken, avoid a few teachers who become the representatives for all, and finally, create opportunities for all voices to be heard.

Cox (2002) describes the use of personality inventories as a strategy that principals can use to help teachers better understand their own personalities in connection with the personalities of their peers and students. The Myers-Brigg Type Indicator (MBTI) is one personality inventory used to look at both introverted and extroverted personality types and assist in helping teachers understand personality clashes and an overarching better understanding of student and peer personality types. Cox (2002) describes some of the benefits of using MBTI as helping staff members to "take the lead to reinstate relationships that have not gone well in the past" (34).

Hall and Simeral (2015) offer a reflective model called *Teach, Reflect, Learn* which encourages principals and teachers to use self-assessment and reflection as a continuous model of improvement. Teachers complete a self-assessment tool and principals gage conversations around a Continuum of Self Reflection which is composed of four stages: unaware stage,

conscious stage, action stage, and refinement stage. As a principal works directly with the teacher on self-reflection, the teacher begins to develop self-awareness which eventually leads to intentional action on the teacher's part. This model could be used as a coaching technique.

Foltos (2015) comprehensive research on coaching describes successful coaching occurs when educators are encouraged to take risks through innovative approaches. Foltos (2015) suggestion to principals is to begin with the willing participants and grow capacity when coaching and professional learning becomes the norm in a school environment.

This literature provides the lens for why relationships are so critical to student success and transformation. The literature provides understanding related to the creation of a teacher's identity including the development of an empathetic mindset. Research also demonstrates how punitive measures negatively impact the overall attitudes and emotional well-being of students and the importance of the coaching role for principals struggling with non-relational teachers. One area that seems to lacking within the literature is the idea of principal as "relational" coach as opposed to instructional coach. In general, there is a great amount of literature that supports the notion that positive teacher-student relationships are essential for student success and that punitive measures for handling student misbehavior results in more harm than good. However, the literature regarding relational coaching in general is scarce. This particular study adds to the literature by allowing for specific strategies that principals can use to support teachers who are struggling relationally.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to discover teachers' abilities to form positive relationships with students as well as discover what a principal can do to address relational concerns. This chapter outlines the methodology for this study.

Context of the Study

The school corporation, Buffton School Corporation (BSC), a fictitious name, is a large, urban district with approximately 18,000 students. The ethnic breakdown of the student population is as follows: 36% African American, 22% Hispanic, 31% White, 10% Multiracial, and 1% Asian. BCS has experienced a dramatic enrollment decrease over the last six years. According to the Indiana Department of Education, in 2006, overall enrollment was reported at approximately 22,000 students. Currently 92% of students are on Free/Reduced Lunch. The most recent grade as reported by the State for the 2015-2016 school year is a D. Graduation rates are reported at 83%, lower than the overall State average of 89%. In 2015-2016, 71% of students did not pass ISTEP+ with only 28% passing in grades 3-8 compared to the state average of 52% passing. In grade 10, 78% of students did not pass ISTEP+ with only 22% passing compared to the state average of 32% passing. Since 2001, BCS has been under the leadership of five different superintendents, all who have brought different academic, financial, facility, marketing, and political philosophies to the forefront. BCS has experienced great change over the years with revolving door initiatives and programming in an effort to improve what many feel is a struggling urban school district. Due to the change in leadership as well as constant flux in programming, many teachers and administrators feel a lack of trust in new programming ideas and initiatives. Past practice has been that teachers and administrators work put in a tremendous

amount of effort to attend training, work in collaborative groups and implement programs, only to learn that a few years down the road, the programs are no longer supported. Teacher and administrator morale, energy and excitement around new work is very low. There is fear that all the hard work and effort will be for naught.

In 2013, BCS created a position for a Director of African American Services in the district to address disproportionalities and concerns around the suspension rates and referrals to special education for African American students, specifically high rates of African American male students. The director resigned in the fall of 2017 and shortly after, a new director was hired. Both directors have offered supports through special programming for African American students, field trips to local colleges, and training for teachers based on restorative justice programs and facilitating a live radio program highlighting the efforts of the school district to address issues specifically related to African American students. While district administrators have agreed that a specific position was needed to assist with specific disproportionalities, there has been some controversy and questions highlighted in local media venues about the specific outcomes and data related to the improvement of educational experiences for African American students. Teacher attitudes vary within the district as to the quality of assistance that has been provided in helping to assist with challenging students. Some have worked closely with the director in training workshops or through consultation. Other teachers have had no exposure to the Director of African American Services.

Participants and Participant Selection

Through the use of a qualitative instrumental case study design, participants were selected to participate in the study. The researcher currently works in a K-12 school district as an intermediate center principal. There are a total of 34 schools in the district led by 34

administrators. After seeking permission from the central office, and receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the researcher presented a proposal to a group of colleagues at a principals' meeting and asked for six principals willing to volunteer to participate in the study that have had success in working with teachers who struggle to develop relationships with students. The principals received a copy of an abstract of the study allowing them information on the purpose and context of the study. The abstract can be found in Appendix A. The principals emailed the researcher expressing interest in the study. The next step was for the researcher to send a follow up survey to help identify principals who have had experience with coaching teachers who have struggled with relationships. The results of the survey revealed that all of the principals indicated they had coached non-relational teachers. From there, the researcher was able to identity principals at the primary, intermediate and high school levels to get representation from each grade level.

Six principals volunteered to participate in this study. The principals vary in their gender, school demographics, and years of experience as well as their school level (elementary, middle or high school). The researcher was intentional in trying to find varied participants in each one of these categories. A detailed description of each principal and their demographics can be found in Chapter 4.

Procedures and Instruments

The first round of questions was administered to the volunteer principals in the form of a Qualtrics pre-survey. The pre-survey collected demographic data in the form of the principals' current grade level of school, gender, ethnicity, gender, number of years in education, number of years as a principal and the free/reduced population of the principals' current school. The demographic survey can be found in Appendix B. After the survey was administered and

principals were selected, the researcher set up an individual meeting time with each principal. The meetings took place at an agreed upon time. The researcher met with each principal in their office at their school site. The researcher provided each principal with the approved IRB Researcher Participant Information Sheet so that each principal was aware of the parameters of the study. The IRB Researcher Participant Information Sheet can be found in Appendix C. The researcher then engaged each principal in an interview. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The researcher asked each principal five initial questions with a sixth question added during the interview process as a result of the first principal's response. The open ended interview questions can be found in Appendix D.

Each principal was asked to identify strategies they had used in the past to assist teachers who were struggling with relationship building. The second round of interview questions were intentionally designed to include open ended responses. The open ended responses allowed the researcher to learn more than anticipated and provide unexpected or surprising results. Researcher bias was limited because the questions were not directed towards a specific result.

Each interview with the six principals was recorded. Analysis involved looking for patterns and correlations between the principals' responses. Responses were coded and categories assigned according to specific themes that arose as a result of the responses. A second coder/auditor was asked to read through the transcripts without a master key of the categories that were previously assigned by the researcher. The researcher then analyzed the themes of the second coder/auditor to see if the themes were comparable or if new themes arose from the narratives. The researcher looked specifically to answer the research question:

1. What strategies have been useful for a principal to coach a teacher who has been identified as non-relational?

Finally, transcripts were reviewed a second time using a master key as related to Dilts to examine if the themes connect to Dilts Nested Levels of Learning. A second coder/auditor was not required for the second analysis as the researcher only intended to see if some of the themes cross over into Dilts work.

Data Analysis

Analysis included specific narrative from each of the principals to support the emerging themes. Detailed analysis was provided for the themes that were most prevalent and common. Commonalities as well as differences were shared in the responses. Analysis includes principals' perceptions of what relational means to them in contrast to what they feel relational teachers should look like in the classroom. Narrative responses provided the lens for which the results arose.

A second data analysis looked for patterns within the principals' responses, specifically for themes/categories that emerged specifically related to Dilts Nested Levels of Learning. The categories from Dilts Nested Levels are listed below. The key for coding is also listed after each indicator.

1. Category 1: Environment

   a. Indicator 1: Objects or displays in the classroom that create a positive atmosphere. (Code EI1)

   b. Indicator 2: Procedures, structures or supports that facilitated a positive atmosphere. (Code EI2)

   c. Indicator 3: Teacher displayed environmental changes after principal support. (Code EI3)

2. Category 2: Behaviors

a. Indicator 1: Kind words, soothing tone of voice, calm demeanor, comforting behavior. (Code BI1)

b. Indicator 2: Gestures, appropriate physical touch (Code BI2)

c. Indicator 3: Teacher displayed behavioral changes after principal support. (BI3)

3. Category 3: Capability

a. Indicator 1: Demonstrates understanding about student behaviors, both positive and negative student behaviors (Code CI1)

b. Indicator 2: Ability to make good decisions (Code CI2)

c. Indicator 3: Demonstrates positive attitude about change and improvement (Code CI3)

d. Indicator 4: Teacher demonstrated the capability to make better decisions after principal support. (CI4)

4. Category 5: Belief System

a. Indicator 1: Teacher beliefs are positive about students (Code BSI1)

b. Indicator 2: Teacher beliefs about student relationships improved after principal support (Code BSI2)

5. Category 6: Identity

a. Indicator 1: Teacher values relationship with students (Code ID1)

b. Indicator 2: Teacher displayed an improved relationship with students after principal support (CID2)

Data was analyzed in each specific area to determine what specific strategies were used in each Dilts area that prompted change. Analysis includes qualitative narrative responses centered on the five levels of Dilts Nested Levels of Learning. Specific quotes from the

interviews were used to support findings in each category area. A thorough and detailed analysis of the data will be found in Chapter 4 of this study.

Summary

In summary, the methodology for this study included the following steps; (a) Submittal of IRB request and consequential approval from IRB to conduct research; (b) Received permission from school district to complete study; (c) Presented an abstract of the study at a principals' meeting to ask for volunteers; (d) Principals sent researcher an email if they were interested; (e) Sent Qualtrics demographic survey to principals; (f) Selected 6 principals to participate to represent primary, intermediate and high school grade levels; (g) Set up appointments with each principal at their school site; (h) Conducted interviews with each principal asking 6 open ended questions; (i) Recorded each interview; (j) Analyzed each transcript for emerging themes; (k) Created a master key based on themes for coding; (l) Coded each transcript to identity major themes; (m) A second coder/auditor was asked to review each transcript to identity emerging themes; (n) Researcher did not provide the second coder/auditor with the original themes; (o) Researcher compared the themes of the second coder to the master key to find commonalities which resulted in the creation of four major themes; (p) Researcher used a second master code to identity themes related to Dilts Nested Levels of Learning; (q) A second coder/auditor was not used to analyze Dilts; (r) All data was analyzed which led to the findings and implications in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The research for this qualitative case study was conducted in December of 2017. The study involved a pre-survey and then face to face interviews with each participant.   The purpose of the pre-survey was to collect demographic information for each principal and to identify if the principal had experience working with and coaching a non-relational teacher. Each principal was emailed a link to a Qualtrics survey which included six questions.   Two elementary principals, two middle school principals, and two high school principals participated in the study. To ensure confidentiality, each principal was given a pseudonym for his or her name. All of the interviews took place on each school site. The interviews consisted of five open ended questions with a sixth question added during the interview process based upon the responses of the principals. The researcher visited each school site and recorded each interview in the principals' offices. The researcher then transcribed each interview by hand (via typing on a computer). The researcher listened to the audio recordings numerous times to ensure the transcripts were accurate and that each word was conveyed appropriately. Once the transcripts were completed, the researcher re-read each transcript numerous times. Common themes began to emerge which identified topics related to teacher identity and the role of relational coaching. The researcher created a master key to convey the common themes of: relationship, deficiency, content, hierarchy, roadblock, solution, identity, strategy and coaching.   A second coder/auditor was then given the transcripts but was not provided with the researcher's master key.   The second coder/auditor was asked to create their own master key. The second coder/auditor also identified emerging patterns and identified common themes of: belief systems, trust and respect, high expectations, success, compassion and empathy, relationship, community building, roadblocks and coaching. The researcher re-read the transcripts multiple times to look for commonalities

amongst the themes. The researcher then combined themes to create a final master key of; (a) relationship building for teachers and students; (b) identity and belief systems; (c) roadblocks and deficiencies; (d) and coaching strategies.

The current study seeks to understand specifically what strategies are useful in supporting a principal to improve a teacher who struggles with building positive relationships with students through the following question: What specific strategies have been useful for a principal to coach a teacher who has been identified as non-relational? Chapter 4 provides a record of the interviews between the researcher and six principals with the purpose of identifying major themes and patterns as well as categorizing the commonalities in principal responses to ultimately answer this question.   Table 1 represents the results for the demographic survey. Tables 2-7 represent open coding for the interview questions.

Results of Demographic Survey

Table 1 represents the results for the demographic survey which asked participants: (1) "What grade level is your current school?"; (2) "What is your ethnicity?"; (3) "What is your gender?"; (4) "How many years have you been working in the field of education?" (4) "How many years have you been a principal?"; (5) "What is the free/reduced population of your school?"; (6) "Have you ever coached a teacher on improving their relational skills in the classroom?"

A summary of the principals demographic information is represented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Principals

Principal	Grade Level	Gender	Ethnicity	Years in Education	Years as Principal	Free/Reduced
Andis	K-4	M	White	Over 20 years	5-10 years	40-50%
Bartlett	K-4	FM	White	10-20 years	Less than 5 years	Over 70%
Campos	5-8	M	Black	10-20 years	5-10 years	50-60%
Dumont	5-8	FM	Black	10-20 years	5-10 years	Over 70%
Edwards	9-12	M	White	Over 20 years	5-10 years	Over 70%
Franklin	9-12	M	White	10-20 years	5-10 years	50-60%

Principal A is a white, male with over 20 years of experience in the field of education. He works in a K-4 building and has been a principal between 5-10 years. The free/reduced lunch population at his school is between 40-50%. Principal B is a white, female with 10-20 years of experience in the field of education. She works in a K-4 building and has been a principal less than 5 years. The free/reduced lunch population of her school is over 70%. Principal C is a black, male with 10-20 years of experience in the field of education. He works in a 5-8 building and has been a principal for 5-10 years. The free/reduced lunch population at his school is 50-60%. Principal D is a black, female with 10-20 years of experience in the field of education. She works in a 5-8 building and has been a principal for 5-10 years. The free/reduced lunch population at her school is over 70%. Principal D is a black, female with 10-20 years of experience in the field of education. She works in a 5-8 building and has been a principal for 5-10 years. The free/reduced lunch population at her school is over 70%. Principal E is a white, male with over 20 years of experience in the field of education. He works in a 9-12 building and has been a principal between 5-10 years. The free/reduced lunch population at his school is over 70%. Principal F is a white, male with 10-20 years of experience in the field of education. He works in a 9-12 building and has been a principal between 5-10 years. The free/reduced lunch population at his school is between 50-60%. All of the participants indicated that they have experienced coaching a teacher who has struggled with building positive relationships. The principals' demographic information is represented in Table 1.

Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 1

Figure 1 represents open coding for Question 1 of the open ended interview. The question was, "What role do you believe teacher identity as being "relational" play in their teaching effectiveness?"

