2017

A Qualitative Study Of Leadership Practices Exhibited By Elementary Principals That Develop Leadership In Others

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES EXHIBITED BY ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS THAT DEVELOP LEADERSHIP IN OTHERS

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the graduate faculty of The University of Alabama at Birmingham
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

2017

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EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ABSTRACT

Research has indicated educational leaders have had to redefine how leadership is practiced in schools. Because of the increase of accountability measures and responsibilities of the K-12 administrator, there has been a shift in leadership from the "lone" leader to leadership including principals, teachers, and other school leaders.

The purpose of this study was to conduct a qualitative multiple case analysis that focused on specific practices exhibited by elementary principals that nurtured leadership in others in the northern region of a southeastern state. Four theoretical frameworks were used as the foundation of this study: (a) Transformational Leadership, (b) Leader-Member Exchange, (c) Shared Leadership, and (d) Distributed Leadership. Qualitative research methods utilized in the study included one face-to-face interview with 10 practicing elementary principals, one observation of a meeting with participants and a team of teachers or entire staff, and the use of notes from the reflective journaling of the researcher.

Five themes and corresponding sub-themes emerged through the analysis of data which were: (a) Professional Learning Communities, (b) building leadership capacity, (c) professional development (d) collaboration, and (e) leadership opportunities. This study provided insight into practices exhibited by elementary principals in nurturing leadership among teachers. This research was significant to in

providing information to assist practitioners in the field on how to support better the leadership development in others.

Key words: Teacher Leadership, Nurturing Leaders, Elementary Principals, Leadership Practices

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, John and Nina. I cannot express in words how thankful I am for your love, sacrifice, and support in raising me to always strive to become my best self. I appreciate your patience, your words of encouragement, and your belief that I would reach this goal. So many people never experience the love of a parent the way I have with both of you. I love you both more than you will ever know!

I also dedicate this dissertation to my cousin, Karla, for teaching me the true meaning of perseverance and strength. You are in my heart always!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This journey has allowed me to connect with so many people in so many ways. I would like to acknowledge my dissertation chairperson, Dr. Gary Peters, for continuously encouraging me to accept nothing less than my personal best. To my other committee members, Dr. Keith Gurley, Dr. Danna Jones, Dr. Michele Sims, and Dr. George Theodore, I am so appreciative of your support and words of inspiration throughout this process. Also, to Dr. Loucrecia Collins, a former committee member, thank you for your continuous words of motivation.

To my Decatur City Schools administrative team, thank you for lifting me up when I felt discouraged or needed motivation to persevere.

To my academic peers, thank you for always being the cheerleaders I needed to see this process to completion.

To my family and friends, my rocks, thank you for helping me breathe easier when I felt I was gasping for air, helping me to walk lighter when my load felt so heavy, and helping me to see sunlight in the midst of the storms. I will be eternally grateful for your love.

Last, but not least, *Faith in God includes faith in His timing*! Thank you Jesus for your everlasting love and the provision of peace that surpasses all understanding!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures *Page*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Due to accountability measures, educational reforms, and increasing responsibilities, educational leaders are being forced to redefine the parameters of educational leadership (Goldring& Greenfield, 2002; Murphy, Manning, & Wahlberg, 2002; Harris & Townsend, 2007; Flanary, 2009; Halliger, 2011). The idea that principals alone are no longer able to lead and manage every aspect of the school is evident in the various demands placed on educational leaders today. Camburn, Rowan, and Taylor (2003); Barth, (2013); and Wilhelm, (2013) explained that researchers have begun to shift the focus from solely the school principal to the leadership of principals, teachers, and other leaders involved in education. Because of changes in educational leadership, there is an opportunity for leaders to reflect on what adjustments are needed in implementing structural changes (Harris & Townsend, 2007).

Leadership roles are moving more from traditional strategies to collaborative relationships (McAdamis, 2010). Principals are compelled to collaborate with teachers and other individuals in creating an environment in which leadership is shared in the organization (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003; Murphy, Manning, & Walhberg, 2002). Wahlstrom and York-Barr (2011) argued that generating and sharing local expertise empowers teachers to be partners in the work of instructional leadership. Developing and implementing processes in building leadership capacity may not be a simple task. However, the collaboration between principals and teachers is essential in sustaining

change in school improvement (Lambert, 2002; Flanary, 2009). Further research by Crow, Hausman, and Scribner (2002) indicated that leaders in education should promote collaboration, dialogue, and learning through active professional learning communities.

Phelps (2008) found that many teachers perceive administrators hold the sole responsibility for leadership. However, principals have the opportunity to work with teachers in becoming leaders and building collaborative relationships that could result in shared decision making. With the development of reforms such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), school leaders focus more on instructional practices and student achievement due to accountability being the mantra for so many schools (Flanary, 2009). Therefore, utilizing self-managed teams is becoming more common in schools by customizing responses to the changing dynamics in education today (Crow et al, 2002).

The State Department of Education of a southeastern state implemented a new teacher evaluation system in 2009 that included *professionalism* as one of the standards. Some teachers expressed their interest in growing as professionals by choosing this standard as an area of growth in their professional learning plan. Because of this trend, the importance of utilizing teacher leaders is in alignment with the perspectives of distributed leadership and shared leadership. Harris (2003) posited the distributed leadership theory is reflective of collective action, empowerment, and shared agency. Therefore, working collaboratively in educational settings allows for all stakeholders to build leadership skills which may also result in school improvement.

Statement of the Problem

Until this point in time, numerous studies have been conducted concerning leadership in general. However, few studies have been devoted to the role of the principal

in the process of supporting teacher leaders in the context K-12 institutions (Weiner, 2011). Spillane and Diamond (2007) stated, "A distributed leadership perspective acknowledges that leading and managing schools consists of multiple individuals; and leadership focuses on the interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situation" (p. 7). Studies have examined the importance of teacher leaders in their capacity to help lead schools (Barth, 2001; York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Studies have also explored issues related to teacher leadership and determined the leadership of principals can serve as a barrier to supporting leadership of teachers (Weiner, 2011). However, minimal research has focused on specific practices used by principals to develop teacher leaders.

Purpose of the Study

Spillane and Diamond (2007, p.5) stated, "Knowing what leaders do is one thing, but a rich understanding of how, why, and when they do it, is essential if research is to contribute to improving the day to day practice of leading and managing schools." School and district leaders may promote shared decision making, delegation of tasks, and professional development. However, specific leadership activities that support teacher leadership may not always be outlined for practicing administrators. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to conduct a qualitative case study that focused on specific practices exhibited by elementary school principals that nurture leadership in others in the northern region of a southeastern state.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant in three ways. First, it contributed to the literature devoted to the study of principals engaging in practices to support leadership

development. Second, the results of this study added to the growing literature in the general area of educational leadership. Finally, this research may have provided crucial information that will assist practitioners in the field with insight concerning how to better nurture leadership development in others. While researchers agree the model of the one-person leadership is not feasible today, significant talents teachers possess are not being accessed which makes the sustainability of a school challenging to achieve (Barth, 2001; Lambert 2002; Spillane & Diamond, 2007).

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of discovering the specific practices that principals utilize in nurturing leadership development, research questions were derived from the literature review. The researcher posed one central question and five sub-questions. The central question was, How d*o principals engage in practices that nurture leadership in others within schools?* The sub-questions that assisted in answering this question were:

1. Are professional learning communities present in schools? If so, are teachers participating in leadership practice?
2. How do principals develop leadership capacity?
3. What types of professional development are provided to teachers?
4. How do principals promote collaboration among teachers?
5. What leadership opportunities are available to teachers?

Assumptions

This research study was informed by the philosophical assumptions of pragmatism. Pragmatism circumvents the questions of ontology, epistemology, and axiology in favor of methodology that is understood from the perspective of research

questions, goals, and practices (Morgan, 2007). Pragmatism focuses on the topic of research, utilizing methods or research techniques that are deemed appropriate to achieve consistent findings. From a practical perspective, this means that the researcher focused on the possible implications of the research while ensuring the study addressed the research problem (Creswell, 2007). Research questions were constructed, and data were gathered and analyzed, with an emphasis on the execution of the research design implemented in the case study format.

Limitations

Several issues posed limitations to this study. First, only ten administrators in one southeastern state were included in the sample. Second, data analysis findings could not be guaranteed in that interpretations of the data may have involved biases because the researcher had been an elementary principal herself. Last, because the researcher was the instrument of data collection and analysis, the accuracy of the findings of the study were only as accurate as the skills merited by the researcher.

Delimitations

Delimitations of the study included the sample size, a specific set of administrators, and one set of perspectives. First, only ten participants from one southeastern state were a part of the study. Therefore, findings would not be generalizable to other geographic regions. Second, only administrators from elementary school settings participated in the study. Thus, findings would not be generalizable to administrators in secondary settings. Last, only perspectives of principals were utilized in this study that omitted the views of teachers.

Operational Definitions

1. Collaboration- This term describes individuals working in concert with each other to deepen their core understanding (Kennedy, Deuel, Nelson, & Slavit, 2011).
2. Distributed Leadership- This perspective frames leadership as a product of the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situation (Spillane, 2005).
3. Leader plus aspect- The leader plus aspect recognizes that the work of leadership involves multiple individuals (Spillane & Diamond, 2007).
4. Leadership Capacity- This term refers to an organizational concept meaning broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership that leads to lasting school improvement (Lambert, 2005).
5. Leadership Opportunities- This term describes informal or formal roles teachers play in influencing and participating in efforts that impact schools (Harrison & Killion, 2007).
6. Practice aspect- The practice aspect includes the interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situation or context (Spillane & Diamond, 2007).
7. Professional Development- This term refers to the improvement of knowledge and skills of educators.
8. Professional Learning Communities- This term is used to describe a wide range of practices where educators work collaboratively to solve problems and share strategies (McLester, 2012).
9. Situation- This term refers to tools and routines that are used in a school (Spillane & Diamond, 2007).

10. Teacher Leadership- This term refers to what teachers do as practice through a variety of formal and informal positions, roles, and communication in the daily work of schools (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Conclusion

The role of educational administrators has changed dramatically with the focus of accountability placed on school leaders. For schools to move with the changing demands of leadership, a shift in paradigms of leadership perspectives and practices must be evident for school improvement. Heroic leadership is a practice of the past with the current emphasis on collaboration among leaders and followers in organizations. School leaders must collaborate with teachers to make decisions and solve problems that affect the sustainability of the school. Not only are school leaders seeking ways to share in leadership practices, but some teachers are also searching for ways to serve in the role of a leader. As a result, the distributed leadership perspective and shared leadership perspective lend themselves to meeting the needs of both principals and teachers. Therefore, this study attempted to elucidate specific practices principals use to nurture leadership development in others.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter explores four leadership theories that will provide a framework for the study. The leadership theories discussed in this framework include: (1) Transformational Leadership, (2) Leader-Member Exchange theory, (3) Shared Leadership, and (4) Distributed Leadership.

Theoretical Frameworks

Transformational Leadership

Burns (1978) introduced the theory of transforming leadership in his seminal book, *Leadership*. He defined leadership as "leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations, the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations of both leaders and followers" (Burns, 1978, p. 19). He further explained two types of interactions that occur between leaders and followers. The first kind of interaction was identified as *transactional* leadership wherein one person makes contact with another to exchange something of value. The second type of interaction was identified as *transforming* leadership in which people engage with each other that allows leaders and followers to raise each other to higher levels of motivation (Burns, 1978).

Burns further stated the genius of leadership is in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and the values and motivations of their followers. Transforming leaders work with other leaders and followers to the extent that followers become leaders.

Burns concluded, Leadership is the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers (Burns, 1978, p. 425).

Burns also wrote that leaders can elevate the motives and values of followers which in turn is transforming leadership.

Bass and Avolio (1993) began to explore the construct of transforming leadership or what is now more commonly referred to as transformational leadership. Bass and Avolio concluded that transformational leadership is seen when leaders are able to accomplish four objectives: (a) stimulation of the interests of followers to view their work from a different perspective; (b) generation of awareness regarding the vision or mission of the team or organization; (c) development of followers to higher levels of potential and ability; and (d) motivation of followers to look beyond their own self-interests toward interests that will benefit the group.

Bass (1999) identified four characteristics of transformational leadership through the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) which measured transactional and transformational traits. Bass (1999) maintained, “Transformational leadership refers to the leader moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration” (p. 11). First, idealized influence is displayed when the leader shares a vision, articulates a plan, provides an example, sets high expectations, and shows perseverance and confidence. Second, inspiration is seen when leaders can excite and inspire their followers in accomplishing goals of the organization. Third, intellectual stimulation is displayed when

followers are helped by the leader to become more creative in their work which allows followers to look at old problems in new ways. Fourth, individualized consideration refers to the close attention paid by leaders to the needs of the followers to support and coach their development (Bass, 1999).

Gill (2006) expanded the four characteristics of transformational leadership identified by Bass and Avolio (1993). According to Gill (2006), idealized influence is exercised when leaders express confidence in the vision, take personal responsibility for actions, and emphasize accomplishments rather than failures. Inspirational motivation is displayed when leaders communicate a clear vision, align organizational goals and address problems as learning opportunities. Intellectual stimulation is evident when the status quo is questioned, new ideas are encouraged, and creativity is valued. Individualized consideration takes place when leaders are active listeners, identify with individual's concerns and needs, and provide opportunities to learn in a supportive environment (Gill, 2006).

Transformational leadership has emerged as a frequently studied model of school leadership wherein transformational leaders focus on restructuring the school by improving conditions (Stewart, 2006). Stewart wrote that because of the complexities associated with any reform, one school leader is not able to lead alone. Therefore, the concepts of shared leadership, distributed leadership, and transformational leadership have become popular in the world of education. Hallinger (2003) stated that by 1990, researchers shifted their attention to leadership models that were more consistent with evolving trends in educational reform such as empowerment, shared leadership, and organizational learning. Although the terminology is different, the current trends relate to

Burns' (1978) idea of transforming leadership as a mutual relationship that converts followers to leaders and leaders to moral agents. Burns also believed that, to understand leadership and change, one must examine human needs and social change. Referencing Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Burns explained the relationship between leaders and followers is one of helping followers reach the highest level of need. In education, principals must understand the needs of individuals as well as the needs as a constituency. Once basic needs are met, the organization can progress towards achieving higher levels of needs that can result in the empowerment of all stakeholders (Burns, 1978).

Leithwood (1992) identified three fundamental goals that transformational leaders pursue which are: (a) helping staff develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; (b) fostering teacher development; and (c) helping teachers solve problems more effectively. First, to maintain a collaborative culture, there must be evidence of staff members conversing, observing, and planning together. Second, leaders must provide clear, explicit goals for staff members that are attainable and realistic which will enhance teacher development as they internalize goals as professional growth. Last, improving problem solving is accomplished when transformational leaders stimulate teachers to work to bring about improvement in schools (Leithwood, 1992).

One transformational leadership model currently being used to develop leadership in some schools today is *The Leader in Me* which is based on The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (Covey & Covey, 2008). Steven Covey wrote the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People in 1989 which identified different principles used in leadership. Covey (2008) shared these tenets in corporate and government sectors. Eventually, the training

spread to the education arena where teachers and administrators took part in the professional development opportunity. The training initially focused on adults until 1998 when Sean Covey wrote *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* (Covey, 1998). Subsequently, in 2008, *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids*. In 1998, an elementary principal approached Steven Covey about the probability of teaching the principles to young children. Based on his positive response, the school began to implement the principles and a school transformation began with the importance of leadership being woven into daily instruction as well as organizational processes (Covey & Covey, 2008). Eventually, a blueprint for the program was developed, and many schools now participate in *The Leader in Me.*

The first phase, *Establishing a Culture of Leadership,* takes place in the first year which includes training with the entire staff on developing a shared vision, receiving 7 Habits training, and certification, implementation training, and Lighthouse Team training. The second phase, *Applying Tools of Leadership*, includes an Empowerment Day where students showcase their leadership roles. In this stage, the school also documents the achievement of schoolwide goals. The last step, *Maximizing Results*, consists of consultants working with schools to achieve the vision and make contributions to the leadership community.

The transformation begins with the Lighthouse Team which serves as a leadership team to guide the school through the use of the model. Hatch (2013) shared information on the impact of this program in a summary report. He found that this program impacted three areas: core academics, school culture, and 21st-century skills. First, an increase in student achievement has shown growth on statewide tests. Next, a decrease in discipline

problems caused an increase in student and teacher engagement. Last, self-confidence in students, teacher development, and community engagement have impacted 21st-century skills that community employers seek in the future workforce. Because of the success of this model, at the time of this study 1090 schools were implementing T*he Leader in Me* worldwide, with 883 schools in the United States, and 80 in the southeastern state used in this study.

Leader Member Exchange Theory

The Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX) may help leaders think about transforming their organizations through the differentiated development of relationships with organizational members. Before the LMX theory, researchers treated leadership as something leaders did to their followers (Northouse, 2010). The LMX theory focuses on the interactions between leaders and followers. Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995) identified three dimensions to the LMX theory including leader, follower, and relationships. LMX is referred to as a relational theory in that leaders and followers are implied, and both parties participate in relationship building. The LMX theory suggests that the leader has a different relationship with each subordinate. This leader-subordinate relationship, or dyad, exists within organizational units (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The inception of the LMX began in 1975 with Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL) research by Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Northouse, 2010). The findings of a study on the relationships between supervisors and subordinates resulted in the conclusion that a superior could establish relationships of leadership with some of its members and supervision relationships with others (Dansereau et al., 1975). This study referred to the different groups as the in-group and the out-group. In-group members

spent more time and energy communicating with superiors than the out-group members (Dansereau et al., 1975; Northouse, 2010). Out-group members had very little communication outside of formal employment roles with superiors (Dansereau et al, 1975; Northouse, 2010). This resulted in the acknowledgment of differentiated relationships between superiors and subordinates in organizations.

Dansereau et al. (1975) stated there was no longer a need for researchers to examine leadership behavior towards members in general. However, future research should include the exchange processes between the leaders and each member. This led to Graen, Novak, and Somerkamp's research in 1982 which resulted in the identification of four stages of LMX theory. The first stage is referred to as *Discovery of Differentiated Dyads* which states that managers develop differentiated relationships with direct professional reports. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) indicated that different professionals generated very different descriptions of the same manager providing evidence of a differentiation of relationships.

The second stage, *Focus on the Relationship and its Outcomes*, developed in 1984 when researchers wanted to further investigate the dyadic relationships in Stage 1 (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Two types of investigations were conducted including studies evaluating characteristics of LMX relationships and studies analyzing the relationships between organizational variables and LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The first of the studies focused on the variables such as dyadic role-making processes, the frequency of communication, interactive communication patterns, and leader-member value agreements. The second study focused on variables such as performance, turnover, job-satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job climate. First, the findings of this stage

indicated that the characteristics and behaviors of leaders and followers influence the development of LMX relationships through a role-making process. Second, positive outcomes for leaders and followers are a result of higher-quality LMX relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Northouse (2012) later shared that the foundation of LMX theory is the idea that a leader should create a special relationship with each follower which results in out-group members becoming part of the larger group.

Stage 3 of the LMX theory is *Description of Dyadic Partnership Building* wherein researchers focused on how managers worked with each person on a one-on-one basis to develop a partnership with each person (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). This new approach shifted the focus from traditional roles of supervisors and subordinates to partnerships which resulted in The Leadership Making model (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Three phases included in the Leadership Making model are: (a) stranger; (b) acquaintance; and (c) mature partnership. In the first phase, individuals work together as strangers to occupy interdependent roles in the organization. In the second phase, individuals show an increase in social and professional exchanges. The third phase results in individuals sharing high levels of exchanges, loyalty, support, and a pattern of reciprocation. At this point, behavioral and emotional transactions are at a high level. Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995) posited that Stage 3 relationships resulted in large payoffs in that the influence is almost unlimited between individuals. At this level, both supervisors and subordinates are empowered to transcend beyond the formal work roles and develop a partnership of mutual reciprocal influence (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The findings in this stage emphasized the importance of leaders developing high-quality relationships or partnerships with all subordinates.

Previously, in 1987, Graen and Scandura (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) proposed that the LMX theory should be viewed as interdependent systems that include dyadic relationships or network assemblies (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) stated Stage 4, *Expansion of Dyadic Partnership to Group and Network Levels* looks at leadership structure not so much as formally designed structures but instead constructs that emerge from the enactment of roles by individual, organizational members. Relationships would cross work, unit, and functional boundaries and would not be limited to superior-subordinate relationships. Stage 4 consisted of relationships among peers across organizational levels.