Principal # 1 Mr. Andis	Principal # 2 Mrs. Bartlett	Principal # 3 Mr. Campos	Principal # 4 Mr. Dumont	Principal #5 Mr. Edwards	Principal #6 Mrs. Franklin
- Principal felt area teachers struggle most - Some teachers have great knowledge base of content can't relate to kids - Principal describes relationship as most important "thing" -Principal describes relationship as something that you either have or you don't -Hopefully something you can work on - Without those relationships this job is not for you	-Principal felt that identity as being relational is one of the strongest components to student success - With relationship you build trust, sense of caring, and show the person that you believe in them -Principal felt that relationship should be balanced with high expectations	-Relational identity plays really, really big into the effectiveness of teaching. - Student needs to know teacher cares -Principal discusses relationship relevance and rigor; relationship is the most important of the three even more so than academics	-Identity as relational is key -The students need to know how much teacher cares before they will listen and perform. -Students require both in school and out of school connections with their teachers -Idea to have a "check in, check out" between teachers and students -Students do not need teacher as a friend, but someone who they can trust	-Identity plays huge role -Teachers' must acknowledge identity as important -Students motivated by people in front of them -Correlation to home life -Positive relationships earn trust -Students will comply if a relationship is there	-Identity comes from experience and our past -Relationship comes from knowing how to solve conflicts and how to have compassion -A teacher who comes from a background that included poor relationships with others, they will struggle

Figure 1. Open Coding Chart for Principal Interview Question 1

Bartlett, Campos, Dumont and Edwards all emphasize the importance of teacher identity as being"relational"play in teaching effectiveness. Andis was quick to point out that relational

identity is an area where teachers struggle the most while Franklin described identity in terms of an individual's past experience. Similar to Andis, Franklin mentioned that a teacher, who has not been successful in relationship building in their own past experiences, will not experience success in a classroom. To a varying degree, all of the principals mentioned that students must know teachers care about them and that when teachers build positive relationships with students they build trust. Students are far more likely to comply and buy in when they feel like the adults care for them. Andis mentioned that a teacher's ability to be relational is a natural inclination; either something the individual has or does not have, but indicates that hopefully a teacher can work on improving. Dumont pointed out that a teacher should make connections with students both in and outside of the classroom, but must be careful to draw boundaries and not become students' friends. Finally, Bartlett discussed the importance of a teacher being able to balance relationship with high expectations.

Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 2

Figure 2 represents open coding for Question 2 of the open ended interview. The question was, "How do teachers develop relationships?"

Principal # 1 Mr. Andis	Principal # 2 Mrs. Bartlett	Principal # 3 Mr. Campos	Principal # 4 Mr. Dumont	Principal #5 Mr. Edwards	Principal #6 Mrs. Franklin
-Understanding a student's situation outside of school -Not lowering standards -Getting involved in an extracurricular activity outside of the classroom (i.e. coaching) -Having conversations with students -Communicating effectively	-Relation-ship building is natural -Social skills a teacher learned growing up -Teachers learn from experience; when they have developed good relation-ships with students -Very small percentage can learn relationship from a textbook	- Getting to know students' names -Being out in the hallway in the morning -Recognize-ing if a student is sad -Getting students to open up -Caring about students -Talking to students -Students will respond if you develop a good relationship by knowing them	-Find out personal information about students -Share personal information within limits -Let students know teachers are real people -Take an interest in what students are doing -Incorporate student interest into teaching content -Set aside time each day to build a connection with students	-Smile -Be enthusiastic about teaching -Teacher should let students know they want to be there teaching -Be happy on Monday morning -Listening to students -Take an interest in students personal lives outside of school -If student has problem with teacher, teacher should listen and hear student out if teacher does not agree -Being prepared for class -Set high expectations -Hold students accountable -Give students breaks outside of the norm from time to time -Show students you care -Listening	-Training -Cultural Proficiency -Communication -Body Language -The way a teacher responds to discipline a student -The way a teacher has conversations with a student -It's an art, not a science -You have to practice; you cannot just get "it" from a book -Relationship building is a process -Principal felt relationship building is about a teacher's behavior

Figure 2. Open coding chart for Principal Interview Question 2.

Most of the principals placed great emphasis on getting to know students' personal situations and understanding students' lives outside of school, including getting involved with students through after school extra-curricular activities. Andis and Franklin were very direct in pointing out that communication skills are very important for teachers to develop positive relationships with students. Franklin went into great detail about body language, the way a teacher responds to discipline and the way the teacher has conversations with students. She was also very passionate about providing teachers with professional training, specifically with knowledge around cultural proficiency. Campos and Edwards spoke about being out on the hallway, talking to students, recognizing when a student has a problem, listening, and getting students to open up. Edwards also mentioned being enthusiastic about teaching, being happy on a Monday morning, being prepared for class and the importance of smiling at students. Bartlett spoke of relationship in the context of teachers past experiences. Bartlett believes that developing relationships with students is a natural disposition of a teacher and that as teachers develop relationships with students they will learn from their experiences. Barlett and Franklin both pointed out that developing relationships with students cannot come from a book. Franklin believes that relationship building is a process and a skill that must be practiced. Dumont mentioned that teachers should really get to know students and then incorporate student interests' into the content that is being taught.

Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 3

Figure 3 represents open coding for Question 3 of the open ended interview.   The

question was, "What factors influence how you coach a teacher who is struggling?"

Principal # 1 Mr. Andis	Principal # 2 Mrs. Bartlett	Principal # 3 Mr. Campos	Principal # 4 Mr. Dumont	Principal #5 Mr. Edwards	Principal #6 Mrs. Franklin
-Having good lesson plans -Keeping kids on task with instruction -Principal offers different teaching strategies if teacher is struggling with instruction -Utilization of time teaching verses letting kids work on assignment -If teacher lacks relational skill, principal assigns them to observe in the class of a teacher who is relational -Pushing teacher into leadership role -Pushing teacher into coaching an extra-curricular activity	-If teacher is being detrimental to child -Tone of voice -Lack of expectations -Lack of belief -Teachers not having one on one conversations with students -	-A teacher who develops poor relationships -The principal offers support through modeling -Principal offers support by coming to class and helping students to see the teacher as "good."	-Book studies on poverty -Principal discussed teacher perception of what they think they are do versus the reality of what they are really doing -Principal offers support by pairing teachers together -Principal has follow up conversations with teacher; What have you implemented? What have you tried? What are the results?	-Negative interactions -Words that are relationship inhibitors -Body language (not positive) -Principal offers coaching support -Principal discussed different personality types; coaches are more apt to want to build relationships; some teachers are more touchy/feely -Despite a teacher's personality type, principal believes "you can build relationships in your own way" -Principal coaches according to personality type	-Teachers who cannot manage a class -When coaching, principal tries to give both teachers and students a voice -Principal asks students to write up their concern and then the principal shares with the teacher -Principal very straightforward with teachers about body language and tone of voice -Principal uses professional development for coaching

Figure 3. Open coding chart for Principal Interview Question 3.

The principals offered many different factors that influence how they coach a teacher who is struggling. Andis was the only principal who mentioned poor class instruction and time on task as being a relational coaching factor. Bartlett, Campos and Franklin discuss tone of voice, body language, and words that are relationship inhibitors as factors that influence how they would coach a teacher. Dumont talks about teacher perception of what they think they are doing versus the reality of what they are really doing. All of the principals offered coaching strategies to assist with such issues. Andis and Dumont discussed having teachers pair up with a mentor teacher to observe relationship building. Dumont also discussed having a follow up meeting with the teacher to see what the teacher implemented or tried after observing the mentor teacher. Andis also discussed pushing a teaching into a leadership role within the school as well as asking the teacher to coach an extra-curricular activity. Campos described his role to actually come into the classroom himself and model as well as to try and help the students see the teacher "as good." Dumont also mentioned using book studies with a focus on poverty. Edwards talked about coaching to different teacher personality types; taking the style of a teacher and adapting coaching methods to meet what the teacher would feel comfortable with. Finally, Franklin describes giving both teachers and students a voice. She asks students to write down their concerns and then she shares the writing with the teacher. In some cases, she is more directive when teachers need a firm reminder of their body language or tone of voice. She also describes using professional development as a way to coach teachers.

Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 4

Figure 4 represents open coding for Question 4 of the open ended interview. The question was, "What specific coaching do you use to help teachers?"

Principal # 1 Mr. Andis	Principal # 2 Mrs. Bartlett	Principal # 3 Mr. Campos	Principal # 4 Mr. Dumont	Principal #5 Mr. Edwards	Principal #6 Mrs. Franklin
-Shared example of a situation when a teacher was too friendly with students; teacher would get off topic and talk about things they should not -Principal walk throughs -Sitting down with teacher and having conversation about what is and is not appropriate -Making teachers aware of their behavior -Communication -Feedback	-Responsive Classroom Approach -*Joyful Classroom* -*Power of Your Words* -Positive Postcards (Principal required teachers to use them) -Goal Setting Worksheets (Principal required teachers to use them with students) -State what I have seen and heard and share with teacher. Will ask teacher what they thought the student's response was -Use parent and peer feedback with teachers	-Listening -Assuming Positive Intent -Talking to students -Set high expectations -Try to understand why students display certain behaviors (i.e. Profanity example) -Pick two or three kids each day to have a conversation with -Allow students opportunity to explain themselves -De-esculation training -Principal spoke out situations where he has witnessed teachers escalating situations which results in punitive consequences for students -Work with veteran teachers -Allow teachers to select the types of professional development they want/need -Younger teachers have had success with training; still work in progress for veteran teachers	-Book studies -Paired teacher with a partner -Principal observes classroom -Have discussions with teacher about climate -Goal setting with teachers -Have teacher try strategies and then meet after to discuss how it went	-PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) -Giving positive feedback and recognition - 4 x 1 Strategy; 4 positive to 1 negative reaction to students - 2 x 10 Strategy; talk to the most challenging students for 2 minutes every day about something personal for a total of 10 days	-Cultural Proficiency Training -Culture and climate training around communication and body language -Inner culture development inventory -Restorative Justice -Conflict resolution

Figure 4. Open coding chart for Principal Interview Question 4.

The principals offered a wide range of coaching strategies that they have tried with teachers who struggle with relationships. Bartlett, Campos and Franklin discussed using professional development as a way to coach teachers. Bartlett specifically named the *Responsive Classroom Approach* and using the resources *The Joyful Classroom* and *Power of Your Words.* Campos spoke of de-escalation training to help teachers understand how to handle situations appropriately without escalating them. He described situations in which teachers escalate students which results in punitive consequences. The point of this training is to help teachers use other means of handling challenging situations. Campos spoke of also allowing teachers the opportunity to select particular professional development they would like in certain areas. De-escalation training resulted from teachers' input on wanting to know how to handle difficult students. Franklin has focused much of her professional development work with teachers around Cultural Proficiency training as well as training around culture, climate, body language and communication. She also mentioned the Inner Culture Development Inventory which provides information on how an individual reacts to differences, Restorative Justice and Conflict/Resolution.

Each principal identified special coaching strategies that they have used to coach teachers individually. Andis, Bartlett, and Dumont talked about having conversations with teachers. Andis described a situation where he coached a teacher who was being too friendly with students. He had to sit down with teacher and have a conversation about what is and is not appropriate. Bartlett spoke about having teachers write positive messages to students and sending home positive postcards during the school year. She also spoke about having teachers sit down one on one with students to develop goals for the school year and continuing to encourage students to revisit and reach their goals. She spoke about the importance of sharing

parent and peer feedback with teachers. Campos expressed how important it is for teachers to listen to students and try to understand where students are coming from. He spoke about the importance of helping teachers understand how to assume positive intentions and picking two or three students each day to have a conversation with. Dumont focused on observing teachers in the classroom and then offering feedback afterwards. He spoke about having teachers set goals and then meeting with them to discuss if they achieved them. Edwards discussed coaching teachers to use Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) strategies, giving positive feedback and recognition, using the 4 x 1 Strategy; 4 positive to 1 negative reaction to students and finally the 2 x 10 Strategy; talk to the most challenging students for 2 minutes every day about something personal for a total of 10 days.

Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 5

Figure 5 represents open coding for Question 5 of the open ended interview. The question was, (1) "Do you consider yourself to be a relational leader?"; (2) "What are the leadership skills and characteristics that make you relational?"

Principal # 1 Mr. Andis	Principal # 2 Mrs. Bartlett	Principal # 3 Mr. Campos	Principal # 4 Mr. Dumont	Principal #5 Mr. Edwards	Principal #6 Mrs. Franklin
Relational -Yes	**Relational** -I think model good relationships and I think I model positivity, and I think I model caring. -I genuinely care about the students in my building and all the adults, and that I do have expectations and that I do my best to really model a building community -Relational leadership intertwines with instructional leadership	**Relational** -Yes, I do. -I am a caring person and sometimes care too much about kids and teachers -I create relationships with teachers (i.e. talks about taking a class if a teacher needs to leave for family emergency) -Create good learning environment for students and good working environment for teachers -Does not like to create conflict -Principal discusses how to approach when a teacher does something to get in trouble; not yelling or screaming or writing teacher up -"Not what you say but how you say it"	**Relational** -I do actually have a very good relationship with all of my teachers. - Collaborative leader; teachers involved in decisions -Teachers have a voice - Teachers know their concerns are heard. -Teachers may not always get what they want but they do have an understanding of why	**Relational** - I would say yes because I have worked to become more like one.	**Relational** -Yes

Figure 5. Open coding chart for Principal Interview Question 5.
Figure 5 continued

Leadership skills and characteristics	Leadership skills and characteristics	Leadership skills and characteristics	Leadership skills and characteristics	Leadership skills and characteristics	Leadership skills and characteristics
-Not a micromanager -Trust -Provide guidance but will not dictate -Give people an opportunity to show how they do things; create buy in; people will work hard for you -Principal shared story about collaborative mission and vision planning with Department Heads -Treat people with respect -Listen to people -Be open as a leader to surrounding yourself with smart people; principal does not have to know the answers for everything	-Have positive relationships -Principal describes her role as a soccer coach to her role as principal; similarities include balancing high expectations with listening and acknowledging when people are going through difficulty -Display empathy -Acknowledge people's strengths -Have people understand "we are all working on a common goal" -Listening -Refocus and redirect conversations -Know how to have difficult conversations -Help teachers create an action plan -Teachers leave a difficult conversation with hope	-Modeling -Would not ask staff to do something principal would not do (i.e. security, sub) -Being visible -Talking to people -Create relationships with students	-Being a good listener -Setting a lot of good examples - Making sure that teachers understand we are all in this together -Teachers need to see principal involved in the work and not sitting somewhere in the office -Principal must be out in the building living the day to day that teachers are -Being collaborative with them in decisions.	-Understanding of where a person is at and what challenges they have in their position -Acknowledgement; I don't often just give a directive without some acknowledgement of, "this is new, I know this is a challenge" -Give rationale for directives -Having conversations -Listening -"Smooth the path"; try to give teachers the resources, tools, information that they need to do something if you're asking them to do it	-Positive -Optimistic -Cannot internalize things; "It is not about you." -Model -Give hugs, ask how people are, take phone calls late at night -Show you care -Body language; make eye contact, smile

All of the principals consider themselves relational leaders. Bartlett, Campos and Dumont elaborated on their responses. Bartlett discussed modeling good relationships with her staff and genuinely caring about the students and staff in her building. She also spoke of the importance of both instructional and relational leadership. Campos described himself as a relational leader who almost cares too much about his staff and the students. He focuses on creating relationships with staff by providing class coverage for teachers himself if a teacher needs to leave for a family emergency. He described himself as a leader who does not like conflict. He focuses on creating a good working environment for his staff and a positive learning environment for students. Campos also discussed the way to approach a teacher who may be in trouble by not yelling or screaming and not quickly jumping to writing a teacher up. Dumont stated he has a very collaborative relationship with his staff. He believes in collaborative decision making and letting teachers have a voice. He wants teachers to know their concerns are heard. When decisions are not made the way teachers prefer, he believes in providing a rationale and letting the teachers know the reason why.

The principals responses to what leadership skills and characteristics make them relational varied with some similarities. Campos and Franklin discussed modeling positive relationship building. Andis and Dumont discussed the importance of collaboration and including teachers in decision making to promote buy in and build trust. Andis focused on providing guidance and direction without micromanaging his staff. He discussed the importance of depending on others to be knowledgeable in their positions and that the principal does not always have to be the smartest person in the room. When people are given opportunities to show what they can do, they want to work hard for the leader. Bartlett discussed empathy and the concept of balance between understanding the challenges people are going through along

with holding high expectations for teachers. She spoke about acknowledging people's strengths and developing a common goal with teachers. Bartlett also discussed the importance of knowing how to have difficult conversations with teachers. She spoke about knowing how to redirect and refocus conversations and helping teachers to leave a conversation with an action plan as well as hope. Campos discussed the importance of not asking the staff to do something the principal would not be willing to do. Dumont echoed this belief by discussing the importance of the principal being visible and not sitting in the office. Principals need to be involved in the work. Edwards talked about the importance of acknowledging a teacher's concern as well as giving rationale for directives. He also discussed the concept of "smoothing the path." When directives are given, principals need to provide the resources and tools so that teachers can get the job done. Franklin discussed the importance of not internalizing, showing care, and displaying positive body language, including smiling.

Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 6

Figure 6 represents open coding for Question 6 of the open ended interview.   The

question was, "Do you think non-relational teachers can change?"

Principal # 1 Mr. Andis	Principal # 2 Mrs. Bartlett	Principal # 3 Mr. Campos	Principal # 4 Mr. Dumont	Principal #5 Mr. Edwards	Principal #6 Mrs. Franklin
-Behavior is consistent -People can change -If I had a choice between yes and no, I would say no	-Everyone can change -I would like a scripted program that could help -Change is a mind shift -Teachers have to be reflective -Teachers have to acknowledge what they are struggling with -Teachers must be willing -Yes, teachers can change	-Yes, teachers can change, even veteran teachers -They just need to see the fruits of their efforts with students -Modeling -Teacher must put effort into it -Shared story of veteran teacher who taught summer school with a challenging student; student learned a great deal and ended up in teacher's regular class -Teacher experienced success	-Absolutely teachers can change -It is difficult when they are engrained in what they do -All teachers can change and most want to if needed	-Yes, I think they can -Might be a few exceptions -Some might not have it in their disposition -Most are teaching for right reasons -Teachers care about kids and success -Teachers can be convinced to change; change is worth it	-Yes, it is possible to change habits of living -It will not happen overnight -Change is a journey -Sustainability and consistency must be present -Life changes and so do people

Figure 6. Open coding chart for Principal Interview Question 6

The researcher added question 6 during the first interview as Principal Andis's responses

prompted curiosity. All of the principals with the exception of Andis believe that non-relational

teacher's can change. Bartlett discussed the change process as a mind shift change. Teacher's

must acknowledge a problem exists and then be willing to change. Campos provided a personal

example of a teacher he worked with during summer school who struggled with a challenging

student. Later the student expressed success with the teacher and so Campos placed the student in the teacher's class during the school year. Just by knowing the student achieved success, the teacher felt rewarded. Mr. Dumont recognized that change is difficult but that most teachers can change and most do if needed. Overall, Mr. Edwards believes teachers can change with a few exceptions; some might not have it in their disposition. Edwards believes most are teaching for the right reasons and can be convinced to change if needed. Franklin related teacher change to changing habits of living. Change is a process that does not happen overnight. Sustainability and consistency must be present.

Emerging Themes

The researcher analyzed the participants' narrative responses numerous times and created the following master key based on emerging themes: relationship, deficiencies, content, hierarchy, roadblocks, solutions, identity, strategies, and coaching.   The second coder/auditor also identified emerging patterns and identified common themes of: belief systems, trust and respect, high expectations, success, compassion and empathy, relationship, community building, roadblocks and coaching.   The researcher found commonalities between the two keys which resulted in four major themes being identified: Relationship Building for Teachers and Students, Coaching Strategies, Roadblocks and Deficiencies, Identity and Belief Systems.

Relationship Building

All of the principals discussed relationship in the context of both teachers developing positive relationships with students as well as principals having the responsibility to develop supportive relationships with teachers. For this reason, the theme of relationship will be broken down into two parts: relationship building for teachers and relationship building for students.

From the data, one might ascertain that in order for teachers to even consider working on relationship building with students, they must first have a trusting, positive, respectful and supportive relationship with their principal.   Consequently, having a positive teacher-administrator relationship helps build trust which can lead to greater buy in from teachers during a coaching situation.

Relationship Building for Teachers

All of the principals described themselves as being relational leaders, those who strive to develop caring and empathetic relationships with teachers.

Campos stated:

> I am a caring person, so I really care sometimes maybe too much . . . I like to create relationships with teachers. I always say, your family comes first so if something happens to your family and you need to leave for the rest of the day, one hour, two hours, go ahead, even if I have to cover the rest of your class. I want to create a good working environment for teachers . . . I really care about people and how they feel.

Franklin describes developing personal relationships with staff, "You give hugs, you ask people how are they, you know, take phone calls at ten o'clock at night about a dog (laughter). That was last night. You know, you just show that you care. You do the same things that we do with the kids."

Dumont expressed the importance of creating a school wide atmosphere of "we are all in this together." He stated, "They need to see me involved in the work and not sitting somewhere in the office . . . being out in the building living the same day to day that they are."

Listening and understanding were two major sub-themes that all of the principals pointed out as skills of relational leaders, and more importantly, skills they modeled for staff themselves.

The principals discussed both characteristics as being important for principal and teacher relationships as well as teacher and student relationships. Edwards stated:

> I think understanding. I think I try to understand where a person is at, what challenges they have in their position and just acknowledge that. I don't often just give a directive without some acknowledgement of, 'this is new, I know this is a challenge.' I at least give them the rationale for it. That is even a good thing.

Principals acknowledged that their positions require them to make decisions that are not always popular. Relationship building and trust helps to create buy in for those decisions when principals listen to teachers' frustrations and then explain the reason why. Dumont explains

> I have a very good relationship with all of my teachers. We can all work more on that obviously but I am a very collaborative leader so I make sure that my teachers are involved in decisions, that they have an opportunity to voice concerns, that they know their concerns are heard. I don't always follow through with what they want because it might not be in line with the vision of the school. I do make sure that they are heard and if I don't follow a recommendation then understand why.

Andis stated, "Sometimes just listening to people is huge. Um, you know there's gonna be times when it's just spending a little bit of extra time with someone listening to them and make them feel really good about what's going on."

The principals went on to say that creating buy in from students in the classroom is no different from the leader creating buy in with teachers. Listening and understanding are key to building trust and understanding. Edwards stated, "So, if you work on positive relationships and you get their trust, and you get their buy-in many of our students will be more likely to work hard to do the things that you need them to do in the classroom, to respond respectfully, to settle down when you ask them to. All those kind of things are oftentimes based on the relationship they have with them."

Other common characteristics of developing positive principal/teacher relationships include principals treating people with respect, acknowledging when people are going through tough times, assuming positive intention, displaying empathy, giving people a voice, refraining from micromanagement, being positive, collaborative and optimistic.

Relationship Building for Students

Principals stressed the importance of teachers having conversations with students, getting to know them on a personal level, taking an interest in what students are doing, listening, understanding and genuinely caring about them. Relational teachers are positive, interested and enthusiastic about teaching, get to know their students by being out in the hallways in the mornings, greeting students, smiling and learning their names. Principals referenced teachers smiling at students and learning their names.

Edwards described the way a teacher builds relationship at the start of class every day, "Smile at them, make them look like they (the teacher) want to be here, be enthusiastic about the start of class, about teaching them and being with them and all those things. Just those little signals you give, like Monday morning you're happy to be here. Campos stated, "Uh, first of all it's to get to know their names, to be out there in the morning greeting them, uh, you know just talking . . . small talk when they come in the morning." Communication and body language were also common sub themes that emerged as principals described positive teacher-student relationships. Smiling is also a part of this important communication and body language. Franklin stated, "If I know that my body communication is 57% of how I talk then I'm gonna reach into people, I'm gonna make eye contact, I'm gonna smile."

Some teachers show students they care by incorporating student interests into their teaching. Teachers set high expectations and hold students accountable but also demonstrate flexibility when something happens out of the norm.

Edwards stated:

> I think by listening to students . . . like asking them questions and finding out about their personal life a bit and taking an actual interest in that. If they have a complaint or an issue, you don't just blow it off, you listen. You don't always have to agree and say "yes," but you listen and hear them out. I think being prepared shows them you care about them and life and who they are. Set your expectations, set your deadlines, and you hold them accountable but there are those moments when you give little breaks because of some factors outside the norm and that shows kids you care about them.

Andis describes the importance of teacher understanding and empathy " . . . understanding that on a Monday morning, they might not have eaten all weekend, understanding that the home life with Mom or Dad or whoever they are living with may not be real good."

Overall, in looking at the commonalities of relational skills and relationship building between principals and teachers as well as teachers as students, one could ascertain that there is very little difference about how relationships are built. Principals seem to understand that developing positive relationships with teachers is paramount to building trust. In turn, effective teachers are able to build this same trust with students and provide an effective learning environment. Relationships between the adults and the students are equally important and it seems that one cannot exist without the other.

Roadblocks and Deficiencies

Principals identified numerous teacher roadblocks and deficiencies related to building effective relationships with students. Many teachers value the content that they teach. They love teaching their particular subject area, but they do not necessarily like teaching students. Andis

states, "They may have really great knowledge base of the topic. They know their content but they just can't relate to kids. It's difficult to fix."   Content teachers especially have difficulty relating to and addressing the needs of students who display challenging behaviors. Campos describes a content teacher, "I can think of a teacher . . . and he was all about, you know, the expectations. In high school, it's always departments . . . nobody comes into my territory." Campos goes on to describe situations that result in punitive measures for students:

> I have seen them escalating situations. I have seen some teachers get upset, their kids are upset, they get more upset, they say things they shouldn't be saying and things get out of hand. It goes from a kid getting after school detention to even being suspended, even threatening the teacher because, you know, it's going back and forth. You know, they cause trouble.

Bartlett shared an experience with a teacher who was using "put downs" with students, "I had one teacher who was very dry and you could tell she had learned to say "put downs", but it was really hard because the students didn't know . . . it was in a way of making fun . . .and no one knew how to take it."

Yet, some of the principals described an exact opposite type of roadblock when teachers are too relational with students and want to be their friend rather than their teacher. This seemed to be a commonality more so with the secondary principals. Andis described a situation that the teacher actually thought was good:

> I had a teacher who was almost too friendly with kids. And so they thought they had good relationships with kids. But what was happening is they would get way off topic and talk about things that they shouldn't. They may not even realize that they asked the kid about the party they were at Friday night and that was inappropriate.   They just thought that they were making conversation with them. Well, that's not really a question that we want to talk about.

Teacher perception and reality merged as a common theme as principals discussed that teacher behavior is very hard to change because a teacher has a different perception of what they are doing versus the reality of what they are doing. Some of the principals mentioned that veteran teacher behavior is much harder to change than teachers who are newer to the profession.

Other roadblocks and deficiencies that were mentioned by principals that hinder positive relationship building include poor lesson planning and instruction, teachers being too friendly with students, crossing boundaries, poor communication skills, negative body language and tone of voice, teachers not being able to forgive and move on, and teachers not taking time to talk to students or have one on one conversations.

Identity and Belief Systems

One major commonality amongst the principals was the belief that relationship building is natural. When asked about what role teacher identity as being "relational" plays in their teaching effectiveness, the following excerpts represent the belief that being relational is a natural disposition:

Andis: "I definitely think that it's something that you either have or you don't."

Bartlett: "I think a lot of it is just how they naturally interact with people. It's the social skills that they learned as they were growing up."

Edwards: "I think it plays a large role. It's huge in that teachers have that as part of their identity and they acknowledge it's important. Some people might not have it in their disposition and who they are."

Franklin: "I think that is huge. I would say, and I always call it disposition . . ."
"It's an art, it's not a science, you can't just open the book and get it."

The principals indicated that if teachers come from a background that does not allow for effective relationship building, they are less effective in the classroom and their previous experiences that have helped shape their identity and belief systems ultimately hinder their

relationships with students. Juxtaposed, if teachers know how to solve conflict and have a relational identity and belief system, they will experience success with relationship building.

Franklin describes past experiences and teacher identity:

> If a person comes from an experience of great relations with others, knowing how to solve conflicts, knowing how to have compassion, whatever those things are that help students in an educational setting build relationships and have success. If they come to the table with that, then it's easy for them to do that with students, but if they come from a background that had poor relationships with others, or maybe they didn't have experience with differences or things like that, then that does impact how they have relationships with the kids and staff, and everybody, so yes, definitely a teacher's identity . . . Yes, that definitely plays a role how they maneuver everyday stuff . . .It goes back to their identity. You know that they may have had experiences where there is lack of trust and there's nothing you can do and they won't believe anything, cause maybe they're coming to the table pessimistic because of their life experiences so they don't see it you know the same way someone else may see it."

Teacher identity and belief systems seem to also coincide with teacher perception and reality. Teachers may not perceive their actions or interactions with students as negative because their identity and belief systems do not allow them to do so.

As the idea of perception versus reality continued to emerge throughout the interview process, the researcher was led to ask another key questions that as not previously included as part of the original interview questions. The researcher was curious to know if principals felt that teachers who were identified as non-relational, had the capacity to change. All but one of the principals felt that despite a teacher's natural inclination to be non-relational, teachers can in fact change. The central idea was that change is a very difficult process and that the individual must be open to change, but ultimately in the end, a majority of the principals did feel that teachers could change their identity to become relational. The following excerpts from the principal interviews represent their belief that teachers can change:

Bartlett: I believe everyone can change. I definitely believe everyone can change. I think the only way to get adults or even children to change is a mind shift . . . to be reflective and they have to be aware and acknowledge what they are struggling with and be willing to work at it, and then I think they can.

Campos: Yes, they can change. I think what they need to see, once you model that, and encourage them to really try, if they are struggling with a student or two students, when they see the student opening up, they just need to see the results or the fruit of their effort on one student or two students. After all it's not bad. So, they can change. Anybody can change as long as you put some effort into it.

Dumont: Absolutely. I think that there are some that are very engrained in what they have done that might for whatever reason have been reinforced so it's difficult to change sometimes, but I think all teachers can and most teachers want to if needed.

Edwards: I would say yes, I think they can. I think maybe there could be some exceptions to that. Some people might not have it in their disposition and who they are, but I think in general yes if they are in teaching for the right reasons which means they care about kids and they care about their success then I think they can be convinced that their relationship portion of things is part of what will lead them to having more success and that it is worth it, and that you have to do it if you truly want to be successful, especially without student population.

Franklin: Yes, and it's possible to change habits of living. It will not happen overnight but if you keep at it, it's a journey. . . Yes, I do believe someone can change because it's experiences. Your life changes . . . depending on new experiences someone's habits of living can change over time.

As principals described one essential component of assuming positive intentions as part of effective relationship building, the principals' belief that people can change is also representative of this relational characteristic.

Coaching Strategies

Principals cited numerous coaching strategies to assist with helping teachers develop relational skills. The most prevalent strategy mentioned was modeling. The principals share the belief that they must model positive relationships in order for teachers to understand what relational skills look like, sound like, and feel like. Excerpts from the principal interviews to support modeling include:

Bartlett: I think I model good relationships and I think I model positivity, and I think I model caring. I genuinely care about the students in my building and all the adults . . . I do have expectations and that I do my best to really model a relationship building community.

Campos: Modeling. I tell my staff, teachers, I am not going to ask you to do anything I wouldn't do. I am security, I am a sub, I would do everything, you know, if I asked you to do something, I would do it too. I am going to be in the cafeteria, I'm gonna be in your classroom, or another place if I asked you to do something. I would model that. That's really big. Being visible, talking to people, in and out . . . you're always there, you always see them, it's like you become a part of their (students) life, everyday life. .talk to them and so you create really good relationships.

Franklin: . . . You have to model, you give hugs, you ask people how are they, you know, take phone calls at ten o'clock at night about a dog (laughter) . . .You know, you just show that you care. I think I do model how to have strong relationships with kids, with people, all those things.

Principals also discussed professional development as a prime strategy used to address teachers struggling with relationship. Professional development activities involved articles and research around developing teachers' awareness of Cultural Proficiency. Franklin described Cultural Proficiency training, "We took The Inner Culture Development Inventory which gives us information on how people react with differences and then from there, based on that data we've tailored what the teachers need when it comes to cultural climate." Bartlett discussed using an evidence based program called Responsive Classroom:

I really like the Responsive Classroom approach to teaching. I've used that quite often. I use the *Joyful Classroom.* There are some articles like *Power of your Words.* It's about building community within the class and building relationships, and I think that the whole approach is really beneficial, especially for teachers that lack some of those skills. They can follow some of those components within the Responsive Classroom approach to help them, and I think it is a good first step. It allows them to be reflective of the community and the relationships they are building.

Other specific professional development strategies include Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), 4 x 1, the teacher provides 4 positive reactions to 1 negative reaction; the 2 x 10 strategy where you talk to them for 2 minutes about something personal for 10 straight days.

Principals also discussed having coaching conversations with teachers to discuss and reflect on particular situations. A few of the principals discussed the importance of balancing reflection with direction. Franklin describes situations that call for both approaches:

> I try to give the student a voice and the teacher a voice and if it's a relationship issue what I do is have kids write up what is going on and I share that information with the teacher and we talk through that. Sometimes if I know it's the teacher, I'll just go up to the teacher and I'm just straight, straightforward; this is a problem, check your body language, hide your tone. I'll just tell them sometimes, but a majority of the time I try to give both people a voice.

This delicate balance of allowing teachers to reflect and have a voice in conjunction with being directive goes back to the capacity of a principal to be relational. When principals consider giving teachers a voice, listening to their perspective and walking through a coaching conversation, the principal is in essence, building relationships with teachers. This is one of the key components in providing support to teachers. Bartlett describes this skill as being able to refocus and redirect conversations with teachers. Bartlett stated:

> Another skill would be to refocus and redirect conversations. Students do this all the time too, to avoid what's really there, what's happening. Listen but then redirect it back. Like having difficult conversations is probably a skill. Know how to bring it back into what you want to talk about, but do it in a way that they feel good about themselves and they still feel like they have hope at the end, and they have an action plan when they leave.

Bartlett discussed being transparent with a teacher while remaining supportive:

> I will just state what I have seen and what I have heard, and then I will also ask the teacher, 'What do you think the student's response was'? I will let them talk with me about it and then I will say what I saw the student's response was, maybe their body language or their facial expressions, or sometimes they get verbal back and then it becomes confrontational . Whatever it is, I will say exactly what I saw happen and then ask them what they thought the student's reaction was.

Edwards talks about the importance of listening, acknowledging and then supporting teachers in change:

> So be open about what the reason is, acknowledge what the challenges are with it but ask them to do it anyway. I think in conversation with them too, I would listen and I would hear them out. I would try to smooth the path for them. So, I think that is another way of acknowledging that you understand all their responsibilities or how this is a challenge for them . . . whatever it is, and so you try to give them the resources, tools, information that they needs to do something if you're asking them to do it.

A few of the principals discussed instruction as being pivotal in creating an effective learning environment and creating relationship by earning the respect of students because they learn so much. Relationship comes from the students connecting with teachers through instruction. In an effort to coach teachers to use their strong instructional skills as a way to connect with students, Campos tells a story of a situation in which a teacher was struggling with a student. The teacher was a math teacher who was non-relational. During summer school, the teacher had a more challenging student in class. When the regular school year rolled around, the principal had to place the student in a class. Campos stated:

> So she taught this kid and this kid came back after summer. She said, "I learned from this teacher more in six weeks than what I learned in the regular school year.' So I talked to that teacher and I said did you know that she learned more in six weeks than what she learned in the whole semester? I am going to give you that student because she really feels like you are helping her. So it really created a good relationship and she moved from Pre-Algebra to Algebra and then she became successful . . . before that it was always a conflict . . . the teacher was able to say, hey, maybe this kid thinks highly of me because I helped. So that was a success story.

When teachers struggle with providing adequate instruction or building positive relationships, principals recommended observing other teachers as mentors and models. Andis discussed the need for principals to regularly conduct classroom walkthroughs so that principals are aware of what is going on and can give teachers feedback.

Dilts Nested Levels of Learning

The researcher conducted a second analysis of the principals' transcripts to look for patterns within the principals' responses, specifically for themes/categories that emerged related to Dilts Nested Levels of Learning. At the most basic level, Dilts explains (2014) that the environment provides the context and constraints under which people operate. This might be an individual's home environment or workplace. Behaviors define what an individual does, most specifically, what behaviors, interactions, patterns, and communications exist within the particular environment. Strategies, skills, and capabilities define how individuals guide and direct their behaviors within a particular context. Individuals may ask how can I use the skills I have within this situation or environment. Values and beliefs are formulated and determine meaning based on motivations and guidelines behind an individual's capabilities. Finally, values and beliefs make up and individual's identity which provides the individual's sense of role and mission within respect to the larger system.

Figure 7 represents the Dilts Levels and how one provides scaffolding for the next. The researcher created the following figure to demonstrate the hierarchies.
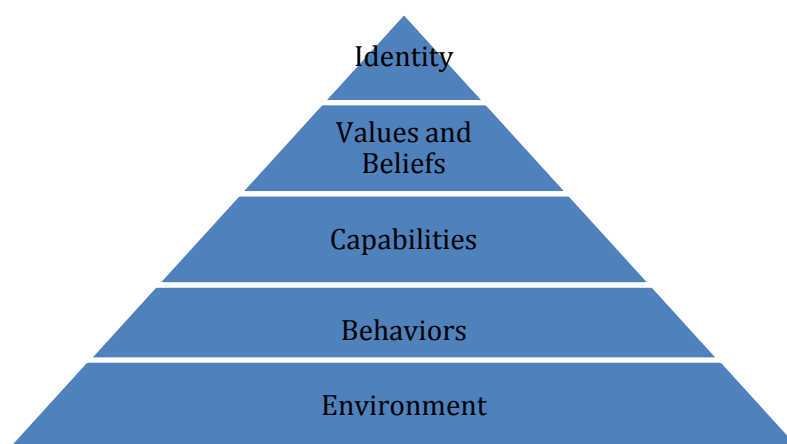

Figure 7. Dilts Nested Levels of Learning

Dilts' (2014) explains his work is grounded in the work of anthropologist Gregory Bateson which focuses on learning and change categorized in learning classes of behavior. According to Dilts, Bateson's work centers on the theory of "learning to learn." Bateson studied this theory in laboratory animals to identify "two fundamental types, or levels, of learning which must be considered in all processes of change: "Learning I" (stimulus-response type conditioning) and "Learning II," or deutero learning, (learning to recognize the larger context in which the stimulus is occurring so that its meaning may be correctly interpreted). "The most basic example of Learning II phenomena is set learning, or when an animal becomes "test-wise"-that is, laboratory animals will get faster and faster at learning new tasks that fall into the same class of activity. This has to do with learning classes of behavior rather than single isolated behaviors" (Dilts 2014, para. 20). Although there are similarities between the two models, within Bateson's model, the levels can occur simultaneously. Within Dilts, each level of learning is dependent upon the other and higher levels of learning mean that the subject changes as result of learning how to change; the subject chooses the change. In studying Bateson, Dilts (2014) states, " . . . there was an important distinction between people's physical actions and behaviors and the deeper cognitive representations and strategies which took place in their minds" (Dilts, 2014, para. 4). Dilts (2014) formulated the Nested Levels of Learning based on the concept of hierarchy, " . . . that those elements at the top of the hierarchy "come first," or are "more important" than those at the lower levels" (Dilts, 2014, para. 6).

Prior to examining how Dilts hierarchy of levels relates to the principals perceptions of teachers, it is important to fully understand how Dilts work is grounded in Bateson's levels of learning. Dilts (2014) summarizes Bateson's applications to the process of learning as follows:

- Learning 0 is no change. It involves repetitive behaviors in which the individual, group or organization is stuck in a rut or trapped "inside the box"-e.g., habits, resistance, inertia.

- Learning I is gradual, incremental change. It involves making corrections and adaptations through behavioral flexibility and stretching. While these modifications may help to extend the capabilities of the individual group or organization, they are still "within the box"-e.g., establishing and refining new procedures and capabilities.

- Learning II is rapid, discontinuous change. It involves the instantaneous shift of a response to an entirely different category or class of behavior. It is essentially the switch from one type of "box" to another-e.g., change in policies, values or priorities.

- Learning III is evolutionary change. It is characterized by significant alterations which stretch beyond the boundaries of the current identity of the individual, group or organization. We could say that not only are they outside the "box," they are outside of the "building"-e.g., transition of role, brand or identity.

- Learning IV is revolutionary change. It involves awakening to something completely new, unique and transformative. At the level of Leaning IV, the individual, group or organization is out of the box, out of the building and in a new world-e.g., completely new responses, technologies or capabilities that open the door to previously unknown and uncharted possibilities. (Dilts, 2014, para. 8)

Both Bateson and Dilts work are grounded in change theory which helps to understand how to support non-relational teachers become relational and ultimately how to answer the initial question: What specific strategies have been useful for a principal to coach a teacher who has

been identified as non-relational? In *A Brief History of Logical Levels,* Dilts provides an explanation for how the two parallel. Figure 2 represents Dilts explanation. Dilts (2014) states:

- A particular behavioral reaction to a particular environmental stimulus is essentially a reflex or habit- Learning 0.

- Corrective change in behaviors in order to reach a particular outcome involves connecting that behavior to something beyond the environmental stimuli- some internal mental map, plan or strategy. This involves the exercise of a particular capability or the development of a new one- Learning I.

- Developments in capabilities are stimulated and shaped by beliefs and values; which function to classify and categorize aspects of our mental maps, behaviors and environment and connect them to emotions and other motivational structures- Learning II.

- Changes in beliefs and values would involve linking to a system beyond those beliefs and values (an identity) that they have been established to serve- Learning III.

- Getting outside that system and connecting to a larger "system of systems" (i.e., the "field" or "spirit") would be necessary to achieve a change within a particular system or identity itself- Learning IV.

- Each level functions by integrating and operating upon the level beneath it. Clusters of change or activity at any particular level will also influence the level above it (Dilts, 2014, para. 9).
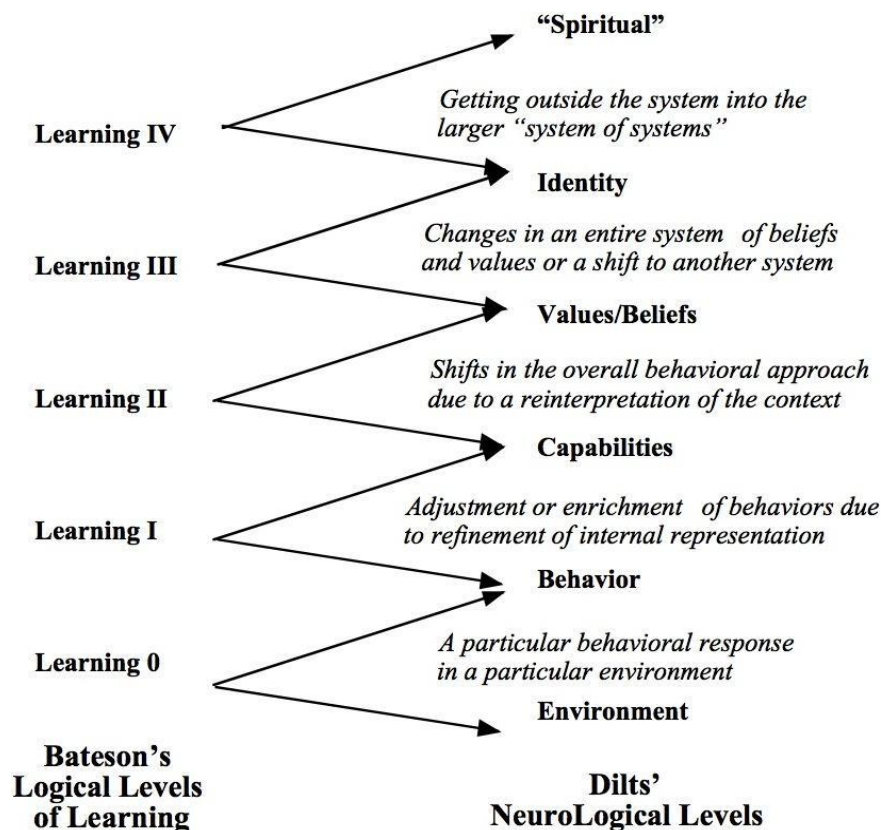
Figure 8. Relationship of Bateson's Levels of Learning to Neuro-Logical Levels
Relationship of Bateson's Levels of Learning to NeuroLogical Levels
Note. Reprinted from "A Brief History of Logical Levels," by Dilts, R., 2014.

There were four Dilts areas that emerged as themes throughout the principals responses: behavior, capabilities, belief systems and identity. Principal narratives provide evidence for how the nested levels coincide with the formation of identity.

Behavior

Within Dilts current Neuro-Logical Level model, Dilts (2014) states that specific behaviors and actions of the individual represent "what the person does within the environment" (Dilts, 2014, para. 3). One might ask, "What are the particular patterns of work, interaction or communication? Behaviors take the form of specific work routines, working habits or job related

activities (Dilts, 2014, para. 3). According to Dilts (2014), behaviors are the specific physical actions that individuals use to interact with the people and the environment around them. Behavior is considered a lower level neuro-logical level; hence, behaviors are indicative of the individual's environment. In an environment when a teacher feels threatened, teachers take on the form of interacting with their students in a particular way. At this level in Dilts hierarchy, behavior is a habit, or reflex. Generally speaking, teachers may form the reflex or habit to always respond in the same way in particular negative situations. The following narratives represent examples of teachers who displayed negative behaviors when interacting with students in addition to what principals would do in situations where negative interactions occurred.

Franklin described how she handled a situation in which a teacher was not communicating appropriately with a student, "Sometimes if I know it's the teacher, I'll just go up to the teacher and say look what is this and I'm just straight, straightforward. This is a problem, check your body language, hide your tone . . ." Edwards discussed what factors influence how to coach a teacher who is struggling, " If I saw negative relationships, like negative interactions, if I saw or heard words from teachers that I felt were relationship inhibitors, if I saw body language from teachers or students that indicated that there wasn't very positive relationship going on, then that would indicate to me there was a need to talk about this." Campos discussed negative behaviors in terms of escalating situations, "I have seen some teachers get upset, their kids are upset, you (the teacher) get more upset, you say things you shouldn't be saying and things get out of, out of hand. It goes from a kid getting after school detention to even being suspended even threatening the teacher because you know it's going back and forth. You know, you cause trouble." Bartlett discussed coaching a teacher who conveyed negativity through using a condescending tone, "I was able to get some teachers to

maybe become more patient with their students and think about their tone, and maybe the way they questioned, and maybe not doing it in a condescending way. I had one teacher who was very dry and you could tell she has learned to say "put downs", but it was really hard because the students didn't know it was there because it was in a way of making fun but not and no one knew how to take it."

Within the behavior category on Dilts hierarchy, behavior is the prime focus, not change. The teachers mentioned above represent those individuals who are resistant to change and and as Bateson describes, "stuck." The types of individuals continue to perform the same old way and generally are resistant to change. Within Bateson's model, these individuals or types of behaviors would be represented at Learning 0. Dilts also discusses the power of language. Language falls in the behavior category on the hierarchy because using language is an action, a behavior. Dilts (1999) states, " . . . a few words change the course of someone's life for the better, by shifting a limiting belief to a more enriched perspective that offers more choices. They are illustrations of how the right words at the right time can create powerful and positive effects. Unfortunately, words can also confuse us and limit us as easily as they can empower us. The wrong words at the wrong time can be hurtful and damaging" (p.6). Teachers who display behaviors like Campos's teacher who escalates situations rather than de-escalates them and Bartlett's teacher who masked put downs with pretending to "make fun" are examples of harmful words and harmful behaviors. If these teachers remain "stuck" in the hierarchy, change cannot occur, and most likely negative behavior, such as using damaging language, will become the norm.