Northouse (2010) described five contributions of the LMX theory to leadership. First, the argument is descriptive in that it makes sense to use work units as a way to describe those who contribute more or less to the organization. Second, the LMX theory is the only leadership approach that includes the dyadic relationship as the focus of the leadership process. Third, the LMX theory guides our awareness to the importance of communication in the leadership process in that high-quality exchanges can have a positive impact on the organization. Fourth, the LMX theory forces leaders to be aware of their biases relative to who is encouraged to be a part of the in-group. And finally, the implementation of the LMX theory has resulted in positive organizational outcomes such as increased levels of performance, commitment, job climate, empowerment, and innovation (Northouse, 2010). When relationships are in place that promotes work in teams, a shared leadership perspective may be implemented by leaders.

Shared Leadership

In transformational leadership, leaders transcend self-actualization and reach a point of being concerned not only for self but for the organization. Furthermore, the LMX theory expands on the positive outcomes of the relationships between leaders and followers. Pearce and Conger (2003) defined shared leadership as "a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both" (p. 1). Pearce and Conger (2003) stated that leadership is not established by formal position or authority but by the capacity of individuals to influence peers in a specified moment or situation. Some may understand this influence to be lateral. However, this process can involve a hierarchical influence as well.

Pearce and Conger (2003) linked shared leadership to the earlier work of Follet (1924) in what Follet called the "law of situation." Follet referred to true power as power *with* another person and not *over* another person. Follet articulated the necessity of everyone in an organization recognizing they are bound together for the organization (Phelps, Parayitam, & Olson, 2007). Following the concept of "law of situation," Pearce & Conger presented a timeline of the emergence of shared leadership that included work completed in the 1950s with Co-Leadership; work in the 1950s with Social Exchange Theory; Participative Decision Making in the 1970s; Vertical Dyad Linkage and Leader-Member Exchange Theory in the 1970s and 1980s; and Self-Leadership and Self-Managing Work Teams in the 1990s. The advancement of shared leadership took place at a time when a shift from the individual perspective to more of a group perspective matched with the practice of modern organizations (Pearce & Conger, 2003).

Fletcher and Kaufer (2003) discussed three relational shifts that made shared leadership different than the traditional view of leadership by Pearce and Conger. The first change included a focus from the achievement on individuals to the achievement of groups along with shared responsibility in the organization. The next shift consisted of a focus on social actions where practices from top-down were less important, and followers were becoming co-creators of leadership. The last shift embraced learning as less of an individual and more of a collective process that addresses the concerns of the whole group (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003).

Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone (2007) suggested that shared leadership is guided by an overall environment which consists of three dimensions: shared purpose, social support, and voice. First, shared purpose is present when a mutual understanding of the goals of the team is present among all team members. Second, social support described the efforts of team members to provide support emotionally and psychologically for each other. Last, voice is present to the degree each team members has input into how the purpose is to be carried out collectively.

"Shared leadership reflects shared ownership of problems, an emphasis on learning and development to enable sharing, understanding, and contribution, and a culture of openness, mutual respect, and trust" (Gill, 2006, p. 30). Printy and Marks (2006) found that shared instructional leadership is found in schools where principals are influential leaders and can facilitate leadership by teachers. In these instances, schools benefit because faculty members offer their best efforts to students and the students give their best in return (Printy & Marks, 2006).

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership and shared leadership both include the process of multiple individuals embracing leadership tasks. However, distributed leadership focuses on the *interactions* of those leading in formal and informal roles. Also, distributed leadership has a more fluid structure in that a leader emerges based on a specific context or situation. Leaders continue to study leadership and what it means to school administrators. Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004) contended, "School leadership is best understood through considering leadership tasks, and that leadership practice is distributed over leaders, followers, and the school's situation or context" (p.11). The distributed leadership framework of Spillane, et al. (2004) defined leaders, followers, and situation to develop an understanding of this perspective of leadership. In this framework, the school leader refers to the principal and other leaders serving in a formal capacity. However, when implementing a distributive perspective, leadership is spread over multiple leaders. Followers, in this framework, refer to teachers and others within the school organization. Followers move in and out of followership and leadership roles, depending on the tasks or situation. In defining situation, Spillane and Diamond (2007) explained that various situations that arise in an organization encompass routines and tools that involve the interactions of leaders and followers. The distributed leadership perspective focuses on how the leader practices distribution among leaders and followers and, more importantly, on the interactions that occur while enacting the actual task.

Distributed leadership is a relatively new concept, gaining the attention of many researchers since the early 2000s. According to Camburn, Rowan, and Taylor (2003), the new vision of effective leadership encompasses various school leaders such as principals,

teachers, and others who exercise instructional leadership that results in a positive impact on the school. Spillane and Diamond (2007) and Harris (2013) studied leadership practices related to what leaders do and how they do it. They explored how multiple leaders behaved and the interactions among multiple leaders.

Spillane and Diamond (2007) categorized the distributed leadership framework into two parts. First, the *leader plus* aspect recognizes multiple individuals in leading and managing schools. Secondly, the *practice* aspect involves the interactions of leaders, followers, and aspects of their situation. Therefore, attention is not only given to the formal leader, but to the "web" of leaders, followers, and their situations. With this in mind, three characterizations of the different types of co-leading were developed by Spillane and Diamond (2007): collaborated distribution, collective distribution, and coordinated distribution. First, collaborated distribution describes a practice that is carried out by multiple individuals at one time and one place. Second, collective distribution describes the practice of multiple individuals working separately on a specific task that is, simultaneously, interdependent. Last, coordinated distribution refers to routines that follow sequential steps for resolution.

Harris and Spillane (2008) concluded distributed leadership can serve as a tool for leaders in providing ideas to diagnose and inform the process of leadership. These authors felt that it is crucial to understand distributed leadership in the context of the relationship between leaders and followers. According to Watkins (1972), principals should surround themselves with teachers who will accept responsibility and assume authority relative to accomplishing tasks confronted in the school or organization (Watkins, 1972).

Summary

Four leadership theories, Transformational Leadership, Leader-Member Exchange, Shared Leadership, and Distributed Leadership, at the core, have in common the relationships of leaders and followers. First, the relationships between leaders and followers are important to organizations. Second, through relationships leaders and followers can be elevated to higher levels of motivation. Third, leaders and followers share a common vision for their organization. Finally, leadership can be dynamic based on the tasks and expertise of members of the organization. A review of the literature will be shared based on the framework developed by the previously mentioned leadership theories.

Review of the Literature

Changes in educational leadership trends point to the school of thought that principals alone, are no longer able to lead and manage every aspect of the school (Dinham, Aubosson, & Brady, 2008). However, principals have the opportunity to work with teachers in becoming leaders and building collaborative relationships which could result in shared leadership.

A review of the literature was a method employed to address the central research question, "*How do principals engage in practices that nurture leadership development in others within schools*?" The various topics outline practices found in individual schools as well as in school districts that support the premise of developing leaders. First, the review of literature will describe the concept of and impact of teacher leadership present in schools. Second, the literature will examine how professional learning communities foster leadership growth among teachers and how the process benefits the entire

organization. Third, the research will describe ways leaders build leadership capacity in schools and the necessary components in developing leadership skills. Fourth, the literature will describe how professional development supports teacher leadership development along with specific examples of professional learning opportunities. Fifth, the research will discuss the collaborative process used in schools, the relationships found in collaborative settings, and how principals are able to establish such a culture. Last, the literature will explore leadership opportunities whereby teachers can apply specific skills within the school setting.

Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is a concept which has no single agreed-upon definition (Harris, 2003; York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Collay, 2006; and Donaldson, 2007). York-Barr and Duke (2004) stated, "The concept of teacher leadership suggests that teachers rightly and importantly hold a central position in the ways schools operate and in the core functions of teaching and learning" (p. 255). Firestone and Herriott (1982) found that elementary schools had more of a shared sense of purpose because the common goal of in this setting was focused around teaching the basic skills to students. Also, the idea of instructional leadership implied communication between teachers and principals was vital relative to areas such as curriculum, discipline, and management of specific children. Furthermore, their study concluded that elementary principals engaged in facilitating the work of teachers which resulted in a higher level of competency and principals ensuring individuals were placed according to a specific skill set.

Since the 1980s, investments have been made in educational initiatives focused on improving the quality of teachers as well as the conditions surrounding the profession.

York-Barr and Duke (2004) further shared that teachers needed to participate on a more active level to improve leadership and education. Watkins (1972) suggested gaining more active participation was through the delegation of responsibility and authority to teachers to implement numerous tasks that exist in public education. He further explained that the selection and training of teachers is important in that administrators must be aware of the strengths and weaknesses possessed by individuals. Knowledge of individuals would ensure administrators proper placement of teachers within the school. This provides job enrichment to teachers and advantages to the organization. Unfortunately, the structures in place at the district office level can be a barrier to sharing leadership in that responsibility may be delegated without the authority to meet demands required for a specific level of performance (Watkins, 1972).

Based on extensive research, York-Barr and Duke (2004) compiled a list of competencies related to teachers who function as leaders. These competencies are divided into two categories, skills as teachers and skills as leaders. Skills as teachers include: teachers with proven classroom success, teachers who have experience and expertise in teaching, teachers who are viewed as experts by their colleagues and teachers who are innovative and lifelong learners. Skills as leaders include: teachers who are able to build trusting, collaborative relationships with others, teachers who are supportive of their colleagues, teachers who possess solid communication skills such as listening, teachers who are able to prioritize needs, and teachers who are able to handle conflict in a professional manner. The literature reveals several areas related to teacher leadership that will be addressed by the researcher: (a) professional learning communities, (b) building

capacity, (c) professional development, (d) collaboration, and (d) leadership opportunities.

The utilization of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is one avenue teachers have the opportunity to participate in leadership through building collaborative relationships, supporting colleagues, and communicating with their team members to address the needs of the school. The discussion of PLCs will describe the involvement and types of leadership qualities expected of teacher leaders.

Professional Learning Communities

The term "professional learning communities" is used to describe a wide range of practices wherein educators work collaboratively to solve problems and share strategies (McLester, 2012). The PLC at Work model, developed by Rick and Becky DuFour, focuses on three main ideas that are key to the transformation of educational practices. First, the PLC must be committed to ensuring that all students will learn. Second, the PLC must establish a culture of collaboration among all staff members. Last, the PLC must focus on the progress of each student (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Karhanck, 2004).

Using the PLC at Work model, DuFour, et al. (2004) outlined characteristics of a PLC that separate this type of PLC from the traditional view which included: (1) shared mission, vision, values and goals; (2) collaborative teams; (3) collective inquiry; (4) action orientation and experimentation; (5) continuous improvement; and (6) results orientation. First, educators should understand the main purpose of school is learning, not teaching. Therefore, a shared mission and vision should be based on the understanding that all students will learn. Second, the structure of a PLC includes collaborative teams

consisting of individuals that collectively, work interdependently to solve problems and share knowledge. Third, PLCs are continuously searching for new or appropriate methods to improve learning and increase results. Fourth, PLCs are motivated to act on information shared through collaborative efforts. Fifth, PLCs are committed to a continuous cycle of improvement. Last, PLCs understand that results must evaluate its work. DuFour et al. (2004) clarified as people, educators have the need to be successful in their work, feel a sense of belonging, and make a difference in which PLCs can meet each one of those basic needs.

The role of the principal is key to establishing schoolwide PLCs for these basic needs to be met (Hirsh & Hord, 2008). Although the goal of the PLC should be self-governing, the initial development relies heavily on the principal in several areas. First, the principal must communicate leadership will be shared among stakeholders. Second, vision, mission, and goals must be developed. Third, the principal is usually important in establishing support structures such as meeting schedules and location. Fourth, setting the stage for collaborative work will depend heavily on how the principal is able to foster trust and relationships in the school. Last, the principal must be committed to follow through on points that have been discussed as a staff. Once the PLC has been established and has begun functioning, the role of the principal will shift to being more of an equal member of the team instead of the leader. Thessin and Starr (2011) found communicating clear expectations, providing supports, structuring time for collaboration, and ensuring teachers become effective team members are all important when implementing professional learning communities. Also, a central element in the assurance of the aforementioned components of effective PLCs was professional development.

Researchers note the benefits of PLC implementation. Kennedy, Deuel, Nelson, and Slavit (2011) concluded leaders should recognize and use internal resources, differentiate the decision making process, and build a collaborative culture through dialogue and inquiry. First, seeking, recognizing, and using the expertise of teachers can be advantageous to the school in that teachers have different specialized areas (Kennedy, et al, 2011; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). Knowledge in various areas such as data analysis, instruction, needs of students, and relationships with the community are all valuable in developing professional learning communities in a school setting. Next, the decision making process can be linked to distributed leadership practices when decisions are stretched over individuals who are knowledgeable in an organization (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). Kennedy, et al. (2011) discussed teachers exhibit a professional demeanor in sharing knowledge and being productive leaders in making decisions that impact the school. Last, building a culture through dialogue and inquiry includes the ability of team members to practice norms of collaboration. Working in sync to improve instructional practices of all faculty would be one outcome and benefit of PLCs.

Another benefit of PLCs is that the principal is also creating an avenue for change in the culture of the school by providing opportunities for teachers to work in teams (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011 and Cook, 2014)). The findings of these studies indicated school culture and student learning could be improved by supporting individuals and groups in identifying and preserving what was perceived as valuable to them, guiding individuals to destroy barriers that inhibit growth, and consistently verifying aspirations for change are not only understood, but result in new behaviors in schools. Hirsh and

Hord (2008) concluded through the work of PLCs, everyone becomes aware of the collective influence each individual has on the learning outcomes of students.

PLCs provide a shared vision for the school organization in that the primary function is to ensure learning in all students. Therefore, transformational leadership communicates the importance of the leader being able to convey the goals of the organization. Next, the leader-member exchange theory illustrates PLCs aid in establishing a culture of collaboration. In the Leadership Making Model, the highest level of relationship exists with mature partnership where individuals are empowered to transcend beyond the routine duties of the workplace. This can have a positive impact on the effectiveness of the organization. Last, PLCs focus on the progress of each student. This requires collaboration and innovation which can be linked to shared and distributed leadership. As teachers monitor the progress of students, leaders are needed to share instructional practices, communication strategies, and research. Those who have a specific expertise in raising student performance would be best to lead in this area. Therefore, influence of all four theories can be seen in the work of PLCs.

Schools that incorporate PLCs are also developing leadership skills in teachers. Furthermore, the literature describes how principals can build leadership capacity of teachers by exploring different practices that impact the development of future leaders.

Building Leadership Capacity

Lambert (1998) defined leadership capacity as "broad-based skillful participation in the work of leadership" (p. 18). Furthermore, Lambert developed a framework including four types of schools and school communities based on participation and skillfulness. First, a school may have low participation and low skillfulness where

principal, staff, and parent participation is limited. Teachers in this category rarely initiate change and may comply with district mandates. However, if gains are earned, sustainability of effective practices is usually not achieved. Second, a school may have high participation and low skillfulness. This type of school tends to function without a clear focus from the principal. However, some teachers may work hard, they may not all be concerned with the same priorities. The third type of school consists of high skillfulness and low participation. This school usually consists of a principal that works with a leadership team or group of teachers. Although subgroups of excellent teaching and focus may exist, a school-wide effort is lacking in consistency. The last school consists of high skillfulness and high participation which includes participation that is broad-based in the school and has a clear purpose that focuses on student and adult learning. Roles and responsibilities are clear and responsibility is collective in that everyone shares in implementation of plans.

Principals can build leadership capacity by communicating a clear vision, building trusting relationships, promoting learning, and implementing specific plans. Researchers (Flanary, 2009; Harris, 2013) suggested principals communicate a clear vision, high expectations of teachers and students, and a commitment of building capacity to the staff and school leaders. Flanary stated, “To change an organization and increase its capacity to produce greater results, the people within the organization must change and increase their capacity” (2009, p. 60). He further articulated, school leaders must clearly demonstrate that capacity building is relative to every adult in the school, not just for persons in leadership positions. Weiner (2011) also conveyed the importance of a clear vision from principals in creating an environment to build leadership capacity of

teachers by declaring the principal's ability to communicate a vision that is clear and of high quality is crucial to developing successful teacher leadership.

Another means of building leadership capacity is building relationships among all staff members. Lambert (1998) discussed the importance of staff members getting to know each other to build trusting relationships. Teachers leading other teachers experienced that once relationships were developed among a peer group in a district pilot for a new program, resistance to the program was eliminated (Dozier, 2007). Building trusting relationships allows teachers to see each other as whole individuals (Lambert, 1998). With this foundation, teachers can understand and respect the values of others. Walhstrom and York-Barr (2011) and Fullan (2009) stated leaders must not only possess a level of self-efficacy but collective-efficacy, which supports the belief that collectively, a group can address specific needs due to the level of capacity within the group.

Harris and Townsend (2007) reviewed a study in which teachers participated in a program intended to build leadership capacity and develop leadership potential. Reviewing a study structured to build leadership capacity among teachers allowed researchers to "consider what forms of leadership were most likely to result in positive changes in student learning and school performance and what structural changes are required to facilitate this form of leadership" (Harris & Townsend, 2007, p. 168). According to Harris and Townsend (2007), school leaders believed they were doing well in nurturing leadership. The "Developing Leaders" program was structured to require participants to lead change in their schools and complete a case study on innovative practice.

The findings from the study indicated participants felt positive about the program. Participants also felt the program allowed them to lead innovation and change in schools that were taken seriously by their leaders. The impact of the work identified four levels including individual development, development of colleagues, whole-school development, and impact on students. Results showed an increase in confidence in making decisions and implementing change which addressed the individual level. The development of colleagues resulted in developing leaders engaged in work that involves training and collaborating with other teachers. Whole-school development was evident in that participants had the opportunity to introduce whole-school initiatives and cross-school networking. The impact on students was perceived to be positive based on evidence shared by participants and their immediate supervisors. Researchers (Harris & Townsend, 2007) believed when teachers were given the opportunity to lead, schools benefit as well as teachers. Leadership and school improvement studies suggest that distributive leadership has the ability to transform classrooms and schools (Harris & Townsend, 2011; Gedik and Bellibas, 2015).

Building capacity among teachers, researchers, Morgan, Williams, and Plesec (2011) found trust must exist between educators involved in the process of building capacity. Morgan et al, (2011) investigated how a school district invested in sustained professional development by building leadership among faculty while also promoting collaboration among teachers within the school district. Two specific approaches were used to accomplish the goals of leadership building and collaboration. These included classroom visitations and grade level meetings. In this study, teachers were given the opportunity to practice leadership through monthly grade level meetings and visiting

classrooms of other participants to observe instructional practices. Teacher leaders planned grade level meetings in collaboration with the district literacy lead teacher and assistant superintendent. District leaders expressed this model allowed participants to build a culture of shared leadership and collaboration.

Once trust has been established, promoting learning with the staff is important in building leadership capacity. Harris (2003) argued developing knowledge of teachers can be accomplished in different ways such as scheduling time for teachers to plan and discuss school-wide issues collaboratively. During these set aside times, teachers could discuss issues surrounding curriculum, develop school-wide plans, collaborate with other schools or higher education institutions, and collaborate with colleagues. Fullan (2009) concluded successful schools "organize themselves to learn and problem solve all the time" (p. 47). He goes on further to explain the main focus is on improving the organization and developing better leaders. Lambert (1998) referred to this as developing a culture of inquiry. Encouraging teachers to reflect and participate in professional dialogue should be present in schools to build capacity.

Although a specific vision has been communicated, relationships have been established, and a culture of learning is being promoted, specific plans must be implemented to build capacity in an organization (Lambert, 1998). Walhstrom and York-Barr studied the implementation of specific plans to build capacity in a six year study that explored building capacity, providing support and distributing responsibility. The study revealed when leaders attended to the context in which others around them learn, they strive to put in place structures and supports that are likely to be effective (Walhstrom & York-Barr, 2011). In developing capacity, the leaders are enhancing others' sense of

influence in being positive and productive for the organization. Next, providing support through professional development was evident in the highest performing schools. A school system provided professional development for all professionals that also led to the creation of professional learning communities. Researchers found that by looking at the support structure, a stable base developed which allowed teams to move forward in sustaining real change. Last, distributing responsibility was not about reducing the administrator's work load, the understanding that improved student learning rests on the collaboration of teams within the school and district.