Campos discussed behaviors in terms of the principal-teacher relationship. There are times when a principal must be more directive with a teacher. In this type of a situation, Campos

discussed the way in which he would approach the situation, " Even if a teacher is in trouble for doing something I don't think yelling and ah, screaming at the teacher, you know, writing that teacher up right away is really the solution." The principal's behavior is more of a soft approach, rather than a punitive one. Campos's initial soft approach to discipline is most likely his reflex in situations that call for teacher discipline.

The principals also described positive behaviors that relational teachers use to interact with students. Positive behaviors can be described as kind words, soothing tone of voice, calm demeanor, kind gestures, appropriate physical touch or behavior that generally can be interpreted as comforting. The following excerpts support specific, positive behaviors exhibited by relational teachers:

Franklin: "You have to have that kind of attitude . . . you give hugs . . .I'm gonna make eye contact, I'm gonna smile . . ."
"The biggest way we communicate is through our body. So being aware of the different ways you know we interact as human beings . . ."

Edwards: " . . . Some of the things I think they can do is smile at them, make them look like they want to be here, be enthusiastic about the start of class, about teaching them and being with them."

Campos: " I would be giving them compliments so kids would see and hear that."

Within a relational environment, teachers do not feel threatened, and therefore, have developed the reflex to display positive behaviors.

In a live lecture, Dilts (2010) states, " . . . the foundation of our lives is in the environment, the physical environment. I can see it. I can hear it. I can touch it. We say that's where it's gonna happen and when it's gonna happen. Then, in order to make something happen there is behavior. This is what I do in that environment. Now my behavior is action. It's our physical action. It's what we do. Two people can be in the same environment but one succeeds and one doesn't because of the actions that are taken." (MyLifeTV, 2010, Robert Dilts - II livelli

neurologici, 0.40) The principals have offered examples of teachers who have behaved differently in classrooms, both positively and negatively, yet because behavior is a lower hierarchy level of learning, the behaviors of these teachers will not change unless they move higher within the levels.

Capabilities

Principal responses tied very closely to the strategies, skills, and capabilities of how teachers guide and direct their behaviors within a particular context. In this study, capabilities represent teachers' and principals' understanding about both positive and negative teacher and student behaviors, both the teachers' and principals' abilities to make good decisions and for both to demonstrate a positive attitude about change and improvement. Dilts (2014) explains,

> Capabilities have to do with the mental strategies and maps people develop to guide their specific behaviors. While some behaviors are simply reflexive responses to environmental stimuli, most of our actions are not. Many of our behaviors come from "mental maps" and other internal processes whose source is within our minds. This is a level of experience that goes beyond our perceptions of the immediate environment . . . At the level of capability we are able to select, alter and adapt a class of behaviors to a wider set of external situations. Thus, "capability" involves mastery over an entire class of behavior- i.e., knowing how to do something within a variety of conditions (Dilts, 2014, para. 5).

Within Bateson's model, capability is a Learning 1 as individuals begin to adapt and alter their behaviors. At the level of capability, change can begin to occur as teachers begin to understand how their behaviors, either positive or negative, impact students. Similarly, principals understand what they must do to assist teachers in a variety of conditions. At this level, corrective change is possible as individuals develop new understanding and new capabilities.

Andis described a situation where a teacher was being too friendly with students. He had to support and redirect the teacher's behavior by conducting more classroom walkthroughs as

well as, "Sitting down with the teacher and having conversation about what is appropriate conversation in class and what isn't." In this situation, Mr. Andis understood that he needed to assist this particular teacher by intervening and having a conversation.

Similar to the the positive behaviors that teachers display, the principals also provided many examples to support the skills and capabilities that teachers' must demonstrate to achieve the capacity to form positive relationships. These examples include teachers' capability to genuinely care about students, the need for teachers to understand where a student is coming from, to take into consideration students' backgrounds and family situations, the capability to solve conflicts, the capability to listen, display empathy and earn trust.

When asked how teachers develop relationships, Campos described capability in this way, "Listening. Listening, listening . . . assuming positive intention. You know, just because a kid is using profanity in the class sometimes it's what that kid hears outside in the home." Dumont described the importance of connectivity and teachers' understanding that students need to have connections at school:

> I think that students need to have that connection at school with their teacher . . . "check in, check out" with the teacher to make sure they have that connection. You know specifically listen to the kid. Choose like two or three kids you would listen to on a daily basis, two minutes, you know listening, conversing with them . . . connect with them.

Teachers who have reached the level of capacity within Dilts levels understand how to work with students in different situations and how to respond to them appropriately and effectively.

The principals revealed their own capabilities as leaders to develop relationships with their teachers while at the same time holding teachers accountable for their roles as leaders in a classroom. Dilts (2003) describes coaching as "the process of helping people and teams to perform at the peak of their abilities. It involves drawing out people's strengths, helping them to

bypass personal barriers and limits in order to achieve their personal best, and facilitating them to function more effectively as members of a team. Thus, effective coaching requires an emphasis on both task and relationship" (Dilts, 2003, para. 1).

Bartlett demonstrates effective coaching using both task and relationship to help a teacher improve. She explains the importance of having the skill set, the capacity, to hold teachers accountable, yet also support and recognize teacher concerns and challenges. There must be a balance between the two. Empathy also plays a role in understanding.

> Another skill is . . . having those conversations with my staff, acknowledge people's strengths, acknowledge when people are having rough times . . . but still being able to set high expectations for them, making them feel like that I understand, have empathy for what they are going through but yet we still have a common goal here and that we are still going to work on that goal. Another skill is just being able to listen to what their needs are and to follow back up with anything they may have, like concerns or what they need. Another skill would be to refocus and redirect conversations. Listen but then redirect it back. Know how to bring it back into what you want to talk about, but do it in a way that they (teachers) feel good about themselves and they still feel like they have hope at the end, and they have an action plan when they leave. A good characteristic is just having empathy, understanding where they are at and what they are going through.

Bartlett represents having the capacity to know how to have difficult conversations balanced with addressing the issues, yet providing the teacher with an action plan and hope.

Dumont describes having a positive relationship with teachers and having the capacity to understand why it is important to include teachers in decision making,

> I have a very good relationship with all of my teachers. I am a very collaborative leader so I make sure that my teachers are involved in decisions, that they have an opportunity to voice concerns, that they know their concerns are heard. I don't always follow through with what they want because it might not be in line with the vision of the school. I do make sure that they are heard and if I don't follow a recommendation, they understand why.

Dilts (1998) discusses the complexity of skills and capabilities. Dilts states:

> Some skills and capabilities are, in fact, made up of other skills and capabilities . . .These are often referred to as "nested T.O.T.E.s," "sub-loops," or "sub-skills," because they relate to the smaller chunks out of which more sophisticated or complex skills are built. The capability of "leadership," for example, is made up of many sub-skills, such as those relating to effective communication, establishing rapport, problem solving, systemic thinking, and so on (Dilts, 1998, para.20)

Bartlett demonstrates the "sub-skills" of acknowledgement, concern for staff members, but making sure they understand the mission and value for the work. She has the "sub-skill" of refocusing conversations, being able to remain empathetic to teacher concerns and issues, addressing issues and ensuring teachers walk away from difficult conversations with hope and a plan for the future. Dumont demonstrates the sub-skill of effective communication, and ensuring his staff understands the reasoning behind his decision making.

Belief Systems

Values and beliefs are formulated and determine meaning based on motivations and guidelines behind an individual's capabilities. Dilts (2014) states, "Values and beliefs relate to fundamental judgments and evaluations about ourselves, others and the world around us. They determine how events are given meaning, and are at the core of motivation and culture. Our beliefs and values provide the reinforcement (*motivation* and *permission*) that supports or inhibits particular capabilities and behaviors. Beliefs and values relate to the question, *"Why?"* (Dilts, 2014, para. 6). Bateson's model classifies values and belief systems as a Level II change. Individuals are reinforced to change at this level based upon their core values and beliefs.

The question with regards to whether or not principals believe a teacher can change was proof of their own belief systems about change. All but one of the principals expressed the belief that teachers can change. Some of the principals expressed the belief that change can happen

with behavior change on the part of the teacher. Even the opinion Andis, who expressed the belief that teachers cannot change, still represents a belief system. When asked if a non-relational teacher can change, the following responses represent the belief systems of the principals:

Andis: " I think behavior is very consistent. . .so I guess if I had to say a yes and a no at the end of the day, I'm going to say no."

Barlett: " I believe everyone can change. I definitely believe everyone can change.
I think the only way to get adults or even children to change is a mind shift, to be reflective, to be aware and acknowledge what they are struggling with and be willing to work at it, and then I think they can."

Campos: "Yes, they can change. . . they just need to see the results or the fruit of their effort on one student or two students. Anybody can change as long as you put some effort into it."

Dumont: "Absolutely. I think that there are some that are very engrained . . .so it's difficult to change sometimes, but I think all teachers can and most teachers want to if needed."

Edwards: "I think, in general yes, if they are in teaching for the right reasons which means they care about kids and they care about their success."

Franklin: "Yes, I do believe someone can change because it's experiences, depending on new experiences someone's habits of living can change over time."

The principals explanations following their own belief systems and values about change represent why the principals believe change is possible or not possible. Andis believes behavior is consistent and so teachers who have consistent negative behaviors most likely will not change. Bartlett believes change is possible if teachers acknowledge what behavior needs to be changed and work at it. Campos believes teachers can change as a result of seeing their efforts and putting effort into relationships. Dumont believes change is hard for those engrained in repetitive behaviors, but most teachers can change because they want to. Edwards believes

teachers can change because they care about kids. Finally, Franklin believes teachers can change because teacher's life experiences change and teachers change right along with them.

In a live lecture, Dilts (2010) explains the neurological levels for individual growth as well as organizations. "This same set of levels which happens within us as an individual also happens within an organization or a team. There's the organization's environment, the organization's actions, the organization's capabilities. Then there's the values and the beliefs. If I don't value innovation, if I don't believe in innovation, I'm not going to develop the capabilities or take the actions" (MyLifeTV, 2010, Robert Dilts - Il livelli neurologici, 5.43). Within the organization, Dilts references beliefs and values as the motivation to accomplish the vision or mission. Through the narratives within this study related to relationships, most specifically, principal and teacher relationships, one can ascertain that principals value and believe in the overall mission of their work which is to coach, support, assist and help teachers in their work to support students. Therefore, all of the principals except for Andis believe that teacher change is possible through teacher acknowledgment that they must change their behaviors and have the desire to do so. Andis's belief that teachers cannot and will not change is also rooted in Dilts work. If a teacher does not value relationship and does not believe in developing relationships with students, the teacher is not going to develop the capabilities or skills to do so and is "stuck" at Bateson's Learning 0.

Identity

Finally, values and beliefs make up and individual's identity which provides the individual's sense of role and mission within respect to the larger system. Dilts (2014) states, "The level of identity relates to our sense of *who we are*. It is our perception of our identity that organizes our beliefs, capabilities and behaviors into a single system. Our sense of identity also

relates to our perception of ourselves in relation to the larger systems of which we are a part, determining our sense of "role," "purpose" and "mission" (Dilts, 2014, para. 9).

After taking into the consideration the three emerging themes of behavior, capabilities and belief systems, principals also talked about the "identity" of a teacher as relational. Despite the belief that teachers who are non-relational have the ability to change, some of the principals describe teacher identity as a natural disposition.

Andis: "It's something that you either have or you don't . . ."

Bartlett: "I think a lot of it is just natural. I think a lot of it is just how they naturally interact with people. It's the social skills that they learned as they were growing up. I would say like a very small percentage would be able to learn that from a textbook."

Edwards: " Some people might not have it in their disposition and who they are . . ."

Franklin: "I think it's a process. It's an art. It's not a science. You can't just open the book at get it."

The principals seemed to sway back and forth with their beliefs about identity formation. On the one hand, some acknowledge that identity is a natural disposition, the makeup of an individual's experienced nested in environment, behaviors, capabilities, and belief systems. Yet, a majority, five of the six, believe that change is a possibility if a teacher acknowledges a relationship problem exists and they are willing to make changes in their behaviors, capabilities and belief systems.

Dilts (2014) summarizes coaching and change at the identity level within Bateson's model as "evolutionary change." " It is characterized by significant alterations which stretch beyond the boundaries of the current identity of the individual, group or organization" (Dilts, 2014, para. 8). Dilts and Bacon describe "the growing need for coaching at the identity level" (Dilts and Bacon, 1999-2018, para. 1). Most identity challenges are a result of change or transition. "A key outcome of coaching at the identity level is to enable people to expand and

deepen their sense of who they are and respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by life from a place of increasing presence, resourcefulness and authenticity—even during times of challenge and crisis" (Dilts and Bacon, 1999-2018, para 10).   Dilts work around identity coaching supports the principals' beliefs that change at the identity level is possible with coaching and support. Dilts (2014) also explains the concepts of ego and soul.   "Identity can be viewed as being composed of two complementary aspects: the ego and the soul. The *ego* is oriented toward survival, recognition and ambition. The *soul* is oriented toward purpose, contribution and mission. Charisma, passion and presence emerge naturally when these two forces are aligned" (Dilts, 2014, para. 6). Hence, when teachers truly embody the vision and mission of their work, they can change their beliefs and values about the significance of relationship building and develop the skills and capabilities to become relational.

Overall, an analysis of the data supports that principal responses do coincide with Dilts Nested Levels of Learning in the areas of behavior, capabilities, belief systems and identity. There was very limited data to support evidence for the level of environment. The researcher did not design a question specifically related to the physical classroom environment which might account for why there was not much data to support the principals' views on how a physical environment might support or not support positive teacher-student relationships.

Assertions

The principals' narratives, emerging themes, sub-themes and evidence of Dilts Nested Levels of Learning provide insight of the experiences the principals have had working with both relational and non-relational teachers. Each principal identified areas of strength and struggle within their experiences of coaching a non-relational teacher. Specific strategies were identified to support coaching a struggling teacher.   In addition, principals also discussed their own

leadership skills and characteristics that attribute to the success of coaching teachers. A thorough review of the narratives and data collected in this study leave three assertions for principals to consider when coaching a teacher who struggles in the area of relationship building. The literature contained within this study supports that positive student-teacher relationships are paramount to students' overall success. Powerful relational coaching on the part of a principal has the potential to help teachers improve their behaviors which will ultimately help positive student-teacher relationships occur.

Assertion # 1 - **In order for teachers to even consider working on relationship building with students, they must first have a trusting, positive, respectful and supportive relationship with their principal.**

The core of all educational success begins with relationship. Tomlinson (2016) discusses the "real essence" of teaching as transformative in which a teacher is able to look at each individual student, despite shortcomings, behaviors and challenges to seeing the "uniqueness of each child" and helping that child to see their own uniqueness as well. The power of relationship is even more critical for at risk students (Wormeli 2016). The principals in this study reiterate this notion. Positive teacher-student relationships are the key to helping students succeed. The principals in this study shared specific experiences and struggles with teachers who have not been successful at building positive relationships with students and their efforts to support teachers in these situations. In order for improvement to be made, change is necessary. The principals in this study also identified that a part of their strategy in helping teachers to improve relationship building skills was the positive teacher-principal relationship itself. According to Fullan (2002), "The single factor common to successful change is that relationships improve. If relationships improve, schools get better. If relationships remain the same or get worse, ground is lost. Thus, leaders build relationships with diverse people and

groups—especially with people who think differently" (p.17). All of the principals in this study described themselves as relational leaders. Campos even described himself as a leader who "sometimes cares too much." Franklin described taking phone calls from staff at ten o'clock at night while Dumont expressed the need for teachers to see him involved in the work, not sitting in the office. Edwards expressed that listening and understanding teachers' points of views creates buy in and trust as well as providing a rationale for why decisions are made, ensuring that staff understands a reason, even if they do not agree.