Planning is important not only for school leaders but district leaders as well in building leadership capacity (Wade & Ferriter, 2007). Wade and Ferriter (2007) outlined several steps district and school leaders can take to support teachers in building capacity: (1) Observe teachers and identify those with leadership potential regardless of title or role; (2) Assign leadership roles to teachers who based on their interests and strengths; (3) Introduce teachers to other key people that may be of assistance to them in developing as leaders; (4) Provide honest feedback along with encouragement to teachers; (5) Decrease support as teachers build confidence and skills; and (6) Promote the idea of continuing the cycle of support among teacher leaders (p. 68).

Fullan (2009) also pointed out the importance of districts implementing plans to support leadership development. Six fundamental strategies evolved from his research: (1) develop the profession of teaching; (2) focus on a small number of priorities and do them well; (3) work explicitly on building capacity with the focus of instructional improvement and assessment; (4) invest in the development of leaders; (5) establish an

intervention strategy that is non-punitive in nature; and (6) use funding to drive school reform (p.48).

Searby and Shaddix (2008) researched the implementation of a program developed to support leadership development in which a school district implemented a program with the purpose of preparing teachers for leadership roles. The program focused on continual leadership that addressed roles in the classroom as well as in the future as an administrator. Teachers were guided in activities that promoted an understanding of themselves and expanding their awareness of leadership issues. The majority of the sessions focused on self-awareness, relationship styles, productive behavior, how they operated under stress, and how they would lead. Other sessions were informative relative to issues impacting education. Survey results from participants in the program indicated an appreciation for the program and a greater understanding of leadership. Programs such as this are able to empower teachers to utilize their leadership skills and make a positive contribution to their schools.

An organization that has high participation and high skillfulness has a clear purpose focused on student and adult learning (Lambert, 1998). In order for this to happen, first, there must first be a clear vision communicated by the leader. Second, the principal must facilitate the growth of trusting relationships among all staff members for collaboration to function successfully. Third, the principal should promote learning among staff and students to reach their highest potential. Last, the implementation of specific plans to build capacity must be enacted that support the development of teachers in the role of leadership.

While building leadership capacity is an area discussed in developing leaders, providing professional development is also a method of cultivating leadership among teachers. The literature discusses the purpose of professional development as well as the types of professional learning provided to teachers in nurturing leadership.

Professional Development

"The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership" (Maxwell, 1995, p. 319). Maxwell (1995) discussed the idea of "equipping" members of an organization and not just training potential leaders. The term, "equipping" was explained by Maxwell as a process of growing leaders instead of simply training them to complete specific tasks. Professional development, in the form of workshops, job-embedded training, or training within higher education institutions can be provided to strengthen teachers as leaders. Lambert (1998) shared teachers are accustomed to focusing on the learning of students and themselves. To be effective at leading others, specific skills such as facilitating dialogue, questioning, coaching, and mentoring are needed for teacher leaders.

Professional development can consist of workshops, conferences, professional study groups, and other means. One important factor to consider is regardless of format teachers will gain information. Phelps (2008) determined teachers should be trained in three categories: knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Phelps shared that teachers should first have a working knowledge of change, school culture, reform recommendations, and servant leadership. After participating in professional development, teachers must develop skills that support advocacy such as empathy, questioning, creating a vision, and collaborating with others. Again, principals should provide opportunities for teachers to

have a safe place to share ideas, ask questions, and problem-solve to sharpen their skills. Last, teachers must develop dispositions such as risk taking, challenge, service, efficacy, and resilience. Acknowledging teachers for practicing certain dispositions will encourage them as well as others to continue which builds confidence as well as self-efficacy. Although teachers may understand the model of essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions, awareness of possible obstacles such as time constraints with additional responsibilities and colleague resistance is also important (Phelps, 2008).

The use of job-embedded professional development strategies encourages the growth of teachers (Ghamrawi, 2013). DeLima (2008) researched the impact of professional development by teacher leaders and found four types of leadership configurations: focused leadership, multiple leadership, alternative informal leadership, and leadership void. Peers within the departments with focused leadership expressed their department leaders were important in their development as professionals. The departments with multiple leadership resulted in department heads and other prominent teachers in impacting professional development. The department that displayed an alternative informal leadership model resulted in the leader playing a marginal role in professional development of their peers. Last, the departments with leadership void resulted in peers expressing there was no impact in professional development by the department head or any other colleague. The promotion of teacher leadership may entail cultural and structural changes in schools which challenges administrators to rethink how leaders are selected, what to expect of school leaders, and how potential leaders in formal positions communicate with their peers.

A different study conducted by Chew and Andrews (2010) had similar outcomes that explored the phenomenon of enabling teachers to become pedagogical leaders. The process included five phases which began with the building principal enabling teachers to become leaders. This study discussed a foundation in parallel leadership, a sense of shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression (Chew & Andrews, 2010).The Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS) process enabled schools to build capacity for ongoing improvement in five phases. First, the principal and leadership team guided the process of establishing ideas. Next, discovery was initiated through collecting information on the organization involving the strengths of the school as well as challenges. Third, the vision was developed collectively. Fourth, an action plan was developed for the teaching staff that is consistent with the vision. Teachers were a part of this dialogue and began the process of moving from meaning to action. Last, extending the work of teachers to sustain the future of the organization was the focus. At each phase, the principal promoted enabling leadership. Otherwise, researchers felt the process would not be successful. The findings indicated that principals never sensed their leadership being diminished during the process. However, principals had to be more intentional in providing time for teachers to work collaboratively. Principals and facilitators took actions to move forward at their own pace. They also took time to nurture teachers as leaders by building strong communication without the sense of micromanagement. This IDEAS concept rests on the foundation of parallel leadership where both the principals and teachers are able to exercise their influence over student learning and planning of teachers.

Although job embedded strategies support teacher leaders, formal educational programs are another option available to teacher leaders. Programs may vary among institutions. Therefore, future leadership practitioners face the possibility of lacking the preparation for current practices such as distributed leadership or data driven systems of accountability. Educational leadership preparation programs should foster the democratic capacity as well as prepare students for challenges found in accountability-driven systems.

Mullen conducted a study to explore the concepts and practices of democracy and accountability from practicing educators. Mullen contended that leadership preparation programs should include four goals: (1) introduce ways to transform the positive aspects of accountability and democracy for school improvement while also recognizing the importance of serving the interest of others; (2) develop leadership strategies that cultivate the whole child in spite of accountability pressures; (3) promote the democratic accountability of all stakeholders and encourage reflective capacity of school leaders; and (4) identify the attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors of democratically accountable practitioners who work in the school context. In educating leaders, one must understand democracy and accountability are sometimes complementary and sometimes conflicting which required constant attention (Mullen, 2008).

Effective instruction in teacher leadership education programs continues to be explored by researchers. Frick and Riley (2010) stated, "Learning to lead and its implications for those who prepare school leaders, has been gaining increased attention for more than a decade" (p. 310). Frick and Riley (2010) examined the teaching practices of a professor of educational leaders to determine how educational leadership is being

taught, if leadership can be taught, and the role of the instructor of educational leadership in developing leaders. Frick and Riley found that structuring the learning environment that mirrors the work environment can be highly instructive in that the apprenticeship is necessary in leadership education. The researchers contended that carefully engineered learning activities can assist with discovery of leadership. Also, the role of the instructor in developing leaders involved the thoughtful process of teaching content, teaching methods, and learner activities that mirror the actual work of school leadership.

In mirroring the actual work of school leadership, researchers (Berg, Miller, & Souvanna, 2011) studied a teacher leadership certificate program in Boston, Massachusetts that supported teachers in building leadership skills. This professional development was a partnership between a school district which exercised job-embedded professional development and higher education which is a form of formal training. Three important factors were deemed significant in this study. First, the courses used to strengthen knowledge and skills were connected to the needs of the district. Because the objectives were tied to the needs of the districts, participants were able to return to their schools with sense of empowerment and ways to enhance school improvement efforts. At the end of the program, participants were expected to be proficient in understanding and using data, supporting instruction, strengthening shared leadership, and utilizing professional expertise. Second, teachers were able to earn graduate credits for participating in high quality, relevant professional development. A partnership between the schools and universities allowed teachers to earn graduate credit hours which could lead to increased compensation for teachers and adding expertise to the district. Last, experienced teacher leaders designed and instructed the core courses for the certificate

program. Experienced teachers designed the courses for their peers, delivered the content, and served as advisors to the participants. The Boston Teacher Leadership Certificate ensured schools would have the capacity to improve school improvement. Berg, et al. (2011) stated, "As teacher leaders strengthen their knowledge and skills for teacher leadership, they will bring new capacity to the leadership roles they hold" (p. 36). Because there are formal structures in place, teacher leaders and aspiring leaders are able to participate in professional development that supports developing leadership skills. As teacher leaders mature in leadership, the impact can be widespread in the fact that their colleagues will benefit from their expertise.

Teachers participate in professional development through job embedded training and formal educational leadership programs offered through higher education institutions. Job-embedded training allows teachers to participate in professional development and implementation with other staff members at the school site. Studies have shown positive outcomes for teachers participating in and sharing communication with colleagues (Berg, et al. 2011; Chew & Andrews, 2010; and Ghamrawi, 2013). Formal training through educational leadership programs also provides aspiring leaders with knowledge and skills to be an effective educational leader.

The literature builds on the utilization of professional learning in cultivating a culture of collaboration within educational organizations. The research on collaboration will explore the benefits and impact of collaboration on schools and how teachers operate in collaborative cultures.

Collaboration

Professional development can be enhanced through peer collaboration where teachers can construct knowledge about teaching and learning (Musanti & Pence, 2010). Three important points of collaboration will be discussed in this study. First, a collaborative environment must be in place for collaboration to be effective. Second, how leaders provide support for collaboration varies in different settings. Third, collaboration can have a positive impact on school improvement. Musanti & Pence (2010) conducted a study in which teachers across a school district participated in a federally funded program designed to assist teachers to enhance their skills in addressing the needs of English Language Learners. As part of the study, participants were asked to participate in peer conversations as well as observations of other participants. Teachers revealed in interviews the level of anxiety experienced during the process of observing and reporting back to the group feedback on observations. Although these researchers noted the program was a success, the study found collaboration was not always comfortable, and a shift in the way teachers identify themselves as professionals should be considered when developing a program.

Donaldson (2007) argued by using a relational model of school leadership, leaders recognize relationships are already in existence among teachers, principals, and other stakeholders. He further stated, developing trusting and collaborative relationships is one of the most important means teacher leaders can influence colleagues. With this understanding, school leaders can recognize three assets teachers bring to the organization that may be able to promote collaboration. The first asset described is building relationships wherein teacher leaders have the opportunity in working with other

teachers in small groups or one-on-one situations that may be informal or structured. However, some teacher leaders find themselves part of organically formed groups where teachers are sharing ideas, materials, strategies, and conversations that all enhance instruction. Secondly, teachers possess the asset of maintaining a sense of purpose in which teacher leaders can utilize their relationships to help colleagues stay focused on goals of the school. Lastly, teachers have the asset of improving instructional practice through influence. Teachers have the opportunity to impact leadership because they have a powerful influence on the practices of other teachers. Donaldson (2007) suggested principals identify and support teacher groups that foster instructional professionalism, respect judgments of professional clusters, and provide resources for these teams to function at a higher level.

When recognizing relationships already exist in buildings, leaders can begin to purposefully promote a collaborative culture in which teachers work together to collectively ensure all students learn (O'Donovan, 2015). Kohm and Nance (2009) stated, "Principals who develop collaborative cultures shift from being the person who sets the goals to being the person who sets up the conditions that allow others to establish goals" (p. 72). Conditions that support collaboration include transparency and collaborative decision making. Researchers, Kohm and Nance (2009) argued principals must provide transparency through effective communication to the entire faculty as well has promote shared decision-making in a way that is clear, concise, and organized in order for teams to function effectively. One way principals can provide guidance on collaborative teams is to model productive meetings. With consistent modeling, teachers will have a

foundation on how to conduct meetings, dialogue appropriately, and develop solutions in a collaborative manner.

Kennedy, Deuel, Nelson, and Slavit (2011) conducted a five-year study that included seven teacher groups that transitioned from voluntary to compulsory structures of professional learning communities. This study focused on improving student learning through teacher collaboration in the middle and high schools in the areas of math and science. Researchers found three distributed leadership attributes supported the development of professional learning communities in participating schools. First, leaders recognized and used available internal resources. For example, school leaders identified expertise in colleagues in areas including knowledge of content, pedagogy, data analysis, action research, community, and students. Second, decisions about school improvement were made with a "flattened" hierarchy where decision-making is more of a lateral process instead of a top-down process. The study revealed there is no one way to develop teams. However, leaders must be careful when identifying the needs of the team to make sure there is a clear focus for those involved in making decisions about a program or instructional strategies. Last, a culture of dialogue must be developed through dialogue and inquiry. In this structure, teachers have on-going conversations of how they can achieve a goal collectively using data and conversations to drive their decisions. As teachers develop in this area, synergy creates an environment that allows everyone involved to work interdependently with the same focus. The findings of the study included by using the knowledge and expertise of teachers and providing teachers with the opportunity to lead, knowledge and expertise grew and deepened which, in turn, impacted the overall improvement of the school.

Support in providing collaboration in schools takes place at the school level in many cases. However, one example of the state participating in supporting teacher collaboration is a study conducted by Hohenbrink, Stauffer, Zigler, and Uhlenhake (2011). These researchers conducted a study wherein The Ohio Department of Education and The Wallace Foundation developed a pilot program to build collaboration and coaching skills with teacher leaders. Teachers participated in three courses that focused on leadership, collaboration, and coaching and mentoring. The course focused on leadership allowed teachers to explore their own leadership styles and school leadership in general. The second course provided teachers with skills in problem-solving, team building, and facilitating teams. The last course focused on developing knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be effective in coaching peers for the purpose of improving instructional practices and student achievement.

The impact of collaboration can be connected to student improvement in that educators participating in collaboration are focused on improving schools through student achievement. Killon (2011) argued, collaboration leads to a collective responsibility among teachers in ensuring all students succeed. Because a culture of collaboration dissipates isolation, teachers realize working collaboratively results in more expertise. Therefore, students are able to benefit from this collective effort. Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran (2007) affirmed teacher collaboration had an impact on student achievement in an empirical study. The findings concluded teacher collaboration encouraged teachers to engage with others about the foundations of teaching and learning and teachers learned how to improve their instructional practice. These findings reveal an indirect relationship between collaboration and student achievement.

As previously evidenced by Hohenbrink, et al., (2011), collaboration does not have to be isolated within one school. McAdamis (2010) discussed the impact of collaboration has had on an entire school district. Initially, the school district completed a program evaluation which indicated that most school administrators and teachers did not understand the components of high-quality professional development. With this knowledge, professional development guidelines were developed, and conversations began between schools and central office. Ten years of providing time and structures for collaboration have resulted in sustainable improvements in a school district (McAdamis, 2010).

Studies have shown the importance of collaboration relative to leadership (McAdamis, 2010 and Killon, 2011). First, a culture of collaboration must be nurtured in the school for collaboration to be effective. Second, the principal should embrace and support efforts of collaboration among staff members. Last, schools that have high levels of collaboration are able to see results in school improvement. Not only is collaboration important to individuals within one school, but collaboration within the entire school district can be beneficial as well.

Collaboration presents opportunities for teacher leaders to work with their peers while developing leadership skills. However, identifying other chances for teacher to participate in leadership practices will be explained in the literature by exploring various leadership opportunities.

Leadership Opportunities

As teachers work in collaborative cultures, principals recognize their professional growth as leaders. Maxwell (1995) explained providing training without opportunities to

lead offers limited success. In order for potential leaders to be successful, mentors must provide three things: responsibility, authority, and accountability. Barth (2001) and Goksoy (2015) argued all teachers possess the capabilities of leadership that are waiting to be utilized for the success of the school. Reid (2011) supported this argument in stating she felt some educators are still of the mindset that only administrators are leaders. However, she shared all teachers are leaders of instruction which provides a basis for leadership. In strengthening their own leadership skills, teachers will have the opportunity to build capacity among other teachers.

Barth (2001) further shared teachers, students, principals, and the school all benefit from the empowerment of teacher leaders. First, teachers are able to become active learners where they are leaders. Second, students are able to participate in an environment of a democratic community. Third, principals are able to expand their own capacity when teachers are leading in tasks previously handled by the principal. Finally, the school benefits from shared decision making from a group rather than from the principal alone. Mongiello et al., (2009) reinforced the position communicated by Barth in a study of a school district that developed a plan to increase the capacity of teachers as instructional leaders. The first phase of the initiative included a summer institute provided to teacher leaders. These particular teachers were either recruited by school administrators, selected based on their positions of department heads, or chosen as a teacher based on the interest of changing the instructional dynamic between teachers and students. Forming learning communities and building group facilitation skills were a part of the initial institute for the participants. The summer institute was followed by six more sessions throughout the school year that provided teachers the opportunity to learn,

practice, and reflect upon leadership protocols such as: how to use data, how to set SMART goals, and how to look at the work of students from a leadership perspective. The study showed that over time the participants were able to educate other teachers in their own buildings on the content of which they were learning through the leadership initiative. Because of new roles expected of the teacher leaders, administrators participated in professional development to ensure their support in being able to sustain the work of teacher leaders. Administrators and teachers began to collaborate on developing a protocol for walk-throughs, and discussing instructional practices, assessment, and classroom management. At the end of two years, teachers were leading team meetings, facilitating groups on building common assessments, and guiding instructional walk-throughs. Tangible results of student achievement were noted in that in both school years, growth was shown on standardized testing, Advanced Placement exams, and college entrance exams.

There are different opportunities for teachers to lead in schools. One option is through informal leadership and the second option is through formally identified roles. When teachers lead informally, they often choose to lead by example in implementing goals of the school. Teacher leaders also work on committees to support efforts of the school (Barth, 2001). Lattimer (2007) contended that when teachers work in groups, recognition of the work of colleagues plays a part in strengthening the community by building on the strengths of each individual. Danielson (2007) argued that some teacher leaders have no positional authority, but are very influential because of their expertise and practice is noticed by peers over time. Danielson further concluded these teachers hold the following attributes: persuasiveness, flexibility, confidence, open-mindedness,

and respectfulness. Roles of teacher leaders can emerge as with the previously mentioned scenarios or administrators can assign roles.

Formal roles for teacher leaders seen in schools include instructional coaches and curriculum specialists (Harrison & Killion, 2007). Instructional coaches may have a specific specialty in either literacy or math. Assistance to teachers can include ideas for differentiating instruction, planning lessons, exploring methods, analyzing data, and developing plans of action (Harrison & Killon, 2007). Curriculum specialists also play a vital role in helping teacher understand standards, pacing instruction, developing common assessments, and leading discussions on assessment results specific to a curriculum.

Teachers often participate in leadership opportunities which can be accomplished through informal or formal roles. Informal roles include leading in the participation in school improvement efforts, involvement on committees, and sharing of expertise in content and pedagogy. Roles that are considered more formal would include teachers working as instructional coaches and curriculum specialists. Whether participation from teacher leaders is formal or informal, involvement in leadership roles plays an integral part in school improvement and student achievement as evidenced by the work of PLCs.

The review of the literature resulted in six major topics: (1) teacher leadership, (2) PLCs, (3) building leadership capacity, (4) professional development, (5) collaboration, and (6) leadership opportunities. Although teacher leadership was discussed as an independent topic, the practice of recognizing teachers as leaders was integral to all the other subject areas. Without teacher leadership present, the other areas could not exist in

schools. Furthermore, the major topics discussed in the review of the literature will lay the foundation in determining how leadership is nurtured within schools.

The following chapter will explain the methodology used to conduct this multiple case study. The methodology will include the setting of the research study, participants, investigative methods, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In every research endeavor, a problem is confronted, an issue is examined, or a phenomenon is explored (Creswell, 2007). In this research study, the researcher investigated practices used by elementary school principals to nurture leadership development in others. Previous researchers have examined the importance of teacher leaders (Barth, 2001; York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Weiner, 2011). However, specific practices used by principals to develop leadership have yet to be studied at great length. This study will fill this gap in the literature by guiding theories of transformational leadership, Leader-Member Exchange theory, shared leadership, and distributed leadership. In this chapter, a qualitative case study for accomplishing this goal will be introduced to the body of research. Specifically, the reader will become familiar with the setting of the study, participants, method of investigation, research design, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to conduct qualitative research that focused on specific practices exhibited by elementary school principals that nurture leadership in others within a southeastern state. The researcher anticipated this study would be significant in three ways. First, study results will contribute to the study of principals

engaged in practices to support leadership development. Second, adding to the growing literature in the general area of educational leadership. Last, providing crucial information that would assist practitioners in the field with insight concerning how to better nurture leadership development in others.