The personal stories provided by the principals were powerful evidence to support the notion that principals must be "emotionally intelligent" to promote change. Emotionally intelligent leaders are able to build relationships because they are aware of their own emotional makeup and are sensitive and inspiring to others (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Campos story about the teacher who struggled with a student during summer school, but then later had success in the classroom during the regular school year is an example of Campos emotional intelligence as a leader. He told the teacher , " . . . did you know that she learned more in six weeks than what she learned in the whole semester? I am going to give you that student because she really feels like you are helping her." Campos understood the importance of praising the teacher for her efforts so that in turn she could continue to create more positive relationships with students in the future. Bartlett's understanding that teachers need to leave difficult conversations with hope and an action plan demonstrates her emotional intelligence as a leader. Finally, the core belief that teachers can change was echoed by a majority of the principals. All but Andis expressed the belief that teachers can change if they want too. Simply by embodying this belief, principals demonstrate their leadership skills as "Cultural Change Principals." According to Fullan (2002), "Cultural Change Principals display palpable energy, enthusiasm, and hope. In

addition, five essential components characterize leaders in the knowledge society: moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, the ability to improve relationships, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making" (p. 16).

This assertion adds to the overall field of education by reiterating that principals must embody the skills to develop positive relationships with teachers in order to effectively coach teachers who are struggling in the area of relationship. Principals must embody the skills to be both instructional and relational leaders, mentors and coaches. They must believe that people can change.

Assertion # 2: **Teachers can be classified as "relationship teachers" or "instructional/content teachers." A master teacher has both the ability to master both of these areas effectively. An instructional teacher can become more relational through coaching if they are open and willing to make changes.**

According to Buskist, Keeley and Irons (2006), "Faculty who take teaching seriously will inevitably ask themselves one especially important question: "How can I become a more effective teacher?" (Buskist, Keeley & Irons, 2006, para. 1). The question implies that an individual's teaching, no matter how good it may be, can become better. The answer to this question can lead to improved teaching practices and student learning. "Faculty may have been "perfect" in the classroom yesterday, but it is almost impossible to string together a week of such days, let alone an entire semester's worth" (Buskist, Keeley & Irons, 2006, para. 1). Tucker and Stronge (2005) list key qualities of effective teachers including teachers who, "dedicate extra time to instructional preparation and reflection." In looking at self-assessment and self-directed inquiry as part of teacher evaluation, Danielson and McGreal (2000) state, "If provided with a safe and respectful environment, most teachers will choose to concentrate their efforts at professional growth in those areas in which they have the greatest need" (Danielson and

McGreal, 2000, para. 22).   The principals agree that if teachers are willing to change, teachers can make improvements in their relationship-building skills with students. Dumont believes that change process is difficult but assumes positive intent that most teachers can change and that most teachers want to if needed. Edwards believes most are teaching for the right reasons and can be convinced to change if needed. Franklin's belief about change aligns with the research, change is a process, a journey that happens over time.   Teachers can change because teacher's life experiences change and teachers change right along with them.

Teachers can be classified as "relationship teachers" or "instructional/content teachers." A master teacher has both the ability to master both of these areas effectively. Most teachers fall somewhere in between. Based on the assertion that a teacher can become more relational through coaching if they are open and willing to make changes, the researcher is led to create a theory called Ehmer's Domains of Instructional and Relational Skills (EDIRS).

EDIRS is supported by the principals descriptions of both relational and instructional teachers.   Principals stressed the importance of teachers having conversations with students, getting to know them on a personal level, taking an interest in what students are doing, listening, understanding and genuinely caring about them. Relational teachers are positive, interested and enthusiastic about teaching, get to know their students by being out in the hallways in the mornings, greeting students, smiling and learning their names. Principals referenced teachers smiling at students and learning their names.   Teachers who display these behaviors are relational. The principals also described instructional teachers. Andis was very explicit about teachers who focus on content, not the relationship. He stated, "They may have really great knowledge base of the topic. They know their content but they just can't relate to kids. It's difficult to fix."   Campos describes a content teacher, " I can think of a teacher . . . and he was

all about, you know, the expectations. In high school, it's always departments . . . nobody comes into my territory."

Figure 3 represents 22 teachers in a school. Those teachers who demonstrate high proficiency with both instruction and relationship represent the dots in the upper left quadrant. Those teachers who demonstrate high proficiency with instruction and low proficiency with relationship represent the dots in the upper right quadrant. Those teachers who represent low proficiency with instruction and high proficiency with relationship represent the dots in the lower left quadrant. Those teachers who represent both low proficiency with relationship and instruction represent the dots in the lower right quadrant. The closer a teacher is to the dotted line, the closer they are to crossing over into that particular domain. There are many factors that contribute to which domain a teacher falls into. On any particular day or school year, a teacher could cross over in to a particular domain based on what is happening within that day or within that year. If teachers are willing to change, and are given opportunities for relational coaching and support from their principal, they may go into the high relational quadrant. Some teachers cross back and forth over and over again; however, most teachers seems to stay within a domain a majority of the time. This theory is supported by the researchers personal experiences with teachers as well as the interviews conducted by the principals in this analysis. It is the opinion of the researcher that fewer teachers fall into the High Instructional Skill/High Relational Skill Area as well as the Low Instructional Skill/Low Relational Skill Area. Most teachers fall in the High Instructional Skill/Low Relational Skill or the Low Instructional Skill/High Relational Skill areas.

Another example supporting EDIRS is the difference between the knowledge of a veteran teacher as opposed to a novice teacher. In discussing the use of self-assessment and self-directed

inquiry as part of teacher evaluation, Danielson and McGreal (2000) discuss the complexity of self reflection as a skill, "Many experienced teachers spontaneously engage in such reflection on at least an informal basis. But few novice teachers do so, and many experienced teachers rarely devote the time to it that sustained reflection (and therefore real learning) requires. . . experienced teachers are typically able to assess their own practice accurately, whereas novices, depending on their preparation programs, may be less skilled in this activity" (Danielson and McGreal, 2000, para. 24).   If a novice teacher is experiencing relational struggles with students and has not developed self-reflective skills just by nature of lack of experience, the novice teacher would rate in the lower relational quadrant in comparison to the veteran teacher who has had more experiences to reflect and improve. In this case, the veteran teacher would rate in a higher relational quadrant. Over time, as the novice teacher gains more experience as well as willingness to devote time to self reflect, the novice teacher would eventually crossover into a higher relational level.

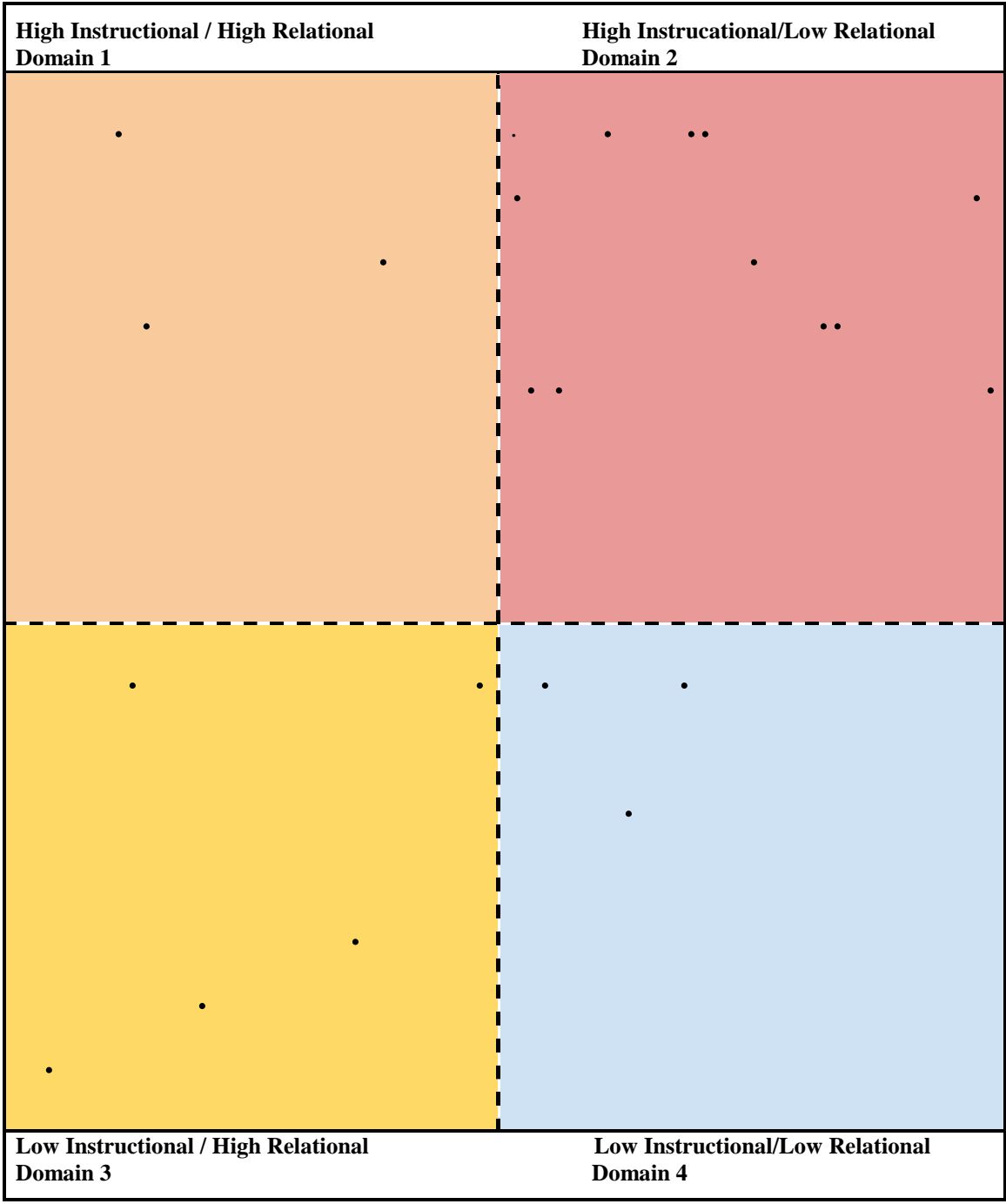| High Instructional / High Relational Domain 1 | High Instrucational/Low Relational Domain 2 |
| Low Instructional / High Relational Domain 3 | Low Instructional/Low Relational Domain 4 |

Figure 9. Ehmer's Domains of Instructional and Relational Skills

This assertion adds to the field of education an overall theory of where teachers fall within a model of instructional and relational skills. Principals must examine their teaching staffs to determine where teachers fall. If a teacher falls within the low relational or low

instructional categories, it is paramount that principals offer support. It is also paramount that teachers are willing to receive support and assistance. If a particular teacher is unwilling to accept support and help, the principal must resort to directive measures. The EDIRS model provides a visual support to principals and assists in the identification of such teachers.

Assertion # 3 - **While coaching and working with teachers, a principal must often "dance" between providing support as well as being more directive with teachers.**

Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2011) discuss the role of "the coach" and "the evaluator." Even in evaluation conferences when the principal offers compliments followed by suggestions for areas of improvement, teachers focus on the negative. "Criticism stings, even when it's offered with the best of intentions. It can provoke frustration, fear, and a sense of failure. It can stimulate resentment and resistance, undermine self-efficacy, and increase unwillingness to change. In short, it can make performance improvement less, rather than more, likely" (Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran, 2011, para. 2). Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2011) go on to describe the importance of getting coaching right. Far too often, principals have used coaching as a "remediation" for poor teaching. Principals have also made the mistake of sending a coach into a classroom to gather information and collect data which is then used to further negatively evaluate a teacher. The wrong use of coaching has resulted in a lack of trust and buy-in from teachers and teacher improvement does not occur. Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran state:

> Schools need adaptive, action-research approaches to coaching. Evocative "listen and learn" models incorporate the growing body of knowledge regarding adult learning, growth-fostering psychologies, and cognitive behavioral neuroscience. Good coaches respect teacher awareness, choice, and responsibility. They understand teacher experiences and show empathy and appreciation. They recognize vitality and build on teacher strengths. As such, coaching in schools can increase teacher professionalism and raise the bar of teacher effectiveness to a

continuous and collective striving for excellence (Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran, 2011, para. 18).

The principals within this study demonstrated effective knowledge on how to coach teachers struggling with relationship. First and foremost, each principal identified themselves embodying relational characteristics. Bartlett discussed modeling good relationships with her staff and genuinely caring about the students and staff in her building. She related her personal experience as a soccer coach to her role as a principal coach and stated very clearly that instructional and relational leadership intertwine. She spoke about the ability to acknowledge people's strengths, listen, display empathy while at the same time refocus and redirect conversations so that teachers understand the common goal and mission. Bartlett also expressed that teachers must leave difficult conversations with hope and an action plan. Campos described the way to approach a teacher who may be in trouble by not yelling or screaming and not quickly jumping to writing a teacher up.   Andis and Dumont both discussed the importance of collaboration and including teachers in decision making to promote buy in and build trust. Andis focused on providing guidance and direction without micromanaging his staff. He discussed the importance of depending on others to be knowledgeable in their positions and that the principal does not always have to be the smartest person in the room.   When people are given opportunities to show what they can do, they want to work hard for the leader. Edwards talked about the importance of acknowledging a teacher's concern as well as giving rationale for directives. He also discussed the concept of "smoothing the path." When directives are given, principals need to provide the resources and tools so that teachers can get the job done.

Somech (2005) studied the roles of what she calls participative and directive leadership approaches to manage school effectiveness. Survey data was collected from 140 teams selected from 140 elementary schools in northern Israel. Participative leadership is described as more

collaborative where teachers are involved in joint decision making with the principal. Directive leadership is less collaborative. Directive styles of leadership are more top down. Somech (2005) states, " Directive leaders are expected to lead by monitoring and managing those teams, whereas participative leaders are expected to lead by encouraging team members to discover new opportunities and challenges, and to learn and to cope through sharing knowledge" (p. 780). Teams were asked to complete surveys that measured their involvement in the decision making process, problem solving, and the extent they were asked to participate as either participative or directive. The results of the study revealed that while most team members preferred a participative style, there was a need for both styles of leadership. Both flexibility and discipline contributed to the high performance of the teams.

The literature review within this study outlines particular coaching strategies that principals can employ when providing coaching to teachers who struggling in relationship and many of the models suggest that teachers prefer and respond better to less directive approaches, however, as supported by Somech's (2005) work at the balance between directive and participative leadership, there are times when directive approaches are appropriate and necessary for teacher change and development. One very important characteristic of a relational leader is the ability to balance teacher accountability with teacher support. A school leader must be able to support teachers while maintaining high expectations. The principals in this study demonstrate "the balance." Bartlett's balance between displaying empathy while maintaining high expectations for teachers was evident. She spoke about having a difficult conversation with a teacher who was using put downs. Andis represented a leader who holds high expectations for teachers while allowing others to be "the smartest people on the room." He stated:

> I like to surround myself with smart people. And I think a lot of times some
> leaders feel like they have to be the smartest person in the room and that's not at

all how I operate.   So I trust that your gonna do your job. Now, I'm gonna give you guidance. Uh, but I'm not gonna dictate how exactly how your going to do something. Obviously there are some times when you have to do that but a majority of the time if you give people an opportunity to show how they do things and what they do there's gonna be a lot more buy in, their gonna work hard for you.

Andis also spoke about working directly with a teacher who was too relational with students which was a more directive approach. These two examples represent Andis' understanding of "the dance." He understands when he must trust teachers to do their jobs, yet provide direct assistance when needed. Campos discussed the need to approach teachers who are struggling first by having a conversation and not resorting to punitive measures unless absolutely necessary.