Research Design

This qualitative study utilized a multiple case study design. A case study is the study of an issue in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2009). "Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time" (Stake, 1995). Merriam (2009) mentioned qualitative case studies search for meaning and understanding with the researcher being the primary data collection instrument. A total of 10 participants, all of whom were elementary principals in a southeastern state at the time of the study, consented to support this research endeavor.

Restatement of the Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of discovering the specific practices that principals utilize to nurture others, research questions were posed in this study. The central question was, *How do principals engage in practices that nurture leadership in others within schools*? The sub-questions assisted in answering this question were:

1. Are professional learning communities present in schools? If so, are teachers participating in leadership practices?
2. How do principals develop leadership capacity?
3. What types of professional development are provided to teachers?

4. How do principals promote collaboration among teachers?
5. What leadership opportunities are available to teachers?

Setting of the Research

This case study included 10 elementary school sites located in a southeastern state. The best way to discover specific leadership development practices exhibited by elementary principals was to uncover the thoughts and experiences of the participants in the study. Ten elementary principals were chosen to explore how the principal was able to nurture leadership development and meet the demanding responsibilities of leadership today.

Participant Selection

Merriam (2009) stated, "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight" (p. 61). Ten elementary school principals were selected for this study because as leaders, they were guiding instructional leadership daily. Miles and Huberman (1994) identified sampling techniques that are used in qualitative research. One type of sampling technique is *theory based sampling* in which the researcher finds participants that are representative of a theoretical construct. In this study, the researcher used transformational leadership, Leader-Member Exchange theory, shared leadership, and distributed leadership to construct a framework for the research. Therefore, participants were selected based on the characteristics found in these theories as described in the framework. The researcher developed criteria to determine the selection of participants for the study. The first criterion for selection was that the participant was currently serving in the capacity of an elementary school principal. This criterion was significant in that the participants had experience in working

with teachers and instructional leadership at the elementary school level since the study focused on elementary school principals.

The second criterion for selection was that participants were trained as principal mentors. In 2009, a southeastern state required universities to redesign their educational leadership programs to meet specific standards developed for instructional leaders. As a part of the redesign, guidelines indicated interns would spend 10 days working with a principal who had been trained as a mentor for aspiring instructional leaders. To be a mentor, principals were required to participate in training with a university professor who worked with graduate students in the educational leadership program. This training included specific guidelines that met the standards outlined by the teacher certification department in this southeastern state. Therefore, participants had additional training in working with teachers who were aspiring leaders.

The third criterion the researcher used to select participants was statewide testing results from the years, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015. This data was used to indicate whether schools of chosen principals met Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP goals were set by the state based on requirements of No Child Left Behind. The researcher used this data as a tool in determining whether instructional leadership had been consistently productive at the schools of selected participants which supported the aspect of purposeful sampling. These three criteria guided the researcher in choosing participants that possibly represented a specific population that provided the best information for the researcher on a particular topic.

Creswell (2002) explained the qualitative researcher must seek and gain permission from individual sites through the use of a gatekeeper. Before conducting the

study, names of prospective participants were provided to the researcher by university professors. Next, permission was requested from superintendents and or their designees to conduct the study. Upon the approval of superintendents, the prospective participants were mailed a recruitment letter followed by a phone call to engage in the research.

Method Selection

Creswell (2009) mentioned several characteristics found in a qualitative research study which include: natural setting, researcher as the key instrument, multiple sources of data, inductive data analysis, focus on participants' meanings, emergent design, theoretical lens, interpretive inquiry, and a holistic account.

> Educational research includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. Characteristics seen in quantitative research include: (a) an emphasis on collecting and analyzing information in the form of numbers, (b) an emphasis of collecting data that measure specific variables or attributes; and (c) an emphasis on the procedures of comparing groups or factors using surveys, experiments, or correlation studies (Creswell, 2008. p. 46).

Creswell further indicated in qualitative research, researchers: (a) recognize the need to listen to the views of participants, (b) recognize the need to ask general, open-ended questions in natural settings of the participants, and (c) recognize the research can be a catalyst for change in the lives of individuals (2008). Stake(2010) referred to three major differences in qualitative and quantitative methods being: (1) the purpose of the study is either focused on explanation or understanding, (2) the difference between a personal and impersonal role for the researcher, and (3) the difference between knowledge discovered and knowledge constructed in the study. Also, Stake (2010) argued there are two main

differences in qualitative and quantitative methods. First, quantitative methods aim for an explanation, while qualitative methods strive for understanding. Second, quantitative methods implore an impersonal role while qualitative methods require a person role for the researcher.

Creswell (2007) pointed out qualitative research is used (a) when a problem or issue needs to be explored, (b) when there is a need for a detailed understanding of a problem or issue, (c) when researchers want to empower individuals through sharing their stories and providing voice to situations or experiences. The purpose of this study is to understand practices of elementary principals that nurture leadership. Furthermore, a qualitative approach has been chosen because a detailed understanding of this issue was sought by the researcher.

This study was conducted by one researcher who worked with a total of 10 participants, all of whom are elementary principals in the northern region of a southeastern state. Data were gathered in the natural settings of 10 different sites bound by a geographic area with the goal of giving a holistic account of how elementary principals nurture leadership in schools. Although case studies are not generalizable (Merriam, 2009), much can be gleaned from particular cases. This was a multiple case study. Therefore, the information in this case study may have been more transferable in providing knowledge for other elementary principals who nurture leadership development within their organizations.

Data Collection

Data were gathered to explore the practices utilized by principals to nurture leadership in elementary school settings. Information collected represented personal

experiences through the perspectives of participants who supported teacher leaders. The sources of data gathered in this study included principal interviews, observations, and documents. After obtaining consent from the Institutional Review Board at a southeastern university, the data collection process began.

Creswell (2008) outlined five steps in the process of qualitative data collection. First, the researcher should identify participants based on people that can best assist the researcher in understanding the central phenomenon. Second, the researcher must gain permission to conduct the study. Third, the researcher should collect data such as interviews, observations, and documents. Fourth, the researcher should record information gained from participants. Last, the researcher must be sensitive to challenges and ethical issues.

A faculty expert provided a list of potential participants based on graduate level internships in the Educational Leadership program in a southeastern state. Others were selected based on input from the superintendents and or other district leadership personnel. Then, the researcher contacted superintendents of school systems in a southeastern state via letter to gain permission to obtain participants in their districts (see Appendix A). Upon approval of the superintendents, principals were contacted via e-mail with an attached letter of recruitment (see Appendix B). After electronic communication, the researcher followed up with a personal phone call to verify acceptance and to schedule a time to meet.

As participants provided consent, each principal received a semi-structured interview protocol which consisted of 11 open-ended questions (see Appendix C). Qualitative researchers use interviews to discover more in-depth meanings used by

participants in their unique contexts (Hatch, 2001). Therefore, interviews are a common source of collecting qualitative data (Merriam, 2009; Stake 2010; Yin, 2009). First, the researcher conducted a one hour, face to face interview using a one-on-one format with each participant. Merriam (2009) concluded the person-to-person interview is the most common form of interview conducted in qualitative research. Interviews can be highly structured or unstructured in format (Merriam, 2009). Semi-structured interviews were applied by the researcher in that guiding questions were pre-determined prior to the actual interview (Merriam, 2009; Hatch, 2002) and that subsequent interrogatories were based on the initial responses of the interviewees. Merriam (2009) mentioned the key to obtaining reliable data through interviews is asking good questions. Therefore, a protocol was developed by the researcher and guided by the methodologist to be utilized in interviews. Yin (2009) declared case study interviews require the researcher to function on two different levels simultaneously in that the researcher must satisfy the need of inquiry as well as present friendly and non-threatening questions during the interviews.

Each interview was recorded, followed by transcription. The transcribed copy of the individual interview was sent to each participant to validate the responses and to add any additional comments deemed valuable to the process. Participants confirmed the information to be accurate as represented in the document. Pseudonyms were used throughout the data collection process to ensure confidentiality of the participants. All transcriptions were kept on a secure data drive that was kept in a safe area that only the researcher had access. A one-time observation was scheduled with the participants to observe a meeting of their choice in which teachers would be involved in the activity. Observations consisted of whole group or small group meetings.

Next, an observation was conducted which is another source of data in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2009). Collecting observation data using an observation protocol during meetings with teams of teachers or the entire faculty were gathered by the researcher (see Appendix D). Following the interviews, the researcher discussed the purpose of the observation with participants for them to suggest the type of meeting relative to behaviors of principals that nurture leadership in others. For example, the participants may have suggested the researcher observe a data meeting, a problem-solving team meeting, a continuous improvement team meeting, a grade level meeting, a cross-grade level meeting, etc. A time was scheduled to observe a meeting recommended by the participant. The researcher anticipated gathering data from observations that would assist in answering the research questions such as the involvement of the principal, participation of staff members, and evidence of professional learning communities, and building leadership capacity.

Hatch (2002) discussed the use of keeping accurate descriptions of what is observed in the field as raw field notes that will be a part of the protocol. An outsider, which, in this case, was the researcher, observed practices that participants viewed as routine which may not have been verbalized during interviews. Hatch (2002) concluded the goal of using observations is to understand the culture, setting, or social phenomenon being studied from the perspective of participants. Observations take place in the natural setting which enable a first-hand encounter with the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2009). Therefore, observations can provide additional information about the phenomenon being studied by the researcher (Yin, 2009). The researcher used interview and observation protocols, as well as a reflective journal (see Appendix E) that

served as additional data in this qualitative study. Finally, handouts from meetings were kept as additional data by the researcher to record data relative to information gathered to answer the research questions.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is a means of processing data to communicate what has been learned (Hatch, 2002). The researcher gathered data from audio-taped interviews, observation protocols, and documents to begin the data analysis process. Creswell (2009) surmised six steps in analyzing qualitative data. First, the researcher should organize and prepare data for analysis. Second, the researcher should read through all data to obtain an overview of all information collected during the process. Third, a detailed analysis using a coding technique should be utilized by the researcher. Fourth, a description of the setting or people should be generated and themes should be developed based on data. Fifth, the researcher should describe how established themes will be represented in the findings of the study. Sixth, interpretation of the data must be completed by the researcher. In this study, data were organized by transcribing interviews and completing observation and document protocols. Next, the researcher read transcripts, coded data, developed themes, described how themes were used in the findings and interpreted data from interviews, observations, and documents.

Qualitative data analysis is both an art and a science (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Unlike statistical analysis, there are few fixed formulas for the novice qualitative researcher to follow (Stake, 2010; Creswell, 2008). To accomplish this data analysis scheme, three analytic strategies were incorporated in this study. First, an explanatory analysis was conducted by the researcher in which descriptive notes were recorded in a

narrative format. Second, the constant comparative method was used wherein the researcher accumulated new concepts and compared old concepts with their occurrences in previous documents (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Merriam (2009) described this method as being synonymous with its name in that the researcher will constantly compare one kind of data to another type of data. This technique led to the development of categories. At this point, situational mapping or category analysis aggregated concepts into meaningful units known as categories or themes which showed relationships among concepts and how they affected each other. Last, a higher level of data analysis was used by applying a cross-case analysis technique which was used when the researcher gathered data from different sites and participants (see Appendix E). When beginning the analysis process, the researcher analyzed each case separately using codes, themes, and categories. Then, the researcher compared data from each site using the same system of coding, developing themes, and categorizing data. The patterns that recurred in the majority of the sites were identified as the major themes in the findings. This enabled the researcher to develop more detailed and sophisticated descriptions (Merriam, 2009).

Establishing Credibility and Validity

"When developing proposals, one should reveal specific steps to be taken in their studies to check for accuracy and credibility (Creswell, 2009). The researcher used five strategies to validate the research. First, triangulation of data sources was used to justify emergent themes. The researcher examined evidence from interview transcripts, observation protocol notes, and document protocol notes to triangulate data. Second, the researcher used member checking by providing transcripts of interviews to participants to allow them the opportunity to provide feedback relative to accuracy. Third, the researcher

used rich, thick description to convey to the reader the setting and/or perspectives about a topic or theme. Fourth, bias clarification of the researcher was conducted by creating a narrative of self-reflection in the journal of the researcher. Last, the researcher located a peer to review and ask questions about the study for the researcher to gain the interpretation of another person. The researcher also checked transcripts for accuracy and compared coding for correctness which added to the reliability of the study. The quality of this research project was based on validity and reliability strategies used in qualitative research.

Ethical Considerations

The qualitative research method requires a sufficient level of trust, based on a high level of participant disclosure (Creswell, 2008). The researcher followed ethical procedures outlined by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and American Psychological Association (APA) ethical standards for research. Pseudonyms, instead of real names, were assigned to participants. The geographic region was described as general as possible to provide anonymity for specific school systems. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants. Observations were scheduled with the knowledge of participants, and they were encouraged to check information for validity. The storage of data was kept on flash drives, and hard copies of data were stored in a secure place determined by the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all data were destroyed from the interviews, observations, and the reflective journal of the researcher within six months.

Researcher Positionality

The researcher was interested in exploring specific practices utilized by elementary principals to nurture leadership development for several reasons. First, the researcher had been an elementary school principal who interacted with teachers in many situations, one of which was distributing and sharing leadership tasks. Second, the researcher wanted to gain more knowledge concerning how other colleagues collaborated with teachers in building leadership skills. Last, the researcher had concerns for a subgroup of teachers who desired to grow as leaders because there were no published processes within the district in place for principals that aligned with the teacher evaluation system for the state. The researcher had been an elementary principal for fifteen years and possessed a heightened interest in nurturing leadership skills which due to the new teacher evaluation system. One specific evaluation standard emphasized professional growth as a leader on the part of the teacher. Because teachers were interested in growing as school leaders, the researcher wanted to investigate specific practices used by principals to assist teachers in accomplishing this goal.

Conclusion

In this research study, the researcher explored practices utilized by elementary school principals as they nurture leadership development in others. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to conduct an instrumental multiple case qualitative study that focused its attention on the specific practices which principals exhibit in elementary schools in a southeastern state for the purposes of nurturing leadership development. A qualitative research approach was chosen because data were collected in natural settings; the key data collection instrument was the researcher; multiple sources of data such as

interviews, observations, and documents were used; data analysis was interpreted to reflect the views of participants; and the results of the study were a holistic account presented in an instrumental multiple case study designed to answer specific research questions.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter Four will present the findings of this qualitative case study. Information discussed in this section will include participant profiles, results of interview and observation data, emergent themes, and sub-themes. Each research question will be addressed using information gathered and analyzed during the data collection process.

Participant Profiles

The participants in this case study consisted of 10 school administrators from one southeastern state who were currently serving as elementary principals, were trained as principal mentors, and whose schools had met AYP for the previous three school years. Pseudonyms were used in the study to protect the anonymity of the participants. A full span of experience as an elementary principal was represented, ranging from four to 20 years. Seven of the participants held Doctorate degrees, and three had Education Specialist degrees. Demographic data included three males, seven females, eight of whom were Caucasians and two African Americans. The schools included a variety of configurations from PK-4 to K-6 with enrollment numbers from 350 to 903 students. The following table consists of the pseudonyms, race, gender, highest degree held, number of years as a principal, school configurations, school enrollment, and the number of certified employees.

Table 4.1

Participant Profiles

Participant	Race	Gender	Degree	Years as Principal	School Configuration	Enrollment	Certified Teachers
Paul	Cauc.	Male	Ed.S.	17	K-5	476	29
Robin	Cauc.	Female	Doctorate	8	3-5	350	27
India	Cauc.	Female	Doctorate	20	K-4	450	34
Natalie	Af-Am.	Female	Doctorate	15	K-6	860	55
Carla	Cauc.	Female	Ed.S.	14	PK-4	350	28
Janice	Cauc.	Female	Ed.S.	11	PK-5	350	26
Patrick	Cauc.	Male	Doctorate	5	K-4	435	45
Avery	Cauc.	Male	Doctorate	11	K-4	842	63
Linda	Cauc.	Female	Doctorate	4	K-6	903	51
Sandra	Af-Am.	Female	Doctorate	12	K-6	448	36

Upon entering Paul's office, he began explaining he was getting his office organized for the upcoming school year. He started sharing management tips that he had incorporated over the years to help him be more efficient with communication and meeting deadlines, elaborating on the fact that organization provided more time for him to be visible and engaged in the regular school day with students and teachers. Paul had just completed his thirtieth year in education at the time of the study, having served 21 years as an administrator. He had worked four years as a high school assistant principal, and 17 years as an elementary principal. Paul was actively involved in the state organization for school administrators and had served as a district representative and a board member for a number of years. A warm atmosphere was felt throughout the interview, due to Paul's display of a positive and thoughtful demeanor. When he spoke of teachers, he referred to them with respect and was perceived to have deep admiration for their abilities and skill sets.

Robin began her career in education 21 years ago in the district in which she currently served. For 10 years, she taught Special Education students, worked as a middle school assistant principal for three years and was in her eighth year as an elementary principal. The state has recognized Robin as a District Elementary Distinguished Principal. The students attending this school were participating in Project-Based Learning and was also involved in the International Baccalaureate Early Years program. They were even recipients of the National Blue Ribbon Schools and Outdoor Classroom Certification. Robin exuded pride when she spoke of the various recognitions the school received under her leadership. She also voiced her concerns in ensuring the school continued to move forward, with the perception being that she continuously encouraged teachers and others around her to keep growing and stay current with trends and new developments in K-12 instruction.

India had been an educator for over 40 years, serving in a many different capacities. She began as an elementary teacher, served as an assistant principal, an elementary principal, middle school principal, district supervisor, and had recently returned to her roots as an elementary administrator. The site was open and inviting with large windows in the front entrance which provided an extreme amount of light and a feeling of airiness. The office staff confirmed the appointment, and upon being escorted to India's office, a sense of ultimate professionalism was felt from all encountered during the process. Before beginning the interview, India immediately started asking questions and having a conversation to get to know more about the researcher. The conversation was comfortable, and her demeanor was one of peacefulness. Throughout the interview, India conveyed wisdom as her responses came from a place of depth, which became a

somewhat mesmerizing experience. During her most recent tenure as a K-12 administrator, India was recognized as Principal of the Year. Also, under her leadership, the majority of the certified teachers in her elementary school received Google training certification which was a source of positive recognition for her school.

Natalie began her career in education 30 years ago. She started as an elementary teacher and was promoted to an assistant principal that resulted in serving 18 years as an elementary principal. Natalie was recognized as a National Elementary Distinguished Principal and completed the Superintendents Academy offered by the state. She was active in state organizations for educational administrators, having served several years as an officer and a board member. She was highly respected by her peers throughout the state as being an effective administrator. Natalie spoke of the importance of supporting educators in all capacities and encouraging higher education and promoting leadership. At the beginning of the interview, Natalie appeared to be remarkably concise in her responses, almost stoic, which prompted more probing. However, after approximately 15 minutes, she seemed to be more open and excited when elaborating on her answers which led to obtaining valuable information in the area of teacher leadership. The more she spoke about leadership roles for teachers, the more energy she displayed, which resulted in thinking how fortunate it would be if every aspiring administrator could have such a cheerleader for leadership as their principal.

Carla had 30 years of experience in education. Her background was in secondary education, specifically high school, before becoming an elementary principal. She was named a District Elementary Distinguished Principal in her state. The school had received the National Blue Ribbon School Award and was recognized as a Project Lead

the Way school under her leadership. Upon entering the school, the office staff was friendly, and Carla had informed them the meeting would occur in the conference room. Within a few minutes, Carla arrived and introduced herself, full of energy and laughter. Her attitude conveyed confidence and pride in her work as a principal, while at the same time, expressing always to want to know more about her craft. She referenced her pattern of recruiting "mustangs" as teachers because she always wanted individuals who were assertive, and envisioned themselves as leaders.

Janice had been in the education field for 28 years. Before becoming an elementary principal, she taught first grade in two different elementary schools for 18 years in the same school district. Janice has served in a leadership role in a community service organization in which she acted as a liaison in the area of education for two years. Under her leadership as a principal, the school participated in The Leader in Me program for several years, including acknowledgments in one of the studies published by the company that developed the program. Janice seemed to be very collaborative as revealed in her responses. Her mannerisms conveyed humbleness, and at times her answers were met with a sense of hesitancy in areas where she felt she could do more to model and or encourage leadership. However, there was a sense of warmth and care. Evidence of her commitment to students was revealed during the interview process as two different students entered her office to share celebrations with her, one showing her his score on a reading test, and the other bringing in a behavior chart for the morning.

Patrick had been in education for a total of 14 years, five of which were as an elementary principal. Before becoming an elementary principal, he served as an assistant principal for three years, an AMSTI Science Specialist for two years, and taught in an

elementary school for four years. His staff had presented in the area of student goal setting based on academic performance for the state school board association in his state, something of which he displayed a sense of pride and accomplishment. Patrick appeared to be eager to assist in the data collection, as he had recently completed his dissertation the previous year. He was very explicit in his responses and communicated using an academic vernacular at times. Patrick seemed to be proud of his work as an administrator, and even more, seemed to be honored to work in his current school system which invested heavily in the educators with tuition assistance for higher degrees.

Avery began his career in education 18 years ago. After practicing 10 years as a youth minister, he decided to enter the field of education. Although he was a full-time administrator, Avery still served in the church as an elder. According to Avery, servant leadership became a part of his life during the ministry, and that philosophy transferred with him when he became an educator. He specifically mentioned listening and setting clear expectations as areas he found to be important in both professions. His experience in education included teaching three years in an elementary setting, serving as an assistant principal, and working as a director in the Central Office in a previous school district before his present appointment. The entrance of the school was very inviting with the décor that was displayed in the lobby area as well as the main office. Avery was welcoming and kept an unusually serene composure, while still being forthcoming with responses. He was interrupted by office personnel when a young student experienced an accident on the playground which required medical attention from the nurse. He left the office to tend to the situation and speak with the parents. Upon returning, he explained

the incident and shared the conversation he had when notifying the parents. After a few minutes, the interview continued with him displaying the same calmness before the event.

Linda worked in the field of education for 22 years. Her experience included seven years as an elementary teacher, 10 years as an education administrator of a program for the State Department of Education, and one year as an assistant principal. The school was recognized as a Leader in Me school and students were able to participate in technology-based programs. As an extension of the Leader in Me, teachers facilitated a variety of student groups such as the Elementary Honor Society, peer tutoring, Destination Imagination, Art Club, Beta Club, and Newspaper Club. Linda expressed she had enjoyed her four years as a principal in an established, high performing school. She was reflective in answering questions and was intentional in relating responses to the area of teacher leadership which seemed to reveal a focused approach to leadership. When discussing different areas of leadership roles, she appeared to be excited and committed to the process, being she spent many years serving as a teacher leader in a position for the state. Linda shared her previous role of working with teacher leaders provided her with the foundation of working with different types of people which was necessary as a principal.

Sandra had been in education for 32 years, all in one school district. Before becoming an elementary principal, she served as an elementary teacher for 14 years, and four years as an assistant principal. Her service as an administrator had all been in the same elementary school. Because of the longevity of her time in the same school, she had developed professional and personal relationships with staff members who had also been there for many years. There were times during the interview when comments were made

which referenced an advantage of being able to work with the same people for an extended period. Also, she was proud of school partnerships and initiatives which included a partnership with an educational agency that provided additional science instruction to students each month. Other initiatives active at the school included Lego Robotics, a competitive math team, Spanish lessons for students in grades K-3, Destination Imagination, and a student choir. Sandra displayed a quiet, yet steady demeanor, all while communicating a sense of total commitment to students and teachers. She seemed cheerful, showing a smile throughout the entire process of the interview.

Interview and Observation Data Results

Data were collected in two phases with semi-structured interviews being the first phase. Interviews were conducted one-on-one in the natural setting of each principal for approximately one hour. The second phase of data collection was an observation in the school consisting of a meeting with teachers recommended by each participant. Involvement of the principal and staff members was observed and recorded using an observation protocol. The central research question for this study was: *How do principals engage in practices that nurture leadership in others within schools?* The sub-questions developed to support the central research question were:

1. Are professional learning communities present in schools? If so, are teachers participating in leadership practice?
2. How do principals develop leadership capacity?
3. What types of professional development are provided to teachers?
4. How do principals promote collaboration among teachers?
5. What leadership opportunities are available to teachers?

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher using a set of pre-determined questions to answer the research questions. In addressing the first research question regarding professional learning communities, the following probe was aligned from the interview protocol:

1. Are professional learning communities in place in your school? If so, describe their make-up and how they function.

In addressing the second research question relative to building leadership capacity, the following probes were aligned from the interview protocol:

2. Have responsibilities changed for you since the time you became a school administrator until now? If so, how have you handled the changes in responsibilities? (Follow-up) Explain if and how you may involve teachers in more of your responsibilities.
3. Would you discuss your philosophy of leadership and how it guides your behavior as a principal?
4. What types of individuals do you look for as leaders within the school context? (Follow-up) What types of characteristics do you look for in school leaders?
5. Please give examples of how you communicate with leaders regarding the mission, vision, and goals of the school. (Follow-up) Explain if this is done as a team or whether you communicate this alone.

The next two probes were applied to the third research question regarding professional development:

6. What types of guidance do you provide for those you see as school leaders?

7. Can you give examples of professional development opportunities provided by you or the district to improve leadership skills? (Follow-up) Explain how you inform teachers of specific opportunities.

The fourth research question regarding collaboration, was addressed by the following interview questions:

8. In what ways do you collaborate with other school leaders?
9. Will you identify and discuss specific structures that are in place to encourage collaboration among school stakeholders? (Follow-up) Explain how you inform teachers of specific opportunities.

The last research question which targeted leadership opportunities, was addressed by these interview questions:

10. Please share examples of situations where teachers assist you in instructional leadership responsibilities. (Follow-up) Outside of serving in a formal capacity such as an instructional coach, how do others assist you in this area?
11. What specific tasks do others at the school level assist you with management and operational responsibilities? (Follow-up) How do you decide what these tasks are?

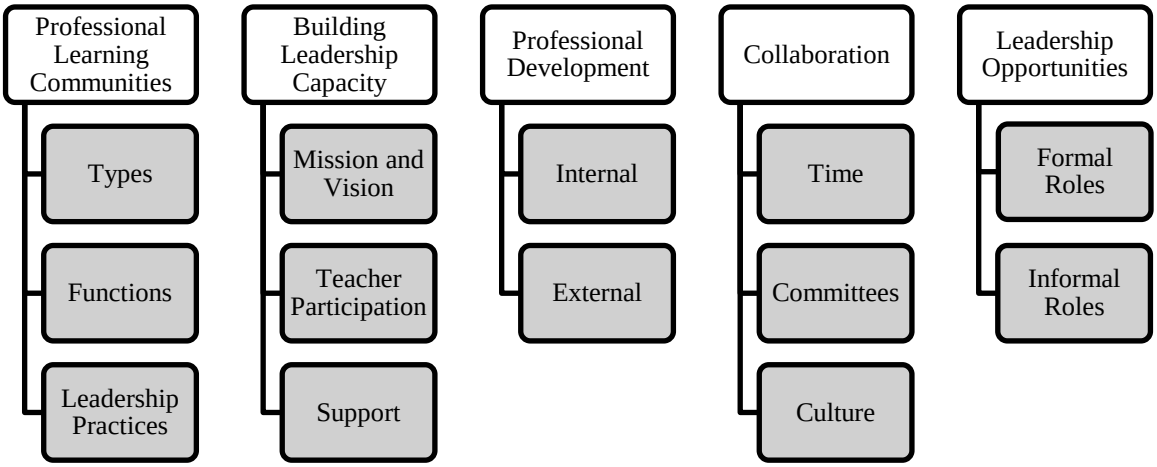
Themes

The purpose of this study was to conduct a qualitative case study that focused its attention on specific practices exhibited by elementary school principals that nurture leadership in others in a southeastern state. The researcher organized the data collected from the one-on-one interviews and the observations into themes. The data analysis revealed five themes along with sub-themes. The five themes that emerged were 1)

Professional Learning Communities, 2) Building Capacity, 3) Types of Professional Development, 4) Collaboration, and 5) Leadership Opportunities.

Figure 4.1.

Themes and Sub-themes



Research Question Findings

Professional Learning Communities

The first research question addressed was, *"Are professional learning communities present in schools? If so, are teachers participating in leadership practices?"* Professional learning communities (PLCs) include the following components: 1) a commitment of assurance that all students will learn 2) an established culture of collaboration among all staff members and 3) a focus on the progress of each student (DuFour et al., 2004). Participants were interviewed, and staff members were observed working in PLCs. Furthermore, data revealed different types of PLCs were present, and functions of the PLCs varied relative to the situation. Effective communication and facilitation of meetings were indicative of specific leadership practices occurring in schools.

Types of PLCs. The first sub-theme for the PLC theme dealt with the types of PLCs that were in the schools. As participants discussed the presence of PLCs in their schools, they often referred to two types. The most commonly mentioned was a grade level PLC, in which the team was comprised of teachers who worked in the same grade level. The groups had designated leaders, most of whom were chosen by their peers to lead their teams. Participants felt that by allowing teachers to choose their leaders, voice in the process resulted in increased buy-in from staff members. An expectation of most participants required grade level PLCs to meet on a routine basis, usually once per week. Patrick, Avery, and Sandra shared that their grade level team PLCs met one hour each week during common planning times. Additionally, India declared the most prevalent PLC in her school was the grade level team due to the in-depth curriculum and instruction work that was taking place with the newly adopted curriculum standards.

The second most discussed PLC was vertical teams in which teachers from different grade levels and resource teachers met on occasion, usually once in a six or nine-week period. These groups were typically led by an instructional coach and consisted of classroom teachers and resource teachers such as Special Education, Title I, Physical Education, Art, etc. Most participants that discussed vertical teams indicated these groups met, but not as frequently as the grade level team PLCs. Avery's statement regarding vertical PLCs was reflective of other schools, "We're doing a lot in grade level but we're trying to increase [the number and effectiveness of] vertical meetings." Although data revealed PLCs were active in schools, tasks were different according to the needs of the school.

Functions of PLCs. PLC functions represented the second sub-theme. During interviews, participants discussed various functions of the PLCs among the 10 participating schools. Each school had a different focus, driven by their individual needs which impacted the direction of the PLCs. However, the most common tasks executed in PLCs were categorized in three areas: 1) analyzing student data, 2) sharing instructional strategies, and 3) conducting instructional walk-throughs.

Analyzing student data. Participants reviewed the role PLCs performed in analyzing student data. Part of the discussion was the importance of PLCs analyzing data to assist in setting goals for the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), a state requirement for all schools. Guiding teachers through the process of utilizing data to set goals and plan for the upcoming school year was implied by several principals. Interestingly, Patrick shared that in the past, he gathered and analyzed all the data for the CIP. However, this past year, he guided the Academic Leaders of each grade level, and it became their responsibility.

> Now, the academic leaders guide their grade levels through collecting their own data, analyzing their own data, and reporting to me what the strengths and weaknesses are from their data. It's flipped. Instead of me owning all the data myself, they all own the data.

Additionally, Natalie described the process of preparing teachers to analyze data through introducing the work of DuFour and associates (2004).

> Let me tell you what I did. I took DuFour's process. Each Monday, they [teachers] would come. I did one thing at a time. I explained to them it would take approximately nine weeks to get through the first step but to be patient because

we would prepare them to start having their powerful conversations. But, they wanted to rush it. By the end of the nine weeks, it was report card time. It was time for data [to discuss data].

Another result of PLCs analyzing student data was the practice of teachers participating in more professional conversations regarding the mastery of standards. In turn, the development of quality questions and learning targets ensued among teams. By reviewing and analyzing data, teachers were also able to identify specific strengths and areas for improvement for individuals as well as groups of students. Therefore, a cycle continued with teams consisting of the analysis of data, development of instructional practices, instruction, and assessment.

During observations, a grade level team was witnessed analyzing data at Sandra's school, with teachers sharing the most recent Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) data with the principal and instructional partner. During the meeting, each teacher discussed the status of individual students and their performance on the assessment as well as in the classroom. The discussion included concerns, celebrations, and the sharing of instructional strategies as next steps. For example, each teacher shared their concerns regarding students who were not showing significant gains on the DIBELS assessment or in classroom performance. Teachers also celebrated students who had shown improvements using the assessment tool. In each situation, Sandra asked specific questions which allowed teachers to articulate and share instructional methods. Next steps were planned according to the information shared by teachers along with the data.

Sharing instructional strategies. Sharing instructional strategies was a practice implemented within PLCs examined in the study. Participants felt when teachers were

able to meet routinely to discuss student data, and they were not only looking at data or student work but examining specific instructional strategies that would best meet the needs of their students. Carla shared that her teams discussed data during meetings to adjust their instructional planning to assist better students who were performing below grade level and those students who showed no significant growth. She also shared that future data meetings would focus more on instructional strategies versus the emphasis on the personal barriers experienced by students.

Along similar lines of thought, Linda stated, "Part of that [meeting] is looking at the data. But, the more important piece was the instruction and next steps." Developing next steps for specific students and creating plans that included programs or practices that would help support them were also evidenced in observations of Problem Solving Team (PST) meetings with Paul, Janice, and Linda. Also, during a grade level meeting, Sandra consistently questioned teachers regarding specific student interferences and what their next steps would include to serve students better. Similarly, Avery provided teachers with a standardized form to outline instructional strategies in specific subject areas. "I gave them a form, and I gave them an example of what I wanted, and it tied back to the strategic plan." He further discussed in detail that the form included the following areas: Strategies, challenges, solutions, and an action plan. Specifically, the document served as a tool for teachers to identify a specific reading strategy for instruction. Next, they would identify any challenges associated with the implementation of the instructional method. Teachers were also expected to determine a solution for any problem faced with the implementation. The last section of the tool expected teachers to articulate an action plan to ensure the instructional method or strategy was successful.

As mentioned earlier, India shared the importance of grade level team PLCs delving into instructional strategies that supported the newly adopted curriculum standards for the state. Natalie also discussed the significance of team leaders providing support to their peers in the introduction of new instructional strategies to the staff. For example, she stated,

> An example of that is building vocabulary. The instructional coach was the lead person. I assigned five of our strongest teachers in reading to be under her. She trained those five and then they trained other people in that subject area.

Conducting instructional walk-throughs. Another PLC function mentioned by the participants was instructional rounds or instructional walk-throughs, wherein teachers and administrators visited classrooms with a list of practices, strategies, and behaviors. Janice shared that her team was once active in conducting instructional walk-throughs which were comprised of a group of primary grade teachers and a group of intermediate grade teachers. She further explained the teachers helped her develop the rubrics to measure the behaviors and practices that were observed by the teams. Due to additional responsibilities, Janice shared that her school had not been involved in walk-throughs in two years. However, she found the practice to be beneficial.

Natalie, Patrick, and Avery discussed the practice of conducting instructional walk-throughs or instructional rounds as a way for teachers to observe specific strategies and or behaviors of their peers. Natalie indicated that teachers gained an opportunity to practice leadership when participating in instructional walk-throughs and discussing information gathered using rubrics. Likewise, monthly walk-throughs were an expectation Avery set for his teachers.

> We do walk-throughs. There are 20 behaviors we are looking for. So, each month they have to observe at least one other classroom. Because of how the schedule is, most of the time it's another grade level, which is what I want them to see. I've given them the charge that when you go to someone else's classroom, find something you like and let them know.

Linda added that through instructional walk-throughs, teachers were able to participate in professional learning stating, "Part of the professional learning is instructional rounds, where it's about learning. It's about what you are seeing happen with students. What can you take away?"

Leadership practices. Several participants discussed how PLCs functioned within their buildings. Along with the functionality of the PLCs, the researcher noted how leadership practices, the third sub-theme, may have been utilized in operation of the PLCs. Data revealed that teachers practiced leadership skills through PLCs in two ways: 1) communication with staff and 2) facilitation of meetings. Leadership practices were vital to the effectiveness of PLCs in that leaders were able to convey their messages regarding the goals and mission, establishing a collaborative culture, and focusing on the progress of students.

Communication with staff. First, communicating with the staff and or teams was discussed by participants as an essential component of the teaming process. Robin shared her faculty participated in a survey, and the results showed their preference of skills possessed by their Building Leadership Team facilitator. "They want someone who is very collaborative, communicative, and fair. It's interesting to look from their eyes." Additionally, Paul stated, "They need to be good communicators with listening being just

as important as, or more important than talking." Furthermore, Paul shared that when the district first began training on the new curriculum standards for math, two teachers who had backgrounds as math coaches quickly volunteered to participate in the professional development and they were able to turn the training around to present to the staff.

Although Paul's experience included specific teachers showing initiative in communication, India, however, explained how she purposefully encouraged teachers to be more vocal. Typically, these were teachers who would sit quietly in team meetings. Therefore, her strategy to promote communication was as follows,

> You get them to begin. And, oh, that wasn't so bad. You know, as long as you're supporting them and taking baby steps to help lead them. Eventually, you send them to some conferences. One of the deals is, if I send someone to a conference, they have to share with the staff. Eventually, they get to the point where they feel, and I can do this. You're basically trying to grow those leaders. Inside every teacher, every good teacher is a good leader.

Another example shared by India was beginning team meetings with asking questions. By posing strategic questions, the teachers became more vocal which eventually led to them taking a leadership role in the team. "I probably plant the seeds to get them started. Then, they start taking charge. They start asking the questions and giving examples." Consequently, Natalie and Sandra shared that grade level chair leaders were responsible for communicating information to the grade level teams such as updates from the principal. Both participants expressed one way of communicating with the staff was through the grade level leaders. Therefore, the principals would share relevant information with the team leaders, either face to face or via e-mail. In turn, the leaders

were expected to disseminate specific information to grade level peers during weekly meetings. Also, team leaders were responsible for reporting information to the administrator that had been discussed or decided upon in committee meetings.

Carla discussed the importance of PLC leaders possessing effective communication skills which enhanced their ability to investigate or explore new initiatives, to help implement new programs, and to sustain successful practices. She shared, "I try to give them enough freedom that they will… that there's enough professional trust there that I feel good about releasing them to the faculty." She further explained information is not always top-down from the principal, that the team leaders channeled information to their peers such as different articles or books that were relative to their team. As a result, communication was identified as a leadership practice implemented by teachers in PLCs, as well as serving as a facilitator.

Facilitation of meetings. Second, facilitating meetings was a leadership practice participants discussed as a part of their PLCs. Several principals communicated that teachers facilitated meetings as a part of PLCs. It may have been a classroom teacher, an instructional coach, or a resource teacher, depending on the type of meeting. Robin shared that her school tried adding a component to grade level meetings whereby, the principal provided each team with an agenda, and they were to add to the agenda other areas they felt needed to be addressed during the meetings. Grade level chairpersons, who were designated by their peers, were responsible for facilitating the meetings. Robin attended some of the meetings and offered support when needed, saying, "This was a different side of leadership in that it gave them ownership in what they were doing. It was good."

Similarly, Natalie shared that the grade level chairpersons and the instructional partner were responsible for leading their PLCs, stating, "Usually, the grade level chairperson will assist the instructional partner, the reading coach, to lead those meetings and to go through the data." A similar practice was observed at Patrick's school in which the instructional partner facilitated the meeting along with the grade level chairperson to share instructional strategies that had been used to strengthen reading instruction and student performance. For instance, a third grade instructional team along with the reading coach met to discuss their progress with specific instructional strategies since their last meeting. The time frame of this meeting was after benchmark assessment data had been analyzed and next steps were identified by the team. Therefore, the team shared the status of implementing specific instructional strategies. One 3rd grade teacher shared an example of teaching a standard and assigning activities to students through the use of a software program utilized by the school. She expressed that she found the program to be beneficial because the personalized learning component targeted each student at their specific level of performance which in turn, assisted the teacher with identifying particular skills during small group instruction.

The conversation with Avery also supported what previous principals shared in that their Academic Leaders, or grade level chairpersons, were responsible for leading meetings and communicating with the principal. Avery's school practiced rotating positions of Academic Leaders every two to three years. Furthermore, those leaders met during the summer to work on pacing guides and were instrumental in working with their grade level teams during the school year. Consequently, in some schools, teachers were expected to facilitate meetings with their grade level peers as well as vertical teams. India

revealed, “I might ask Ms. Jones to conduct a team meeting, not just for her grade level but the next grade level [above] and the grade level below hers on what she is doing with number talks in the classroom.” Distributing responsibilities such as facilitating meetings promoted a sense of shared leadership with the different organizations.

Participants encouraged shared leadership as discussed and observed with the execution of PLCs which included the entire staff, grade level teams, or vertical teams. Patrick indicated that grade level Academic Leaders facilitated several responsibilities, namely the CIP. This was an example of how the Academic Leaders took charge of facilitating the process, whereas, in the past he, himself, was responsible for the process and the final product.