This notion of balancing teacher support with teacher accountability led the researcher to theorize that principals' capacity to balance is also a skill set.   This theory is called "The Dance." While coaching and working with teachers, a principal must often "dance" between providing support in the form of collaboration, giving teachers a voice, using kind words and gestures, speaking in a comfortable tone, taking a personal interest in teachers lives, and genuinely caring about the teachers as well as being more directive, transparent, and resorting to punitive measures when necessary. A principal must embody the skill set of "the dance." A principal inherently needs to know when the teacher requires more support versus a more directive approach. Varied situations require a particular stance and the principal must dance back and forth between the two in an effort to coach and improve teacher behaviors, particularly a teacher's approach to teacher-student relationships. The principals in this study made many references to these types of approaches which ultimately led the researcher to the "Theory of The Dance." Figure 10 represents "The Dance."
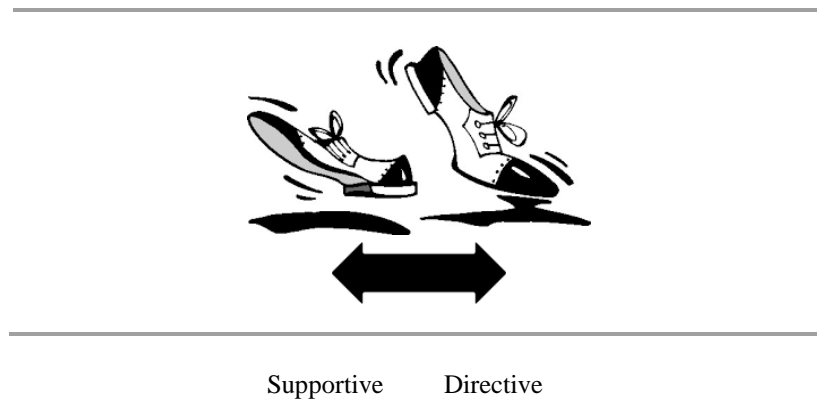
Supportive   Directive

Figure 10. Ehmer's Theory of "The Dance"

This assertion adds to the field of education an overall theory to support the enhancement of principals' skills to demonstrate understanding and proficiency between providing support as well as being more directive with teachers. Principals must provide support in the form of collaboration, giving teachers a voice, using kind words and gestures, speaking in a comfortable tone, taking a personal interest in teachers lives, and genuinely caring about the teachers as well as being more directive, transparent, and resorting to punitive measures when necessary.

Summary

This chapter has explored the research question by providing an in depth analysis of six principal responses to the five open-ended questions:

1. What role do you believe teacher identity as being "relational" play in their teaching effectiveness?

2. How do teachers develop relationships?

3. What factors influence how you coach a teacher who is struggling?

4. What specific coaching do you use to help teachers?

5. Do you consider yourself a relational leader? If so, what are the leadership skills and characteristics that make you relational?

As the interviews emerged, the researcher asked one additional question:

6. Do you believe that non-relational teachers can change?

The researcher analyzed the participants' narrative responses and created the following master key based on emerging themes: relationship, deficiencies, content, hierarchy, roadblocks, solutions, identity, strategies, and coaching. The second coder/auditor formulated the following master key based on their own emerging themes: belief systems, trust, high expectations, success, compassion, communication, professional development, negative teaching, and reflection. The researcher found commonalities between the two keys which resulted in four major themes being identified: (a) relationship building for teachers and students; (b) coaching strategies; (c) roadblocks and deficiencies; and (d) identity and belief systems. There were four Dilts areas that emerged as themes throughout the principals responses: (a) behavior; (b) capabilities; (c) belief systems; and (d) identity. Principal narratives provide evidence for how the nested levels coincide with the formation of identity.

Three assertions serve as the foundation to provide specific coaching strategies to teachers who struggle in the area of building positive relationships with students:

1. In order for teachers to even consider working on relationship building with students, they must first have a trusting, positive, respectful and supportive relationship with their principal.

2. Teachers can be classified as "relationship teachers" or "instructional/content teachers." A master teacher has both the ability to master both of these areas effectively.   An

instructional teacher can become more relational through coaching if they are open and willing to make changes.

3. While coaching and working with teachers, a principal must often "dance" between providing support as well as being more directive with teachers.

These assertions are supported by principal narratives as well as additional research. The researcher created two theories based on the assertions. EDIRS provides a model of teachers ability to be instructional, relational, or both. Ehmer's theory of the dance represents principals' skill to dance between providing supportive and directive approaches. Chapter 5 provides recommendations, limitations of the study and conclusions.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter five provides the implications for this study, including an in depth examination of the research question, discussion of the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for further research. This qualitative case study was designed to provide a principal with specific coaching techniques directly from the field of education that have the potential to increase a teacher's ability to become more relational with students. This case study allowed the participants to share what specific coaching strategies they have used with non-relational teachers that have been successful. The study also shed light on what characteristics and skills both relational teachers and principals embody to build positive relationships. The study revealed whether or not change is possible for non-relational teachers as well as the implications for change. Dilts Nested Levels of Learning provided the contextual framework for this study. There were four emerging themes related directly to coaching strategies: relationship building for teachers and students, coaching strategies, roadblocks and deficiencies, and identity and belief systems. There were four additional Dilts themes related to change which also corresponded with the themes related directly to coaching: behavior, capabilities, belief systems, and identity. The emerging themes from both areas led to three assertions which resulted in the creation of two theories directly embedded into the assertions. An examination of the themes related to coaching and Dilts revealed three assertions:

1. In order for teachers to even consider working on relationship building with students, they must first have a trusting, positive, respectful and supportive relationship with their principal.

2. Teachers can be classified as "relationship teachers" or "instructional/content teachers." A master teacher has both the ability to master both of these areas effectively. An

instructional teacher can become more relational through coaching if they are open and willing to make changes. Ehmer's Domains of Instructional and Relational Skills (EDIRS) represents this assertion.

3. While coaching and working with teachers, a principal must often "dance" between providing support as well as being more directive with teachers. Ehmer's Theory of "The Dance" is supported by this assertion.

The following research question was used to guide this study: What specific strategies have been useful for a principal to coach a teacher who has been identified as non-relational? The following discussion is grounded in the data collected during this study to examine this key question.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings from this study revealed that while there are specific strategies that principals identified as being useful in coaching non-relational teachers, there are other variables in addition to the coaching strategies that must be taken into consideration first. The first correlation is between principal-teacher relationships and teacher-student relationships. In order for teachers to even consider working on relationship building with students, they must first have a trusting, positive, respectful and supportive relationship with their principal. Consequently, having a positive teacher-administrator relationship helps build trust which can lead to greater buy in from teachers during a coaching situation. Rooney (2008) looks at the essential qualities of effective leaders, "Principals are effective not because of positional power, but because of the synergy that flows from positive relationships between the principal and teachers—and among the teachers themselves (p. 90)." Hall and Simeral (2008) discuss the triangular relationship between administrators, teachers, and coaches. The role of administrator as leader, coach, and

manager overlap. Administrators are often referred to as leaders and managers and fulfilling both roles is quite a difficult task. Sometimes the principal must act as coach and other times principals are privy to instructional coaches within their buildings. In either case, Hall and Simeral state

> The relationships between teacher and coach and teacher and administrator are perhaps the most important and most sensitive elements of schools striving for improvement. Effective coaches and administrators appreciate the magnitude of these relationships, and both work diligently to establish, nurture, and maintain them. Good relationships are characterized by trust, respect, and understanding, and it takes time to create and strengthen them. Our colleague and friend Derek Cordell poses these relationship questions to coaches and administrators: If you were locked in a broken elevator with a teacher, would you be able to carry on a "regular" conversation, or would it be accompanied by awkward periods of silence and discomfort? What do you know about that teacher as a person? With what depth have you cultivated that interpersonal relationship? Effective coaches and administrators devote a significant amount of time and energy to this end. They know that the *real* work occurs only after they've formed a strong bond with each teacher" (Hall and Simeral, 2008, para. 2).

The principals in this study articulated that they create positive relationships by listening, understanding, displaying empathy, modeling, assuming positive intention, giving people a voice, refraining from micromanagement, being positive, collaborative and optimistic. All of the principals identified themselves as relational leaders and cited specific examples of developing positive rapport with teachers.

Findings from this study also revealed that teachers build positive relationships with students by having conversations with them, getting to know them on a personal level, taking an interest in what students are doing, listening, understanding and genuinely caring about them. Relational teachers are positive, interested and enthusiastic about teaching, get to know their students by being out in the hallways in the mornings, greeting students, smiling and learning their names. Nearly all of the principals referenced teachers smiling at students and learning

their names as an important attribute of relational teachers. Boynton and Boynton (2005) describe attributes of teachers who develop positive relationships with students. They explain teachers who care are interested in students' personal lives outside of school, stand by the door and greet students as they enter, notice when students display strong emotions of anger or happiness and follow up by asking them how they are doing, listen sincerely to what students have to say, and finally, display empathy. Tomlinson (2016) discusses the "real essence" of teaching as transformative in which a teacher is able to look at each individual student, despite shortcomings, behaviors and challenges to seeing the "uniqueness of each child" and helping that child to see their own uniqueness as well. The power of relationship is even more critical for at risk students (Wormeli 2016). The principals in this study reiterated the importance of teachers behaviors, appropriate responses and reactions to students as well as the characteristics that allow them to have positive relationships with students.

In conjunction with the importance of developing positive relationships with both teachers and students, the principals in this study also discussed roadblocks and deficiencies that hinder positive relationship building on both fronts.   Findings disclosed specific roadblocks that prohibit collaborative and "participative" relationships. The principals identified being directive, not allowing teachers a voice, not giving explanations for why decisions are made, and being non-empathetic as specific roadblocks and deficiencies that hinder positive principal-teacher relationships and get in the way of a coaching type relationship. Once again, the crux of providing coaching support to teachers, relies upon a positive principal-teacher relationships. Teachers are less likely to accept help from a principal, if trust is not established. Nazim and Mahmood (2016) studied the difference between transactional and transformational leadership to find out the relationship between the leadership styles of principals and job satisfaction of

college teachers. Five teachers from 43 colleges were selected to take a survey to rate the leadership styles of their head teachers. Results from the survey revealed that transactional leaders differ from transformational leaders in that their functions are more directed towards management while transformative leaders main function is to lead the organization. Unlike transactional leaders, transformative leaders inspire others and have vision and passion. The transformational leaders communicate with their teams. Nazim and Mahmood state, "They act and communicate with energy and enthusiasm. There is close relationship between the leaders and the employees. The transformational leaders depend upon the knowledge and talent of the employees in order to attain the objectives of the organization" (p. 19). Leithwood (1992) also describes transformational and transactional leaders in the context of transformative and transactional organizations. Transformative organizations are referred to as Type Z and transactional organizations are referred to as Type A. Leithwood states, "Type A organizations . . . centralize control, and maintain status between workers and managers . . . they also rely on top-down decision processes" (p. 8). In contrast, Leithwood describes Type Z organizations as "emphasizing participative decision making as possible. . . they are based on a radically different form of power that is 'consensual' and 'facilitative' in nature - a form of power manifested through other people, not over other people" (p. 9). Finally, Fullan (2002) defines five essential components that make up effective school leaders as those who can lead cultural change. These leaders have " moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, the ability to improve relationships, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making" (p. 16). The principals in this study echo the research in that leaders who do not include teachers in decision making, or at least provide an explanation as to why decisions are made, struggle in developing positive relationships with teachers which may impact a principals ability to coach them.

Findings from this study identified specific roadblocks and deficiencies that prohibit teachers from developing relationships with students, including behaviors that help to curb classroom disruptions. The principals described incidents of poor lesson planning and instruction, teachers being too friendly with students, crossing boundaries, poor communication skills, negative body language and tone of voice, teachers not being able to forgive and move on, and teachers not taking time to talk to students or have one on one conversations. Smith, Fisher, and Frey (2015) discuss punitive and restorative practices in the classroom. They contend that traditional approaches to student misbehavior can be described as adult responses that focus on establishing guilt, punishment, and focusing solely on the offender and not the victim. The outcome of the situation is dictated by the rules and the fact that the offender rarely has an opportunity to repair or make amends for his or her actions. Marzano and Marzano (2003) call for many teacher behaviors that provide the structures and support in a classroom that are proactive in eliminating classroom disruptions and provide for positive teacher-student interactions. Such teacher behaviors include the need to communicate clear expectations, "well-designed"rules and procedures and establish clear learning goals. For example, teachers can use space proximity by moving closer to a student's desk if that student might be talking, use a physical cue by putting a finger to the lips to signal stop talking, use appropriate tone of voice, take a personal interest in students, greet each student by name, make eye contact, ensure all students have an opportunity to participate, and have an overall awareness of students' needs. The principals perceptions with regards to student-teacher roadblocks and deficiencies support the research that also inter-relates to the specific relationship skills that teachers need to develop rapport with students.

Findings from this study reveal one major commonality shared by the principals that relationship building is natural.   The principals indicated that if teachers come from a background that does not allow for effective relationship building, they are less effective in the classroom and their previous experiences that have helped shared their identity and belief systems ultimately hinder their relationships with students. Juxtaposed, if teachers know how to solve conflict and have a relational identity and belief system, they will experience success with relationship building. Campos, Delgado, and Soto Huerta (2011) discuss the importance of self exploration, reflection and understanding of one's self prior to understanding other cultures. While their research focuses specifically on Latino students, the central idea can be attributed to all students. The authors explain that cultural practices are based upon lived experiences. A teacher's willingness to become culturally aware allows for greater openness and understanding. "For instance, a teacher's willingness to explore the rearing practices of an African American family, the discipline methods of a Hmong parent, and the dietary habits of a Hindu family exemplifies purposeful cultivation of both cultural and self-awareness. Thus, interest in learning about students helps the teacher design and deliver authentic learning experiences while enhancing cultural sensitivity "(p. 8). The principals in this study discussed teachers taking the time to get to know students and their backgrounds. One principal even went as far as focusing on Cultural Proficiency training in her school based on the need to help teachers connect with students of different cultural backgrounds.

Findings from the principals suggest that teacher identity and belief systems seem to also coincide with teacher perception and reality. Teachers may not perceive their actions or interactions with students as negative because their identity and belief systems do not allow them to do so. All but one of the principals felt that despite a teacher's natural inclination to be non-

relational, teachers can in fact change. The central idea was that change is a very difficult process and that the individual must be open to change, but ultimately in the end, a majority of the principals did feel that teachers could change their identity to become relational.

Numerous coaching strategies were offered by the principals in working with teachers who struggle to build positive relationships with students. Modeling was the most prevalent strategy. Miller (2015) discusses the importance of modeling as a strategy that helps educators and students learn from failure. The principals share the belief that they must model positive relationships in order for teachers to understand what relational skills look like, sound like, and feel like. If a teacher is failing to do that, it is the role of the principal to model positive relationship building in all facets, both with students and staff. Principals also discussed professional development as a prime strategy used to address teachers struggling with relationship. Professional development activities involved articles and research around developing teachers' awareness of Cultural Proficiency. The principals referenced both whole school professional development meetings and book studies as well as individual professional development conversations with teachers who are struggling. Rock (2002) discusses the importance of job embedded professional development and reflective coaching. The traditional form of professional development usually tends to be based on a topic selected by the administrators and based on what the administrator believes the teachers need. Rock calls for a new approach which differentiates professional learning based solely upon teachers needs. While the principals in this study did not over-elaborate on differentiated learning professional development, they did allude to the notion that particular teachers require additional assistance in areas that they need support which might take the form of sharing an article or having a conversation about relationship and understanding students from different backgrounds. One

principal mentioned administering the Inner Culture Development Inventory, another mentioned allowing teachers to select professional development they are interested in while another discussed customizing coaching and help to meet the teacher's personality.   All of these strategies are supported by job embedded professional development and reflective coaching. Principals described having coaching conversations with teachers to reflect upon particular situations.   The delicate balance of allowing teachers to reflect and have a voice in conjunction with being directive goes back to the capacity of a principal to be relational. When principals consider giving teachers a voice, listen to their perspective and walk through a coaching conversation, the principal is in essence, building relationships with teachers, one of the key components in providing support to teachers.   Hence, personalized professional development conversations inter-relate to the development of positive teacher-principal relationships.