Summary of PLCs. The three functions mentioned above relative to PLCs in participating schools included analyzing student data, sharing instructional strategies, and conducting instructional walk-throughs. Grade level and vertical teams were involved in the implementation of the practices which provided opportunities for leadership, buy-in from staff members, professional learning, and collaboration. Data from interviews revealed principals utilized PLCs in different ways. Overwhelmingly, most PLCs were responsible for analyzing student data. This practice led to collaborative discussions on instructional strategies that would be most beneficial to students. Also, several principals conducted instructional rounds or instructional walk-throughs with their teams as a way to observe, discuss, and ultimately improve instruction for students. This process also allowed them the opportunity to stay focused on specific goals and or practices as an entire faculty.

As principals discussed the PLCs, leadership practices such as communication and facilitation were evident as skills teachers were involved in as the leader of their teams. Teachers were responsible for leading their team meetings which included communicating information from the principal and or the district. Teachers were also responsible for providing feedback to administrators on the progress of their teams. Some principals provided teachers with recommended agendas and forms to assist in leading meetings. Furthermore, routine facilitation of meetings included the review student work, discussion of instructional strategies, collaboration on different issues, and the opportunity to address scheduling of activities or events relative to their grade level. The foundation has been laid through the discussion of PLCs to discuss the topic of building capacity among staff members.

Building Leadership Capacity

The second research question addressed by participants was, *"How do principals develop leadership capacity?"* The data collected for this theme revealed that participants practiced building capacity of teachers through 1) developing a clear vision and mission, 2) encouraging teacher participation, and 3) supporting teachers in leadership practices. These comprised the three sub-themes of capacity building. Developing and revising the vision and mission of the school was found overall to be a process in which participants collaborated with other stakeholders to communicate the purpose of the school. Also, participants encouraged the involvement of teachers in decision-making, serving in leadership roles, and expecting teachers to be actively engaged on their teams. Because participants included teachers in different aspects, the

concept of supporting teachers in leadership practices appeared to be a natural progression in methods of building capacity.

Mission and vision. All ten participants discussed the process of communicating the vision and mission of their schools. Eight of the 10 participants used a site-based group process to develop a vision and mission for their prospective schools in which every teacher was involved in the endeavor. These participants felt that by including the staff, more buy-in would occur in the school. The remaining participants were a part of a small school district, wherein the process began with representatives from each school and district personnel developing a shared vision and mission which was then taken to the individual school level for input and feedback.

Once mission statements were developed, the process staff members revisited the process, ranging from every one to three years. However, two participants, Carla and Avery, began each spring with starting the conversation in guiding them for the next school year. Carla stated,

> Starting in January or February of every year, I'll start talking that talk. I think what I'm hearing you say is…What I see coming is…and that we may want to get in a situation where we are preparing. So, we start talking so by the time we end the year in May, they know what we're going to work on the next year.

Two other participants, Janice and Linda, explained that they took an in-depth look at their mission statements when their schools decided to be a part of Covey's "Leader in Me" program (Covey & Covey, 2008). One change implemented concerning this program was developing a statement that all students could understand and learn.

Additionally, communicating the mission and vision was deemed necessary in the process of internalizing the beliefs of the school. Linda shared,

> It's a part of the Leader in Me process. It's one of the things we keep alive. We talk about that every week. Why are we here? What is our purpose? How do we make our decisions? What's the right thing to do by children? We take everything to the next level. I just think you keep those expectations in the forefront and keep those conversations alive. You put the mission statement on the wall, because they may not be able to remember it. I think the Leader in Me has helped us keep that to the forefront every day.

Participants also shared how mission statements were referenced in different circumstances while communicating and making decisions with their staff members. Data revealed principals used the mission and vision as guides for activities ranging from planning school-wide activities to developing schedules. Robin, India, Sandra, and Patrick all reiterated the practice of referencing the mission and vision when making decisions. Comments such as "selling it daily" to "making critical decisions on scheduling, programs, and school traditions" were made by participants when discussing the utilization of the mission and vision. Furthermore, participants expressed their thoughts regarding keeping the mission and vision an active part of their role as a leader. For example, Sandra shared a situation in which a group of teachers was in the process of revising disciplinary procedures at the school level. She felt the committee was basing their decisions on emotions instead of their established beliefs as an organization. Therefore, she referred to their mission and vision and asked them to rethink their proposal and apply the beliefs of the school to the task at hand.

Patrick revealed a more proactive approach in ensuring teachers actively engaged in the mission and vision of the school. By initiating a practice with teachers to assist them in understanding the mission and vision of the school, he felt they had a better perception of what their organization represented in educating students. He asked teachers to develop lesson plans at the beginning of each year centered on their mission statement which included five standards: Explore, create, challenge, innovate, and lead. He expected teachers to develop activities that would provide opportunities for students in each of the areas of the mission and vision statements. Because Patrick required teachers to develop several lesson plans incorporating aspects of their mission statement, he expressed the result in participating in the activity compelled teachers to acquire a deeper meaning in their purpose as a school.

Teacher participation. Principals repeatedly voiced that the job of the elementary principal involved many responsibilities which were impossible for one person to control. Participants encouraged teachers to engage in areas such as decision-making, being active members of teams, and serving in leadership roles. Several participants discussed the utilization of leadership teams wherein these groups were involved in planning and implementing activities that were a part of the goals of their schools. Also, Paul, Nancy, and Robin spoke of the importance of communicating with teachers and encouraging them to be more vocal during team meetings. Not only did the principals expect growth in communication, but also wanted teachers to share their areas of expertise with others. Paul specifically discussed encouraging teachers to participate in leadership roles such as training other teachers. Principals also shared that they believed everyone was a leader in some capacity in their schools. Some participants indicated that

there were teachers who welcomed leadership roles without hesitation, while others needed encouragement to serve in a leadership capacity. For example, several participants shared situations in which teachers initiated assisting peers in their areas of expertise. On the other hand, in some circumstances, principals spoke to individual teachers to ask for their support in leading an activity or a group. Principals discussed a variety of methods to ensure more participation.

First, several participants; Paul, Natalie, and Carla; mentioned that building leaders began with the hiring process. Natalie explained, "I've always tried to make sure I hire good people at the school so they can assist and help…They want the school to be its very best." Continuing with the thought, Carla stated, "Everybody I hire, I try to hire a leader. Everybody I hire, I have that in my head. I don't let someone sit too long before I start delegating responsibilities."

Second, participation in decision-making was discussed by several principals in that they encouraged teachers to share their voices. One participant, Robin, used surveys when she started as a new principal to gather feedback from the teachers. "When I got all the surveys together, they could choose which area of leadership they wanted to be a part. They could have some buy-in and feel that everyone's voice was heard." Robin felt having buy-in allowed teachers to work on the same goals and be on the same page. Additionally, Sandra and Janice emphasized the importance of being transparent when making decisions as a school. Both participants felt the responsibility of nurturing an environment where everyone's voice was solicited and valued by the principal.

Last, through the utilization of leadership teams, principals were able to gain active teacher participation. Principals talked about their leadership teams, often referring

to them as the Building Leadership Team, the Leadership Team, or the Lighthouse Team. These groups included teachers that represented different grade levels or special areas within schools. The responsibilities of a leadership team involved sharing information on new initiatives, providing information on continuous efforts in the schools, and or keeping the staff focused on school-wide goals and plans for the school year. Linda spoke of several different academic leadership teams that were responsible for communicating newly adopted curriculum standards. She assisted teachers in the planning process and provided the time and opportunities for the teams to work with other staff members.

Avery and Patrick also used their Academic Leaders as a team in which the participants would meet with team leaders and decide upon what and how they would share information with their teams. Both participants felt that by delegating responsibilities and rotating the grade level leaders, growing their teachers was reflective of capacity building.

As principals identified teachers considered to be effective leaders, specific behaviors were noted in the interviews. Participants indicated the types of practices or characteristics found in successful teacher leaders included commitment, follow-through, and credibility. Being committed to the best interests of the school and possessing the ability to follow-through with plans were communicated as important by principals. Participants also searched for teachers who had established credibility with their peers, were able and willing to make difficult decisions, and show initiative. One participant, Patrick, expressed many of these attributes,

> Well, I first look for those who are willing to step outside the box, for those individuals who are not afraid to take risks, those who have a sense of who

> they are as an educator…I look for those people who have people skills. Their leadership doesn't stop with them but spreads out throughout their grade level. It has to be someone who reaches out beyond the walls of their classroom.

Support. Principals discussed ways they supported teachers in facilitating leadership. Several participants shared that they believed their role was to be of support to teachers in what they were attempting to accomplish individually as well as on teams. India, Patrick, and Linda shared similar thoughts. India stated, "It's my responsibility to encourage that leadership and even to develop that teacher leadership." Patrick shared, "I want the faculty and staff to understand my job is to support them to be the best teachers they can be, and that's when I feel I have been successful." Furthermore, Linda explained,

> It is my responsibility to take the barriers away from my teachers to do the best job they can do. Whether that's finding the resources or the money they need…or if that's garnering time for them to collaborate with their peers so that we're taking away any barrier that would keep them from doing the best job that they can.

Carla stated, "I think that's part of it for us to make people feel that they are not a million miles away from achieving this. Oh, they just have to do a little here, and a little there and they will have it." Janice responded with,

> I'm here to serve my school, my teachers, and my community. I work for them… I've allowed them to handle some activities and responsibilities. I felt like in the event that I wasn't here, and I won't always be here, they need to be able to do a lot of these things themselves.

Attending meetings, providing resources, scheduling, outlining logistics, and reinforcing the work of the teams were expressed by participants as ways they supported teachers. For participants who were active in attending different group meetings, they experienced first-hand knowledge of what specific ways the administrator could help the situation. Also, for principals who worked directly with team leaders, the same types of support were provided. However, a different format garnered information.

Summary of Building Leadership Capacity. The development of the mission and vision usually involved the entire staff. Some locations began with a leadership team providing the framework, while other schools engaged everyone in the whole process from the beginning stages. All participants indicated the involvement of staff members impacted how well the organization supported the mission and vision. Most participants revealed referencing the mission and vision for decision-making was usually the responsibility of the principal until the connection became a part of the culture of the school which leads to the participation of teachers in the process of building capacity.

During the interview process, principals explained that communicating a clear vision and mission, encouraging teacher participation, and supporting teachers in leadership practices were a part of their routine efforts in the role of a principal. The mission and vision were developed and revised using a team approach which also included the principal. Encouragement of staff members to share their opinions, voice, and skills resulted in the creation of opportunities for teachers to be more visible in their areas of expertise. Also, participants described ways in which they supported teachers in building leadership skills. Although the mission and vision were established and communicated, teachers were encouraged to be actively involved in school decisions, and

support was provided by participants, professional development was also an integral part of nurturing leadership.

Professional Development

"*What types of professional development are provided to teachers?*" was the third research question addressed by participants in the study. This comprised the third theme as well as two sub-themes. Principals discussed different types of professional development often provided to teachers. The researcher categorized the responses as internal and external. Internal professional development or job-embedded opportunities were provided through peer-coaching, consultants, and district and or school initiatives. External opportunities included workshops and conferences and higher education institution programs.

Internal. All principals discussed job-embedded professional development as one avenue provided to teachers for professional learning opportunities. Each principal shared experiences wherein peers worked together to train each other in different areas. Participants also discussed the use of consultants in providing professional development to teachers on-site and during the school day. Lastly, principals shared examples of various initiatives facilitated at the school and district level to support teachers in professional development.

Peer coaching. Because all of the schools had an instructional partner or reading coach as a part of their staff, most principals were able to utilize them to train and or coach teachers. The following participants shared how their instructional partners, reading coaches, or math coaches were able to deliver professional development in their buildings. Paul, Sandra, and Robin identified peer coaching as being an essential role of

the instructional partner and or reading coach. According to the data, instructional partners worked with new teachers, teachers new to a grade level, and veteran teachers who needed additional support. Novice teachers often required training in the curriculum, assessments unique to the district and or school, and instructional strategies. Other teachers needed help when transferring to a different grade level. Although, principals felt that knowledge of instructional strategies transferred to other grade levels, learning the curriculum for a different grade level necessitated support from the instructional coaches. Not only did veteran teachers need assistance in working in a different grade level, one principal, Avery, shared some experienced teachers required additional support in specific areas such as small group instruction. Therefore, instructional coaches provided training to meet specific needs of adult learners.

During the data collection process, the researcher observed Sandra's instructional partner facilitate professional development in grade level meetings to assist teachers with staying abreast of new updates for a school-wide program as well as reviewing the research connected to the program. She began with providing handouts to the team of four classroom teachers and the principal. Then, she turned their attention to a digital presentation she had prepared that included the research and new updates. The team appeared to be attentive, with some taking notes and asking questions regarding monthly expectations. The principal allowed the instructional partner to guide the training and respond to questions posed by teachers which gave the impression the practice of peer coaching was a part of the culture of the school. Furthermore, Patrick revealed how the instructional coach provided training in the area of gathering and analyzing data. "The instructional coach really did a lot of training on how to pull their own data. It was a

gradual release, so it wasn't as if we threw them to the wolves. We gave them many steps, and now they have ownership."

Instructional partners or coaches were also utilized in a "train the trainer" type of format for different instructional strategies. For example, Natalie shared, "The instructional coach was the lead person. I assigned five of our strongest teachers in reading to be under her. She trained those five and then they had five to six in their group." Avery shared a similar practice when commenting on how their instructional partner provided professional development on district professional developments days, followed by teachers collaborating on the same topic in the afternoon.

Because India had an assistant principal with a background as a technology coach, the assistant principal provided professional development and assistance to teachers. "She has unbelievable technology skills at her fingertips. And, we're all learners." Not only did the assistant principal provide professional development in this area, but other staff members did as well. India explained that she sent five teachers to a Google Summit, and they received certification as trainers. Therefore, the expectation was for them to turn that training around to their staff. "They were all interested. So of course, my deal is, if I send anyone off to do anything special, I'll pay for it professional development wise. But, then you owe us back as a school." This resulted in 33 teachers receiving Google training by the five certified trainers in the school.

Several participants discussed the importance of having an instructional coach for reading. However, one principal, India, and her peers decided to make concessions in other areas to fund math coaches as well. Their rationale was that having a math coach to

provide job-embedded professional development would positively impact standardized test scores.

In addition to peer coaching by teachers with formal leadership positions, principals also shared situations where classroom or other resource teachers provided professional development to their peers. One area that recurred was that of technology. Paul spoke of the school receiving new technology devices and how the music teacher and a fifth grade teacher took on the responsibility of training the staff in how to utilize the new tools best. "They had groups, learning team groups, they led. They did quite well. I hear good feedback from people they were working with." Continuing along that same path, Robin shared, "We have several good technology related teachers, so they have taken on the role of going into some of the classrooms to initiate contact and encourage some of those things with other teachers."

Avery also promoted utilizing peers to assist with learning technology. "With the one to one initiative with technology, I found my shining stars, if you will." Later, he organized a professional development session that involved teachers who displayed strengths in utilizing technology and in specific software. Avery described organizing various sessions on a professional development day in which teachers attended the sessions in small groups, and were able to learn more about the specific software. He further explained that in the days following the sessions, teachers felt more comfortable in asking for assistance from the presenters and this provided more collaborative opportunities.

Other areas of peer coaching or professional development were discussed by the participants as well. Natalie imparted that her school had a math leadership team, which

was responsible for providing professional development to the staff. Furthermore, the team was responsible for examining the curriculum guide developed by the state and reviewing the standards with teachers. "At this time, they are leading us through student learning maps and acquisition of lesson plans." Next, Natalie discussed the Language Arts leadership team in which they were expected to function as the Math leadership did with providing more training on the standards. Lastly, she also shared that teachers led professional development in faculty meetings. "We do business the first 15 minutes. Then, I try to make sure a teacher leads some type of professional development. That seems to work really well if I assign several teachers to present."

Similarly, Linda and Sandra worked in districts that trained leadership teams comprised of teachers to facilitate professional development at their prospective schools. Linda shared,

> When the new standards came out, they met by grade level to break down the standards and really understand them. And, how to best implement them in the classrooms. Those committees still meet because they help develop common assessments… That started about three years ago.

Although Carla was not specific as to a particular type of peer staff development, she stated, "If someone goes to professional development, there is an expectation there that if that is something that some more people need, you have to come back and do some type of turn-around training on that. It kind of puts everyone in a good place."

Avery also shared two examples of utilizing classroom teachers to coach others. First, he knew there was a teacher who needed support in classroom management. "I paired them with someone, not the Academic Leader, but with someone I knew would be

a good fit and could help give them more direction." Another example shared by Avery was regarding instruction. "I paired her with one who was being very strategic with small groups." As discussed, peer coaching was one means of providing job-embedded professional development in various areas such as curriculum, technology, as well as the individual needs of teachers. Another method utilized by participants was contracting with consultants to facilitate professional learning among teachers.

***Consultants*.** Participants discussed professional development opportunities which included consultants providing job-embedded training during the school day. Consultants were either invited by individual school principals or by the district. After speaking with participants, interview data revealed consultants were used to develop teachers in three different areas: School culture, academic support, and specific academic areas. Principals who obtained consultants to enhance collaboration and communication were focusing on improving school culture. Other participants were concentrating on improving instruction in specific academic areas. However, in both cases, the use of consultants provided professional development opportunities that could ultimately impact leadership growth among teachers.

Two participants shared that they utilized a consultant to train their teachers in the area of personalities and self-awareness. Robin stated, "This year, we did characteristics, personality characteristics, so you know how you can communicate with others based on their characteristics." Robin felt that this activity allowed staff members to understand how to approach others depending on their personality characteristics. She felt the staff collaborated more effectively when there was an understanding of how to communicate with different personalities within a team. Another participant, Avery, shared that he used

funds for a consultant to train staff on Emergenetics, another type of personality traits awareness approach for working with team members. “I felt like they needed to know themselves. I want them to know themselves, really do some introspection.” He further expressed the importance of teachers being reflective of who they were to impact their effectiveness as teachers. Although Robin and Avery focused on personality traits and how to best communicate to enhance school culture, Carla contracted with a consultant to train the staff on the purpose and function of a Professional Learning Team (PLT) which she voiced as still being impactful with teachers, stating, “Patricia came to work with us. That helped with that too. Now, I don’t have to go to a PLT and say, these are your objectives. They will tell me.” All three of these participants had a goal of ensuring their staff members were provided with specific skills to communicate as a team.

Janice and Patrick shared examples of experts working with their schools relative to their area of focus for the school year. For instance, Janice partnered with a writing consultant because the area of writing was their academic focus that school year.

> I’ve been able to bring in a consultant six days this year. We’re doing third, fourth, and fifth grade writing this year for testing. I want them to be able to see what is expected. He is so much fun, anyway! The teachers love him!

Janice felt because the expert was able to connect with teachers and students alike, investing in his services would have an impact on not only student achievement but in improving the skill sets of teachers.

Patrick communicated another instance of a consultant supporting academics. His district had a focus on Quality Questioning for the current year. Therefore, he wanted more support for the teachers explaining, “We hired a consultant, Dr. Walsh. She’s

written several books on Quality Questioning. She's our mentor for quality questioning." Patrick also explained there would be a summer retreat with his staff members wherein he would invite a consultant to continue the discussion on quality questioning with teachers.

***District/school initiatives*.** Participants discussed district initiatives as a means of providing professional learning opportunities to teachers. District initiatives shared by participants included the implementation of professional development for aspiring administrators and existing teacher leaders such as math and reading coaches. Also, professional learning centered on curriculum standards as well as developing a new teacher evaluation system.

India explained that the district and school provided summer training for instructional coaches. "Going back and reviewing with our reading coach the kinds of things we expect of them, the roles, and the math coaches." Furthermore, she clarified that the training was not just on providing professional development to teachers, but on how to be an effective instructional coach. Also, India communicated that her school system had two technology coaches that served all elementary schools. Therefore, they were following a model where two coaches would work with two teachers per building and train them as technology facilitators. She elaborated, "They're working with a facilitator per grade level. So, that's their role back at the school. They are responsible for providing professional development at the school to develop technology leaders."

Another district initiative discussed by Carla, Linda, and Sandra included professional development at the district level to develop aspiring administrators. Carla stated, "I'll call it Leadership Academy for this purpose. It's designated for those people

in our school district who have their certification but don't have a leadership job right now." Similarly, Linda and Sandra were in the same district and discussed the leadership cohort developed the previous year that involved teachers who were aspiring administrators. Some held administrative certification and others did not. However, the cohort members participated in an application process with the district. After they were chosen, they were involved in a yearlong process of monthly meetings where they participated in professional development on different topics, which allowed them to earn a Professional Learning Unit (PLU), a credit that is required for recertification for individuals who hold administrative certification in this southeastern state.

In addition to the leadership cohort in Linda and Sandra's district, professional development was also provided to various leadership teams. The school system invited teachers from each school to participate on different leadership teams such as English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Standards-Based Report Cards. These teams met regularly throughout the school year. The district provided the professional development, and the teachers were expected to facilitate the training at their respective schools. Linda explained,

> As a district, we pull all our school level leaders together. Then, they come back and facilitate professional development. We support that from the system level, and then the school supports that by providing the time and the resources to turn that professional development around.

Furthermore, Janice discussed a process in which the school district was in the process of developing a new evaluation system in which teachers played a vital role in the creation of the new process. She shared, "I definitely think that the Educator

Effectiveness meetings we had were a great way [to improve leadership skills]." According to Janice, the only weakness in the process was that only one teacher per school was able to participate. She stated she would have loved to be able to send more teachers so that they could be a part of the development of the plan.

External. Another avenue of providing professional development to teachers was through workshops, conferences, and higher education institutions. Participants shared information with their teachers regarding professional development opportunities focused on leadership practices. Also, principals encouraged teachers to seek opportunities through enrolling in higher education programs with local universities to promote leadership development.

Workshops/conferences. Participants indicated that external professional development opportunities included off-site workshops or conferences. Paul shared one particular seminar he felt was important for teachers in developing leadership, "I think 7 Habits, by far, is the best. And, I send or try to send as many as I can to the Leadership Symposium." Robin also sent teachers to participate in the same type of training. "We do training, 7 Habits training, as well as many of them have had the opportunity to take the trainer's training." Linda, Sandra, and Janice also mentioned Stephen Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" and "The Leader in Me" as one area of professional development in which their teachers were able to participate. During the interview process, Linda discussed *The Leader in Me* several times concerning building capacity and providing leadership opportunities for teachers.

Other examples of leadership opportunities for teacher leaders were provided by participants. For instance, Robin discussed sending teachers who needed to earn a PLU to

an initiative facilitated by the State Department of Education. She stated, "I think it has been good for my two who have been to those the past two years because they've come back to share things from other schools." Another example was communicated by Natalie when she encouraged and provided the opportunity for teachers to participate in the leadership organization conference for administrators in the state. According to Natalie, she chose teachers to attend the conference if they held a Master's degree in Instructional Leadership or Administration, sharing, "I took them so they could see what principals do in training. So, they could hear some of the information, and be strong leaders here." These participants felt that the exposure to actual sessions with practicing administrators was a good experience for teachers who were aspiring to become principals. In addition to participating in different workshops and or conferences, some teachers engaged in higher education programs as a means of professional development.

Higher education. Another external professional development opportunity included teachers participating in formal higher education programs. Janice shared,

> I try to encourage them to further their education. I have one in particular who is planning to start her Master's. She wants to do online classes. I have [another] teacher I'm trying to get her [to pursue] a leadership certificate. She's in charge of my Problem Solving Team (PST). You saw her in action. She's good, sharp, and dependable. Everybody looks up to her."

Janice felt this particular teacher had not only the ability to do the work required in a formal program but also had the respect of teachers that would allow her to be successful as an administrator. However, she indicated that encouraging teachers, in general, to improve their knowledge base through formal education programs was a common

practice because she felt information would only increase their ability to deal with different situations.

The next situation was unique in that Patrick and Avery worked in a school district that partnered with a local university in supporting professional development through higher education. Patrick shared, "We are one of the few districts in the state that pay one-third. The university pays one-third. And, the teacher only pays one-third. You would not believe how many teachers in this building have their Ed.S [degree]." Avery also elaborated on the positive support of their school district on professional development through higher education. The support was not only for teachers but for principals as well. An additional university had partnered with the school system to support practicing administrators. Avery explained,

> We've teamed with (a university). That's helped in lowering tuition costs, and a private donor to help pay for that. My doctorate, the majority of it is paid. After I graduate, I have a three-year commitment. If we don't stay three years, we have to pay back the tuition. You don't want to grow your leaders and then have them leave.

These two participants felt that the investment in teachers and administrators by the school district was effective because the quantity and quality of professional development occurring across the school district impacted the capacity of all professional staff which in turn, impacted instruction in each classroom.

Summary of Professional Development. Participants identified and described types of professional development provided to their teachers in supporting and or developing leadership. Some professional development opportunities were defined as

internal, meaning the training was offered by either the district or the school and or took place during the school day. The trainings consisted of peer coaching, consultants, and district or school initiatives. Using consultants enabled participants to keep professional learning embedded during the school day as well as target specific areas specific to their school. Some focused on cultural pieces whereas others focused on specific academic areas. Another type of professional development described as external by the researcher consisted of teachers participating in workshops and or conferences that were off-site, or participation in higher education programs.

Participants discussed several different district initiatives in which teachers and teacher leaders participated in professional development. In one district, instructional coaches participated in training that reviewed the expectations of their position and how to facilitate learning in their specific areas. In two other school systems, training was provided to groups of aspiring administrators in which participants had received their credentials to become an administrator though they did not hold an administrative position at the time. Another district facilitated continuous professional development to groups of teacher leaders to support the newly adopted curriculum standards. The last district collaborated with a group of teacher leaders selected by building principals to develop a new teacher evaluation system, facilitated by a trainer employed by their State Department of Education.

In addition to in-house leadership training, there were also external opportunities for professional development. These included workshops and conferences, some of which the State Department of Education or local school systems provided to teachers. Other agencies and organizations facilitated other training experiences as well. Another form of

external training was formal coursework offed by various colleges and universities. Some of these were taught through the typical classroom format, while others could be accessed online.

Collaboration

The fourth research question addressed by participants was, *"How do principals promote collaboration among teachers?"* This became the fourth theme of the study, and it included three sub-themes: Time, committees/teams, and 3) culture. Collaboration through these three modalities was a practice discussed by the participants. First, developing a master schedule that incorporated time for grade level teams to meet was a priority for principals for teachers to be able to collaborate during the school day so they would be able to conduct grade level meetings and data meetings. Second, establishing committees and or teams was essential for collaboration to be effective in schools. Schools referred to the groups in various terms. However, the basis for the work of the teams was often very similar. Lastly, principals recognized that although time could be allocated and teams could be in place that nurturing a culture of collaboration was also crucial to ensuring collaboration would take place in a meaningful way.

Time. Principal participants repeatedly spoke on how they provided time for peer collaboration. Most of the collaborative times were embedded in the master schedule as a way to support collaboration among grade level team members, an activity also observed by the researcher in six schools. Paul shared, "I do provide an hour of common grade level planning for each of the six grade levels." He also explained that during this time, they had their monthly Problem Solving Team (PST) meetings where the team discussed students who were struggling in different academic areas. While attending the PST

meeting, the researcher observed teachers coming in on their planning time as a team to discuss the status of specific students who had been referred to the team by teachers due to academic or behavioral concerns.

Janice, Patrick, and Avery utilized time built into their master schedules, meetings such as Problem Solving Team, Learning Supports, and grade level meetings. The designation of one hour of planning times for grade level PLCs was accomplished by participants. Therefore, the expectation of weekly meetings was expected by participants. The researcher also observed the practice of meeting during this time.

Robin and Janice communicated that they provided a window of time every week for each grade level, which they were expected to use as grade level planning time. Natalie provided grade level planning time during the day twice a month on Mondays. Also, when there were no faculty meetings scheduled, the grade level was responsible for using that time to meet as a team.

Linda and Sandra provided collaborative time through the use of scheduled meetings for a half day for each grade level. One school offered this time monthly, and the other school provided this time approximately every six weeks due to the sizes of the schools. During the half days, the grade level teams met with the principal, the assistant principal, and the instructional partner to review and analyze data and discuss instructional strategies. The other part of the allotted time was used for various practices such as instructional walk-throughs, observing a new program, grade level collaboration, or participating in professional development. Sandra shared that after a facilitator disclosed the new phonics framework with a grade level, they were able to see it in action during this allotted time.

> We went to a teacher in the district who taught second grade who was implementing that framework very well. So, they got a chance to see it. We came back and debriefed. That half day allows us to do that.

Another scheduling practice in providing time to promote collaboration for whole group discussion was during faculty meetings. Paul explained that his school used Monday afternoons for different types of meetings. "We have Monday meetings scheduled. The first Monday is faculty meetings. The second Monday is Building Leadership Team and committee meetings. Then, one Monday is devoted to grade level meetings. The other Monday is Learning Team meetings." Janice used a similar format to provide time for committees to meet for activities such as Family Night, Open House, and the 50-year celebration. Their team for sharing the curriculum standards also used this time to meet. Linda explained that faculty meetings were held each Monday, with the majority of the time being spent either with professional learning or with outlining the next steps to a specific process they had been working through as a faculty.

Other participants took a creative approach in considering the element of time with collaboration. For example, one participant, Carla, spoke of promoting collaboration with teams through a digital platform. They were using the same platform, Edmodo, for different purposes. However, she modeled utilizing the platform for a faculty meeting first. Then, she communicated the option of using the platform as a way to communicate within PLTs. A different example was shared by Robin in that she elaborated on a new practice she tried at her school which was providing time for resource teachers to team teach with a classroom teacher several times during the year as a project-based learning activity.

> The students go to their specials for 30 minutes. Then, specials [resource teachers] are required for another 30 minutes to go back in the classroom and teach a lesson together so everyone can see what everyone is teaching, and facilitate more collaboration.

Because teachers were expected to work and plan together throughout the school year, Robin felt classroom teachers and resource teachers had a better understanding of how they could connect the curriculum through collaborative efforts.

Although the participants usually scheduled collaboration times based on their master schedules, some districts had implemented calendar days where students either did not attend school or were dismissed for a half-day. This allowed teachers to have more collaborative time or professional development time. Carla shared that their scheduled early release days averaged about twice per month and were utilized for vertical team meetings. Likewise, another district implemented a similar practice for collaborative time.

Patrick and Avery shared that additional time was provided by building seven days into the calendar that were used for professional development or analyzing student data as teams. According to Avery, teachers asked for more time for professional development for collaboration. Therefore, their school changed the format on the agenda, with the instructional partner presenting information in the morning, which left afternoons open for grade level teams to meet on how to implement or refine what they discussed in the morning session. Other participants also reflected upon their schedules during the days provided by the district for collaborative time.

Linda and Sandra revealed that the four half-days the district provided were initially intentioned to be reserved for school-based collaboration and individual school needs. However, part of the allotted time in those days was used to turn around district training from the various leadership team members. This process required leadership team members to attend the initial training, and then present the material to their respective schools. Time was still left for teachers to collaborate on specific school needs or next steps to implement the newly acquired information. Sandra shared,

> We always want them to feel that is their true collaborative time. There might be a piece we need to turn around, but we also want what they're seeing in instruction, at their grade level, so they have that true collaborative time.

Both participants, Linda and Sandra, felt that while true collaborative time was a priority in their buildings, they understood that having teachers facilitate district initiative training was also important so they would not have to require teachers to stay after school for specific professional development.

Committees/teams. Various school teams and committees were discussed by the principal participants as ways to promote and encourage collaboration. "I have a Lighthouse Team that leads 7 Habits implementation. Our behavior plan spun out of that group," Paul noted. Furthermore, he explained that the team scheduled meetings that focused on meeting school-wide goals. Another function of the team as mentioned by Paul was planning and conducting Leadership Day which was an activity which was a part of "The Leader in Me" program. This activity showcased leadership among the student body. Another participant, Linda, also discussed the presence of their Lighthouse Team.

> I'm on all the teams. But, they're the ones that own it and put it out…the ones who are on the stage, so to speak. I just help facilitate, get money, make sure the building is open, and be in support of that. But, they take the ball and run with all of [it]".

Robin discussed how she collaborated with a Building Leadership Team, stating,

> "It definitely builds collaboration in my building. It's built some different leaders that I was surprised by, who they elected which gives me a better idea of some of the strengths I may not have tapped into."

Another example of utilizing a leadership team was described by India. She shared that a team meeting structure was in place for what she referred to as their advisory team. This group consisted of the principal, assistant principal, counselor, reading coach, and math coach. They had a scheduled meeting every Monday morning where they collaborated on identifying the upcoming weekly focus. Sandra implemented a very similar practice that included the principal, assistant principal, counselor, and instructional partner. Although they did not meet each week, they met roughly twice a month for an hour each time.

> We talk about scheduling what's coming up, what we need to accomplish, a timeline, how's the Lighthouse Team doing on this? It gives us something to focus on for the next couple of weeks. Then, we meet again.

In addition to the previous principals working with teams, Avery shared that he helped second grade teachers develop a standards-based report card. He expressed that collaboration was helpful to the school.

Continuing to explain her belief in the team process and team organization, India revealed that she and the assistant principal met with grade level teams on a weekly basis. The focus of those team meetings was on curriculum and instruction. At the time of the interview, the focus was on the College and Career Readiness standards.

> So, we go into the team meetings and had the standards there and started talking with teachers. Tell me what standard you're working on. Now, give me an activity you've done in your classroom, a teaching activity that you've done in the classroom to support that standard.

According to India, these types of questions allowed teachers to verbalize their thoughts and inevitably become highly engaged in the meetings. At the beginning of this process, India discussed that she was usually the person asking a majority of the questions and prompting teachers to be an active part of the conversation. However, over time, teachers became comfortable with asking questions, sharing their thoughts, and providing lessons to their counterparts that met specific standards.

Along those same lines, Natalie elaborated on various teams that were active in her school. Teachers were responsible for meeting with their committees, and the leads shared the information with the principal. She explained that they had to make sure to get input from everyone on the staff when making decisions. Keeping documentation of their meetings was recommended by Natalie to show that everyone had the opportunity for input into the decisions. Her role in the committees was to serve as an advisor. "I advise them by talking about policies and procedures, and then they move forward and present it to the faculty."

The committees or teams covered instruction as well as operations. First, there were two academic leadership teams, math and English Language Arts that were responsible for sharing information and training teachers in their specific areas. Second, there was a discipline committee that decided the specifics about the school-wide discipline plan. Third, there was a Character Council that included the counselor and other teachers, wherein the team was responsible for developing the plan for character education instruction. Fourth, there were grade level chairpersons that helped the principal communicate information to the grade level teams. Fifth, there was a committee charged with developing the master schedule. There were also other committees such as the technology committee, safety committee, and gifted committee. A similar practice was observed with Robin in a whole group meeting wherein the teachers were participating in creating the committees for the upcoming school year.

Patrick described several collaborative efforts outside of the school itself. "We collaborate with other principals. We collaborate with other instructional coaches. Also, we're very involved in the Best Practices Center. So, we do a lot of collaboration with other school districts."

Culture. Participants often spoke of relationships, trust, and a positive culture in their schools relative to collaboration. Paul shared,

> My number one philosophical belief is that teachers are teaching for a reason. They went through all the training at school to become a teacher. That gives them a skill set that enables them to make lots of decisions on how their classrooms should be, how to teach kids and how to be professional.

He also explained that he encouraged teachers to seek assistance from their peers in specific areas. As the researcher observed the teachers in a PST meeting, the principal played a support role in volunteering ways in which he could assist the teachers in communicating with parents and contacting a community organization to provide support for a student.

Natalie also spoke of how she directed teachers to seek assistance from peers or team leaders to give them power and a voice. "I have the teachers to show a lot of respect to those leaders because if a teacher comes to me and asks me something, I say go ask Elise because she is the chair of that committee." Concurring with the thought of voice, Carla shared that everyone in her school wanted a genuine voice in everything. Janice also shared the sentiments of being inclusive of others by stating, "I want to understand first before I come in and just start making decisions. I'm not a "my way" person, not my philosophy. I want it to be what's best for everybody." Furthermore, Avery stated, "It's just that collaboration of bringing everyone together and giving them voice. They take ownership." Linda shared, "What we've realized is that the more involved we can get them, the more buy-in we have from them. Really, it's better work." Sandra continued with the same thoughts, "If they feel it's a top-down push from us, it's going to be something they do to be compliant, but one of the things we strive for is to hear from them more."

Robin shared that the teachers on her team planned ways to help each other. "My coach may be the best manager of them all. He may never step up in a leadership role, but the minute he says, I want to do something, they all get on board to figure out how it can be done. He helps them so much so they will help him do anything." She also

explained, “My philosophy is I need to communicate and collaborate with everybody around me. Everyone on the school staff, as well as the community.” When discussing her philosophy of leadership, India divulged,

> Everybody in that circle is a leader…One of my responsibilities is to make sure that the wheel turns smoothly, and that everybody is pulling their weight, and that everybody is working as a team… Building that culture in your school to make sure everyone feels valued.

India continued her thoughts by sharing,

> I have to show them that trust. I think the best way to build trust is through discussions, being available, making sure teachers see you as approachable, and making sure they know they can challenge ideas. There is a trust, a culture of trust.

Natalie concurred by stating, “To get people to follow you willingly, you have to build trusting relationships and be committed to everything you do. You have to believe in it.”

Several principals also described informal discussions a means of collaboration. India conveyed that the most valuable collaborative conversations took place informally, often in the hallways.

> You’re walking in those classrooms. You see something. You talk to the teacher. This opens up a conversation. It’s those that are the most powerful collaborative discussions because they are very personal and relevant to that classroom teacher.

Patrick also had meaningful conversations with his instructional coach on a daily basis, stating, “The instructional coach and I meet every day and talk.” This type of relationship was described by Avery also, stating, “We meet formally each week. But,

we're always coming together all the time, saying, how can we address this situation? So, it's that collaboration."

Patrick indicated that because the grade level teams had common planning time daily, they often met more frequently than the one day per week that was scheduled. Janice also spoke of informal situations as well saying, "I have an open door policy. They will come and go and tell me things they need or ask for things."

Carla shared a tradition her school practiced at the end of the school year. The entire faculty participated in a school-wide data meeting. "This is how we leave. This is the last thing we do. We talk about every student who did not benchmark or was proficient in one area but not in another." She explained the activity did not "go over well" the first year. However, the school continued with the practice, and now it is better accepted by the staff. "It [the meeting] usually generates a lot of conversation about something else we need or something else we're not doing or not understanding across the board. That's always a good meeting."

Summary of Collaboration. All participants revealed the provision of time as a factor in collaboration. Principals were able to allocate time during the development of master schedules for grade level meetings, data meetings, and other team meetings. Furthermore, school districts assisted with collaboration by providing half-days or full days specifically designed for professional development and collaborative planning at schools. Even with scheduled time during the school day, there were also instances where principals expected collaboration during faculty meetings. Additionally, other means such as partnering teachers or using digital platforms was shared by participants as ways

to facilitate collaboration. A variety of approaches was shared by participants in allocating time for collaboration which leads to the structure of committees and teams.

Supporting collaborative efforts was discussed by participants in the areas of time, committees, and culture. Participants shared means of providing opportunities for collaboration on a routine basis. Participants also discussed the formats of which collaboration most often occurred among staff members which were through committees and or teams. Also, a culture of collaboration was reviewed by the participants as a way of supporting the expectation of collaboration.

Leadership Opportunities

The fifth research question, and thus the fifth theme, addressed by participants was, "*What leadership opportunities are available to teachers?"* Participants enlightened the researcher in how the responsibilities of the elementary principal had changed over time. With these changes, participants began to involve and empower their staff members in being active leaders in their schools. The researcher spoke with participants relative to leadership roles and or opportunities that were available to teachers in the elementary school setting. Two categories or sub-themes were revealed in the data collection as formal and informal roles.

Formal Roles. Teachers in formal positions such as instructional coaches for reading and/or math were indicative at the elementary schools in this study. In addition to those positions, all participants spoke of designated grade level, committee, and/or professional learning team or committee leaders. All participants had one reading coach or instructional partner on staff. Only one participant had a reading and math coach as a part of their faculty. Instructional coaches were identified by all participants as teachers

who shared in taking the lead with instructional tasks such as training teachers in newly adopted reading programs, working with new teachers and with teachers who were new to a grade level, assisting with PLCs, and gathering and analyzing student data. In addition to the responsibilities of the instructional partners described earlier by the researcher, the following statements were also shared by the participants. Paul, for example, stated, "Anytime we have a teacher change grade levels, she usually goes in and works with them at least half the year to help with reading instruction for her grade level." Robin explained, "She does an outstanding job in correlating data and seeing where we are…She does a great job of that piece." India commented, "If we're talking about reading, our reading coach is at that meeting. If we talk about math, our math coach is at that meeting." Natalie clarified, "She schedules all of our instructional walk-throughs and instructional rounds. She collects all the data, and gives the data to the teachers at the meeting. She'll present data at the meeting."