While other specific professional development strategies such as Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), 4 x 1, the teacher provides 4 positive reactions to 1 negative reaction; the 2 x 10 strategy where you talk to them for 2 minutes about something personal for 10 straight days, were suggestions offered by the principals, the most prevalent finding goes back to the importance of building both principal-teacher relationships which in turns creates positive teacher-student relationships.

Quality instruction also emerged as being pivotal in creating an effective learning environment and creating relationship by earning the respect of students because they learn so much. Relationship comes from the students connecting with teachers through instruction. Irvin, Metzler, and Dukes (2007) study student engagement and connection with literacy. Within their model, students are called to engage in different literacy tasks.   As they receive quality instruction, support, feedback, practice and coaching, students become more motivated.   As

students get smarter, they become confident to engage more and more. Quality instructional conditions scaffolded with teacher support provide an effective learning environment that connects students to literacy. This research supports the principals' belief that quality instruction does correspond to creating positive-teacher relationships when students feel good about what they are learning. The principals in this study also report that when a teacher needs support with instruction, one coaching strategy is to observe other teachers as mentors and models. The principals in this study also believe the responsibility of the principal to regularly conduct classroom walkthroughs so that principals are aware of what is going on and can give teachers feedback.

The findings related to Dilts Nested Levels of Learning supported evidence in the areas of behavior, capabilities, belief systems and identity. While a majority of the principals believe that identity is a natural disposition, all but one believe change is possible if a teacher is willing to acknowledge there is a problem and wishes to get better and gain a relational identity. As supported by Dilts research ((1990, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2014), findings from this study do reveal that principals believe change is possible if teachers are willing and open to change their behaviors to become more relational.

Finally, a thorough analysis of the data led the researcher to create a theory to demonstrate a teacher's ability to be instructional, relational, or both. Ehmer's Domains of Instructional and Relational Skills (EDIRS) provides the model within four domains: Domain 1: High Instructional/High Relational, Domain 2: High Instructional/Low Relational, Domain 3: Low Instructional/High Relational, Domain 4: Low Instructional/Low Relational. Teachers can be classified as "relationship teachers" or "instructional/content teachers." A master teacher has both the ability to master both of these areas effectively. Most teachers fall somewhere in

between. Very few teachers fall within the High Instructional/High Relational Domain and very few teachers all within the Low Instructional/Low Relational Domain.

The researcher also presents a theory called "The Dance." A principal inherently needs to know when the teacher requires more support versus a more directive approach. Varied situations require a particular stance and the principal must dance back and forth between the two in an effort to coach and improve teacher behaviors, particularly a teacher's approach to teacher-student relationships.

Implications for Practice and Recommendations for Further Study

Tucker and Stronge (2005) describe effective teachers, "The transformative power of an effective teacher is something almost all of us have experienced and understand on a personal level. If we were particularly fortunate, we had numerous exceptional teachers who made school an exciting and interesting place. Those teachers possessed a passion for the subjects that they taught and genuine care for the students with whom they worked " (Tucker & Stronge, 2005, para. 1). As a principal who is passionate about providing students with the most effective teachers, every student should be engaged with teachers who have the capacity to be highly relational and highly instructional every single day. Principals have the responsibility of ensuring that teachers working in classrooms directly with students receive as much support as needed to ensure a high relational and high instructional environment. With so much research supporting the instructional role of a principal, this study suggests the role of principal as a relational coach is just as paramount. This study is a call to superintendents across the country to begin understanding the importance of relational coaching and to begin embedding relational coaching within school districts beginning with principal training.

The principals in this study describe the balance between supporting teachers in their efforts to become more relational, yet holding them accountable for non-relational behaviors that cause undue harm to students overall experiences in school. Overwhelming, the principals in this study revealed their belief that non-relational teachers can change. Therefore, relational training is needed at all levels, both the teacher and administrative level. Principals need to know how to have delicate coaching conversations with teachers as well as how to have directive conversations when teachers do not have the capacity to change. Principals must know when to have both types of conversations, what they sound like, feel like, and the implications for both types. Within this study, principals continued to point out the necessity of modeling and supporting teachers in their relational journey. Principals also need to understand what modeling entails, exactly what situations call for modeling and how a principal ensures progress is being made with a non-relational teacher. This study is a call for job embedded professional development that does not just occur at a one-time professional development session, yet an ongoing series of discussion and study that occurs inside of the school walls with a principal and a teacher.

As mentioned in the introduction of this study, teacher evaluation tools do not provide the necessary means to address a teacher in the area of relationship building. Tucker and Stronge (2005), point out, "Teacher evaluation traditionally has been based on the *act* of teaching and documented almost exclusively through the use of classroom observations" (Tucker and Stronge, para. 20). The authors point out that one of the flaws of the evaluation system is limiting scope, a focus on instructional skills only. This study serves as a call to superintendents to really hone in on how much weight is dedicated towards teacher-student relationships in an evaluation tool. If relationship and instruction are of equal importance, then equal weights

should be given to both areas. Teachers should be held accountable to provide quality instruction balanced with growing and maintaining positive relationships with students.

Teacher training is equally important in helping teachers grow in their capacity to become more relational. Principals within this study indicated that when a problem is brought to the surface, most teachers want to change. Teacher training can look like working directly with a principal to improve teacher-student relationships. Within training, principals continue to model how to listen, display empathy, understanding, caring and how to positively develop relationships with students. Training might also include specific coaching conversations between the principal and the teacher. Teacher training can also look like professional development opportunities offered by the principal in conjunction with the school district's goals and mission around relationship. Once again, this training is not a one-time effort in a lecture hall. Principals and teachers must have continuous conversation and follow through both inside and outside of the classroom.

Recommendations for further study include a deeper look into effective professional development. What specific elements would be included in the most impactful professional development for teachers with regards to relationship development? The researcher is also interested to learn more about the longevity of teacher change. If principals believe that teachers do have the capacity to change with relationship building, how long does this change last? Can a principal expect sustained change over time? Further study is necessary to examine how teachers develop the skill set in understanding how to develop relationships with students balanced with accountability. Finally, the researcher is interested to know if there are any school districts that have an evaluation tool based on relationship building. How have school districts helped be more relational focused on an evaluation? If so, how much weight does it hold?

Limitations

Some limitations which may have hindered the results of the study include the small number of participants in the study. Only six principals were interviewed. The results may have been different with a larger number of participants. All of the participants are from the same school district. The professional development offered is reflective of district professional development offerings. A greater variety of professional development as well as coaching strategies would probably be offered with a larger number of participants outside of the school district. While the researcher made a great effort to remain unbiased, the researcher is passionate about this particular subject. The researcher's theory EDIRS is based upon the data analyzed in this study as well as the researcher's experience as an administrator working directly with non-relational teachers.

The researcher chose to focus solely on qualitative data; therefore the use of any quantitative data is absent. Quantitative data may have also produced different findings. However, in comparing the literature to the findings of this study, the researcher is confident this study did yield valid results.

Conclusion

Teacher relationship and instruction are equally important in playing a vital role in the success of a student. Master teachers have the capacity to do both. Teacher identity plays a large role in a teacher's capacity to build positive relationships. Some teachers display a natural disposition to be relational, while others must develop relational skills over time. Principals must model relational skills through their own relationship building with teachers. Without a positive principal-teacher relationship, principals may struggle to support teachers in developing positive student-teacher relationships. Change is possible on the part of the teacher if the teacher

acknowledges the problem and is willing to work towards change. Principals must embody the skill set to know when to be relational with teachers and when to offer support in the form of direct measures. The bottom line for all educations is that relationship matters.

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APPENDIX A. ABSTRACT FOR PRINCIPALS' MEETING

Teachers who struggle to form positive relationships with students negatively impact likelihood for student achievement and success, most specifically with academically at-risk students and those students displaying at-risk behaviors. Principals struggle to find support and assistance for teachers who are non-relational, especially if teachers have a natural disposition to be non-relational. Evaluative tools may assist principals in holding teachers accountable for negative attitudes, having the ability to work well with peers, and classroom management; however, most evaluative tools are geared towards instructional skills and the weights in each evaluative area do not support terminating a teacher simply based on the lack of the ability to develop positive relationships. Coaching models do offer some supports in having conversations with teachers regarding specific areas of growth, but most coaching models also tend to be concentrated on instruction.

This study seeks to answer the question what specific strategies have been useful for a principal to coach a teacher who has been identified as non-relational?

Through the use of a qualitative intrinsic case study, methodology includes identifying six principals who have had success in working with teachers who struggle to develop relationships with students. Volunteer participants will complete a pre-survey to provide background on their own beliefs about what makes a relational teacher. Participants will then participated in a 30 minute interview to define what makes a teacher effective. Data will be analyzed to look for patterns in responses and offer specific strategies principals' could use in working with non-relational teachers.

APPENDIX B. DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Directions: Choose one item that appropriately answers each question.

1. What grade level is your current school?

 K-4 _____   5-8_____   9-12_____

2. What is your ethnicity?

 American Indian _____   Black _____   Asian _____   Hispanic _____

 White_____   Multiracial _____

 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander_____   Other _____

3. What is your gender? Male _____   Female _____

4. How many years have you been working in the field of education?

 Less than 5 years _____   5-10 years _____   10-20 years _____

 Over 20 years _____

5. How many years have you been a principal?

 Less than 5 years _____   5-10 years _____   10-20 years _____

 Over 20 years _____

6.. What is the free/reduced lunch population of your school?

 Less than 10% _____   10-20% _____   20-30%_____

 30-40% _____   40-50% _____   50-60% _____

 60-70% _____   Over 70% _____

7. Have you ever coached a teacher on improving their relational skills in the classroom?

 Yes _____   No _____

APPENDIX C. IRB RESEARCH PARTICIPANT SHEET

Exemption Granted on 28-NOV-2017

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
Teacher Identity and the Role of Relational Coaching
Dr. Marilyn Hirth, Associate Professor
Educational Leadership
Purdue University

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this study is to understand specifically what strategies are useful in supporting a principal to improve a teacher who struggles with building positive relationships with students through the following question: What specific strategies have been useful for a principal to coach a teacher who has been identified as non-relational? The study is a qualitative intrinsic case study which will include the analysis of six principals' narrative responses. You are being asked to participate in the study because you are a principal who works in a K-12 school district.

What will I do if I choose to be in this study?
Your participation will include completing an online pre-survey which includes 8 questions. The online survey will be sent to you electronically via email. Once the survey has been completed, I will contact you via email to schedule a time to conduct a 30 minute interview with you in person. There are a total of five open ended questions.

How long will I be in the study?
The online survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. The total time commitment of the study is approximately one hour.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?
Due to the small number of principals involved in the study, it is possible that individual principals may be identified by descriptors of their settings. The risks are minimal, but safeguards are in place as described in the confidentiality section of this form.

Are there any potential benefits?
Benefits of this study include providing helpful information to principals and educators in general within the educational field to support struggling teachers.

Will I receive payment or other incentive?
There is no compensation for your participation in this study.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?
The interview will be audio-taped so that I am able to analyze the responses within a transcript. Your identity will not be shared with anyone at any time during this process. Any identifiable information,

including your personal information as well as your school information, will be kept private and confidential.

Once the interviews have been completed, the audio-tapes will be erased and there will be no record of the conversation. Pseudonyms will be used in the data analysis portion of the study. Narrative responses will be included in the study under the pseudonyms.

What are my rights if I take part in the study?
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or, if you agree to participate, you can withdraw your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The participation in this study will not have an impact on your job status.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?
If you have questions, comments or concerns about this research project, you can talk to the principle investigator, Dr. Marilyn Hirth, Associate Professor, College of Education Beering Hall of Liberal Arts and Education Room 5134, 100 North University Street, West Lafayette, IN 47907-2098, 1-765-494-0319, mahirth@purdue.edu or the graduate student, Melinda Ehmer, mehmer@sbcsc.k12.in.us

If you have questions about your rights while taking part in the study or have concerns about the treatment of research participants, please call the Human Research Protection Program at (765) 494-5942, email (irb@purdue.edu)or write to:

       Human Research Protection Program - Purdue University
       Ernest C. Young Hall, Room 1032
       155 S. Grant St.,
       West Lafayette, IN 47907-2114

APPENDIX D. PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The open ended questions for the interviews were as follows:

1. What role do you believe teacher identity as being "relational" play in their teaching effectiveness?

2. How do teachers develop relationships?

3. What factors influence how you coach a teacher who is struggling?

4. What specific coaching do you use to help teachers?

5. Do you consider yourself a relational leader? If so, what are the leadership skills and characteristics that make you relational?

6. Do you think non-relational teachers can change?"

VITA

Melinda R. Ehmer

Education:
1991-1995   DePaul University   Chicago, Illinois
- *Bachelor of Science, English (Secondary Education)*

1998-2001   Indiana University   South Bend, Indiana
- *Master's Degree, (Secondary Education)*

2002-2005   Indiana University   South Bend, Indiana
- *Administrative Licensure Cohort*

2014-present   Purdue University   West Lafayette, Indiana
- *PhD Educational Leadership (Superintendents Licensure Program) – PhD Candidate; Expect to Graduate in May 2018*

Certification
October 3, 1995
- *State of Indiana Teacher's License*

May 2005
- *State of Indiana Administrator's License*

Administrative Experience
August 2016 – present   LaSalle Intermediate Academy, Grades 5-8;
                               Principal, South Bend, Indiana

- *Primary duties include directing data driven curriculum and instruction, professional development, teacher evaluation, 8-Step Process, building management, partnering with parents and community, strategic planning, oversight of PL221 Plan, fulfilling vision of 5-8 Gifted and Talented Program, and all other duties related to educational leadership at LaSalle.*

August 2008-June 2016   Tarkington Traditional School, Grades K-4
                               Principal, South Bend, Indiana

- *Primary duties included directing data driven curriculum and instruction, professional development, teacher evaluation, implementation of 8-Step Process, building management, partnering with parents and community, oversight of PL221 Plan, oversight of Magnet Enrollment Process, recruitment, fulfilling vision of Traditional Magnet Program, and all other duties related to educational leadership at Tarkington.*

Teaching Experience:

August 1998-June 2008   Washington High School, Grades 9-12;
English, South Bend, Indiana

- *Primary duties included teaching Regular, Honors and Advanced Placement English for students in Grades 9-10.   Specialty courses included ISTEP+ Remediation, and Medical Magnet English. I served on numerous committees including PL221, Medical Magnet Leadership Team, Smaller Learning Communities and Peer Mentoring.   I was responsible for planning and providing quality instruction and highly effective classroom management as well as developing positive rapport with students, parents and staff.*

September 1995-August 1998   St. Mary of the Assumption Grade School; Grades K-8;
Language Arts, South Bend, Indiana

- *Primary duties included teaching Language Arts for students in Grades 6-8. I served on the PBA Committee and supervised the after school care program.   I was responsible for planning and providing quality instruction and highly effective classroom management as well as developing positive rapport with student, parents and staff.*

Leadership Experiences
- *SBCSC District Teacher Evaluation Oversight Committee*
- *SBCSC District Principal Evaluation Oversight Committee*
- *SBCSC District Staffing Committee*
- *IUSB Administrative Cohort, Guest Speaker*
- *St. Mary's College, Guest Speaker*
- *Panelist, Community Forum on Diversity, Olivet AME*
- *8-Step Process Training*
- *PBIS Training*
- *Adaptive Schools Training*
- *Smaller Learning Communities, Teacher Leader*
- *Medical Magnet Program, Teacher Leader*
- *Peer Mentor Facilitator*
- *Data Wise, Harvard University*

Achievements
- *Light of Learning Award, Diocese of Ft. Wayne/South Bend, 1996-1997*
- *Teacher of the Year, State Semi-Finalist, State of Indiana, 1996-1997*
- *Teacher of the Year, Washington High School, 2005-2006*
- *Teacher of the Year, Honoree, South Bend Community School Corporation, 2005-2006*
- *Michiana 40 Under 40, South Bend Chamber of Commerce, 2012*
- *Tarkington Traditional School, Four Star School, 2013*
- *Tarkington Traditional School, A-Rating 2010-2015*