Avery discussed his professional learning network for their school district, in which the instructional partners from each school led training sessions for the teachers in the district. Patrick concluded, "The instructional coach helps in reading, math, and culture. She does everything."

All participants spoke of designated grade level leaders, some of whom were chosen by the principal, and some of whom were chosen by their peers. Regardless of the selection process, the teachers who held those positions facilitated grade level meetings, served as conduits of information between the principal and their peers, and/or worked with instructional partners in various areas. India stated, "You have sponsoring clubs, sports, academic teams, extracurricular looking for teachers." Similarly, Robin

shared, “I give them opportunities to take leadership roles, not just building leadership roles, but committee heads, simple tasks to get the faculty on board, and put them in different committee situations.”

One district had implemented a program for aspiring administrators whereby the teachers could take approved time off from their regular duties, for which substitutes were funded for their classrooms in order for them to be of assistance to the principals. For example, they assisted principals with their state safety plans and their school improvement plans during the school day.

Informal Roles. The practices of modeling and training were noted throughout the data collection. In some cases, the principals encouraged specific teachers to assist others. However, in other cases, teachers volunteered to work with their peers in a variety of areas including modeling and training in areas such as technology, and curriculum and instruction through modeling and training. Paul shared, "I’ve got a couple of teachers that are really good at Mobis, and working with other teachers on that.” Paul also referred to a new math program the school had implemented,

> I had a couple of people who kind of became the “go to” people after they went to the training. Some people were really excited about it and others were struggling. So, I had two or three people I could call on for them to help with that piece.

Noticing the strengths of teachers and soliciting their expertise in those areas was practiced by several principals. India revealed,

> I have two teachers who have unbelievable talents in the area of reading. They’ve been around a long time. They’ve presented workshops for us. We’ve had them

go into first grade or second grade team meetings to do workshops in the standards.

Carla discussed Professional Learning Team leaders wherein teachers took the lead role in managing and operating teams. "I have a teacher who is completely in charge of the outdoor classroom and a PLT connected to that. And, apart from a touch base kind of talk, she owns that. They own that." Also, I have two teachers who are particularly connected with math and a math team. And, they own that." She also spoke of two teachers who received technology facilitator supplements, and how they own assisting teachers with instructional technology.

In specific situations, teachers were given the opportunity to lead. Carla revealed, "I have a teacher leader. Well, two teacher leaders, that are very involved in my safety plan." She described one of those teacher leaders, "She's not a person that is a stand out teacher leader in every area, but she fits that area very well." She continued to share an example of a time when she was attending a district meeting, and principals were informed of a tornado warning. She called the school, spoke with the secretary about informing a specific teacher leader to do what he felt was necessary. "When I got here, they were in the hallway. He was on top of it, and that really felt good. So, I've got a lot of people I can go to in a variety of situations, and it's not always that same person."

Janice described how she used a group of teachers to help select new staff members. "They felt like they had a hand in choosing a person that would work well with the rest of the staff." Also, Janice reflected on her first year as principal wherein she developed a team that assisted with developing the school improvement plan. "The first

year, I had no clue because we had very little work with the CIP plan as a first grade teacher at ABC School."

Summary of Leadership Opportunities. Leadership opportunities were discussed by participants as formal leadership positions and informal positions among staff members. Formal leadership positions included reading coaches, instructional partners, or math coaches. With the formal leadership positions, leadership roles were expected by participants. Also, opportunities in leadership roles were discussed by participants in the utilization of teachers whose primary job was not in a coaching or leadership capacity. However, the teachers were able to provide leadership within their schools. Some leadership positions were also informal. These occurred when a teacher did not fill a leadership capacity under a specific program but rather stepped forward to assist with a need for leadership without necessarily being tasked for the position. Such informal leadership was necessary for elevating teachers in supporting different aspects of the school.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The research study was designed to explore practices exhibited by elementary principals in developing leadership in their teachers. Interviews, observations, and documents were utilized for the discussion in this chapter. The analysis includes major findings, summary of research question results, implications, recommendations, the significance of the study, and the conclusion.

Summary of Major Findings

The purpose of this research was to conduct a qualitative study that focused on specific practices exhibited by elementary principals in the northern region of a southeastern state for the purpose of nurturing leadership development. Ten elementary principals were chosen to explore specific practices that nurtured leadership development in teachers. Interviews, observations, and documents were sources of data gathered in this study. First, individual participants were interviewed in a natural setting, which in this case, was their elementary schools, using a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix C). Next, participants arranged for the researcher to observe a meeting which included specific teams or the entire faculty. Observation data were gathered during the meetings using an observation protocol (Appendix D). Also, documents used in the meetings were collected as sources of information. Last, data were recorded in a

reflective journal including experiences of the researcher during interviews and observations.

To answer the central research question, "*How do principals engage in practices that nurture leadership in others within schools?*" five sub-questions were addressed by the researcher as follows:

1. Are professional learning communities present in schools? If so, are teachers participating in leadership practice?
2. How do principals develop leadership capacity?
3. What types of professional development are provided to teachers?
4. How do principals promote collaboration among teachers?
5. What leadership opportunities are available to teachers?

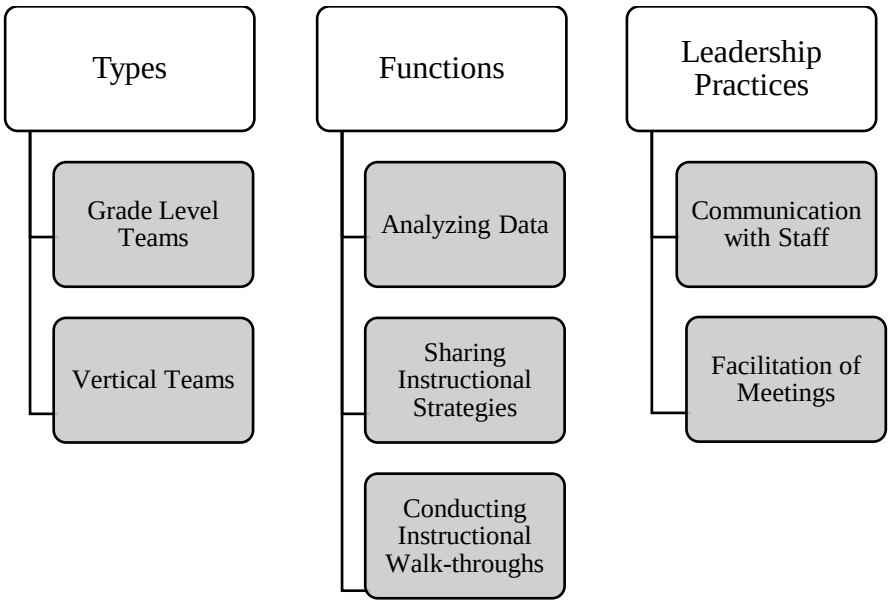
Summary of Research Question Results

Sub-Question 1. *Are professional learning communities present in schools? If so, are teachers participating in leadership practice?* Shared leadership has been defined as a process that is dynamic and interactive among individuals in groups where the objective is to lead each other to the achievement of group and organizational goals (Pearce and Konger, 2003). These researchers also believed leadership is not established by formal position or authority but by the capacity of individuals to influence peers in a specific moment or situation. Furthermore, Fletcher and Kaufer (2003), identified three relational shifts in shared leadership. First, a focus on the achievement of individuals to the success of groups took place in organizations. Second, a change from a top-down approach seemed less important when followers became co-creators of leadership. Third, a shift from individualized learning to collective learning allowed the concerns of the whole

group to be addressed in the organization. Shared leadership, as described by Pearce and Conger (2003), and Fletcher and Kaufer (2003), was evident with the implementation of PLCs in this case study.

Professional Learning Communities. McLester (2012) described PLCs as a wide range of practices wherein educators work collaboratively to solve problems and share strategies. Furthermore, Hirsh and Hord (2008) discussed the importance of the principal in establishing PLCs including setting expectations, communicating the purpose of the PLCs, and providing time for meetings. The researcher acquired data through interviews and observations that supported the views of this previous research. In each of the ten schools, the researcher concluded PLCs were present. However, the types and functions the PLCs varied among the ten sites including the involvement of the principals. The theme, Professional Learning Communities, was comprised of three sub-themes: Types of PLCs, functions, and leadership practices.

Figure 5.1 Professional Learning Communities Sub-themes



Types. Grade level team PLCs were the most predominant type of PLC mentioned by participants. Because all schools had common planning times built into the master schedules, a structure for grade level teams to meet on a consistent basis was in place. Because of this protected time, teachers and principals did not have to concern themselves with disrupting the school day for these meetings to occur. Seven of the 10 schools were able to schedule weekly one-hour meetings for entire grade level teams. The three remaining schools were able to provide an uninterrupted block of time either on a monthly basis or once each six weeks, which was due to a large number of teachers on the grade level. In addition to the scheduled time, these principals recommended grade level teams meet when there were no whole group faculty meetings scheduled after school. The emphasis of the meetings could be instructional or managerial during this protected meeting time. For example, grade level data meetings were conducted to identify the strengths and areas of improvement for each grade level as well as determine the needs of specific groups of students. However, managerial responsibilities including organizing field trips or planning grade level activities, were important to discuss when all teachers on the grade level were present which enabled everyone the opportunity to provide input.

The second type of PLC most commonly discussed was vertical teams. All participants recognized the importance of vertical teams as PLCs. However, a consistent challenge emerged in the interview results which was that of the need to provide more time for vertical PLC meetings which led to five of the participants being consistent with working vertical teams. Although the literature gathered in this study did not specifically use the terminology of vertical teams, Dufour et al. (2004) argued PLCs should establish

a culture of collaboration that includes all staff members. The researcher determined the vertical teaming process was a means of ensuring all staff members collaborated and communicated concerning the instruction provided to all students. Participants stated they were unable to meet as frequently as they desired in this format due to the lack of time available in the master schedule. Because principals placed so much emphasis on providing regularly scheduled, uninterrupted time for grade level teams to meet, participants had a difficult time creating additional time for vertical teams to meet on a consistent basis. All of the participants indicated they utilized some of the professional development days provided by the school districts for vertical team meetings. The researcher concluded vertical teaming was a method that allowed principals to provide equity across grade levels. For instance, classroom teachers were able to share activities and strategies used in specific curricular areas which allowed teachers from other classes to gain ideas in addressing the same standard. The meetings also afforded resource teachers such as Music, Physical Education, and librarians to communicate another layer of instruction on specific skills and concepts. Therefore, vertical meetings supported a culture of collaboration and mutual respect.

Functions. The next sub-theme, functions of PLCs, varied among schools. Overall, PLCs were involved in analyzing student data, sharing instructional strategies, and conducting instructional walk-throughs with the goal of student learning in mind. DuFour et al. (2004) communicated the importance of the PLCs being committed to student learning, establishing a culture of collaboration, and focusing on the progress of each student. Furthermore, DuFour et al. (2004) emphasized the importance of a shared mission, the use of collaborative teams, collective inquiry, action orientation, and

experimentation, continuous improvement, and results orientation. Participants provided information in the interviews that highlighted the utilization of PLCs supported by Dufour and colleagues. More specifically, PLCs in this study operated consistently with a particular purpose as defined by the principals. One function shared by participants was the analysis of data to develop school-wide goals, a shared mission. Analyzing student data by teachers was used for instructional purposes but also assisted principals in developing the annual CIP. After the teams analyzed student data from the previous year, teachers developed goals and plans for the upcoming school year to provide a focus for the entire staff which indicated continuous improvement and embodied a results-oriented mindset.

Another function of the PLCs was to share instructional strategies among teachers. PST meetings offered a platform where teachers were able to share instructional strategies for lower performing students who needed additional academic assistance. Also, the researcher observed regular data meetings wherein teachers shared strategies among peers that targeted all levels of student performance to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students. These meetings allowed collaborative teams, another component of PLCs.

Participants also discussed the use of instructional walk-throughs or instructional rounds as a function of PLCs. Instructional walk-throughs usually consisted of several teachers, the instructional coach, and the principal wherein the group would visit classrooms with a specific list of behaviors to look for during a class visit. In one meeting observed by the researcher, teachers conversed about their experience in participating in an instructional walk-through after the implementation of a new phonics program. The

consensus of the group was that they were able to either validate their delivery of the new program or realized they needed to adjust their methodology. Therefore, the practice of conducting instructional walk-throughs was confirmed by the principal as an effective tool in improving instruction and providing an action-oriented climate.

The results of this case study indicated the components discussed by DuFour et al. (2004) were in practice in schools with a high presence of PLCs. Because teachers shared a vital role with principals in implementing these tasks, administrators and teachers were able to benefit from this process. For example, principals worked with those who were most involved in the daily planning and implementation of instructional strategies which provided a continuous first-hand experience of information for the principal. On the other hand, teachers were able to benefit from being exposed to other classrooms, different instructional styles and approaches by participating in these teaching and learning activities.

Leadership practices. The third sub-theme, leadership practices, evolved in PLCs through communication and facilitation of meetings. Participants discussed this process and the researcher observed this process. Principals revealed that communication was a major leadership practice expected of teacher leaders. Therefore, several participants shared that their process of communicating to the grade levels was through their team leaders. Those designees would, in turn, share information with peers during group meetings. By allowing teachers opportunities to communicate often, skills were being developed to equip better those individuals who wanted a future in leadership.

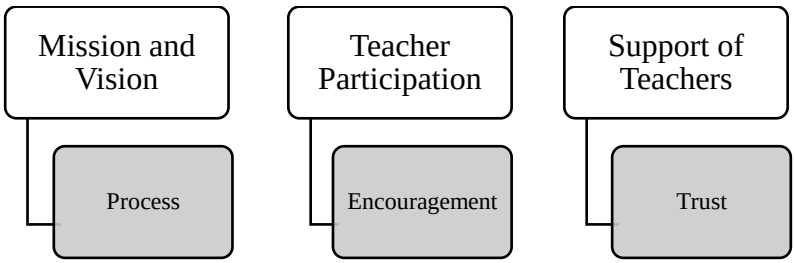
Another practice that was discussed by participants was affording teachers the opportunity to facilitate meetings which were observed during the data collection process.

Although facilitators of the meetings were teacher-led, principals were involved in the discussions that occurred at the meetings. Another important observation was that during the meetings, facilitators often referred to working with other teachers before the actual meetings that allowed them to collect information that was essential in conducting the meetings smoothly. In the meetings observed, there was a distinct layer of effective communication and teamwork among the staff members and the facilitators. When principals encouraged this type of practice, specific leadership competencies were being developed in teachers.

Sub-Question 2. *How do principals develop leadership capacity?* Lambert (1998) determined that specific plans must be implemented to build capacity within an organization. Although leaders may communicate a specific vision, establish positive relationships, and promote a culture of learning, without follow-through, growth of teachers will inevitably fail. A six-year study conducted by Walhstrom and York-Barr (2011) concluded that when leaders implemented structures and supports that were positive and productive, they were able to develop leadership capacity. Also, a stable base of teacher leaders emerged which allowed teams to progress in sustaining real change.

Building Leadership Capacity. Flanary (2009) posited that communicating a clear vision, setting high expectations, and a committing to building capacity are responsibilities of principals if the desired outcome is to increase the effectiveness of an organization. The researcher concluded participants in this study were practicing transformational behaviors as evidenced by the theme and sub-themes of building capacity.

Figure 5.2 Building Leadership Capacity Sub-themes



Mission and vision. Mission and vision, the first sub-theme, was developed in all schools as a team, rather than solely by the principal. Most of the principals worked with their staff members to develop and communicate the mission and vision statement while only a few remaining participants worked with district leaders to develop the mission and vision, and in turn, communicated this information to their staffs. Although the process of formulating and communicating the mission and vision was mostly shared among staff members, several participants indicated that as principals, they were usually responsible for referring to the mission statement when making decisions. The researcher found it interesting that although the process of developing mission and vision statements was shared, it was inevitably the responsibility of the principal to incorporate them into practice. Although the research revealed the follow-through of the mission and vision rested primarily on the principal, a prospective administrator would have the opportunity to experience first-hand how to implement this valuable practice with their staff.

Teacher participation. Sub-theme two, teacher participation, involved the encouragement of teacher participation as a means of building capacity. Principals worked intentionally to engage their teachers in aspects of instruction and school management. Participants throughout the interviews mentioned the belief that everyone was a leader. Also, the belief everyone played an important part in the effectiveness of the school was evident. Therefore, administrators used different strategies to involve

teachers in instructional teams, managerial duties, and student committees. The interviews of principals revealed that school leaders showed their support of individuals through words of encouragement, urging staff to share their viewpoints, and conversing with them regarding their professional goals and ambitions. Several participants shared examples of how they were able to foster the development of teachers in voicing their opinions and sharing information that would benefit their team as well as the school.

Four types of school communities based on participation and skillfulness were identified by Lambert (1998). First, she categorized some schools as having low participation and low skillfulness in which participation by the principal, staff, and parents is low, and change and sustainability are not effective. Second, she identified was high participation and low skillfulness wherein the school functions without explicit guidance from the principal. However, some teachers work diligently with different priorities. Third, Lambert discussed high skillfulness and low participation whereby the principal tends to work with a group of teachers resulting in a lack of consistency school-wide. Lastly, Lambert described a school with high skillfulness and high participation which includes broad-based participation with a clear purpose which focuses on student learning as well as adult learning. The researcher found that participants communicated the importance of broad-based participation and met the criteria put forth by Lambert (1998) for schools with both high skillfulness and high participation. This could be observed mainly in the practice of providing teachers time to work together during the school day. By including this time in the schedule, teachers were obligated, in a way, to participate with their teams. Although being present does not ensure participation, an important step in ensuring that is attendance. In this study, many times the meetings were

led by grade level chairpersons or instructional coaches who possessed a certain knowledge, skill set, and respect of their peers that allowed them to be viewed as leaders.

Support of teachers. The third sub-theme, support of teachers, was evident in the data gathered by the researcher. Participants shared that they encouraged teachers to participate in decisions involving the school by creating an environment of trust and support. In turn, participants were able to distribute responsibilities among staff members while simultaneously providing support. Walhstrom and York-Barr (2011) found that when leaders enhanced this sense of influence in others, the organization positively benefited. For example, the researcher observed a meeting wherein the principal, the assistant principal, counselor, instructional partner, and classroom teachers focused on the progress of previously identified students who were not academically on grade level. It appeared to the researcher that a sense of collaboration and trust was felt throughout the meeting. Furthermore, during the meeting, team members referred to prior conversations and communications relative to the students on the agenda for the meeting. There was great deal of collegiality when celebrating the success of students as well as a collective sense of concern when trying to find solutions for students who were still facing challenges with learning. This type of support of teachers in leadership roles was observed throughout the study which again, could be a leadership growth opportunity for teachers.

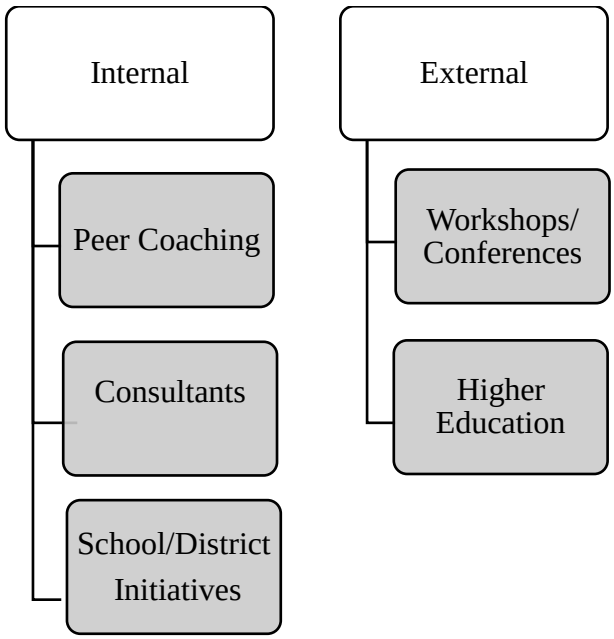
Another show of support explained by participants, revealed there was promotion from the district level in building capacity with teachers who showed an interest in becoming school administrators. Teachers in these districts were able to participate in leadership centered sessions to expose them to the leadership responsibilities and

practices. Furthermore, one district provided participating teachers with leave time to assist principals with different tasks and projects. Searby and Shaddix (2008) studied and concluded that participants appreciated a similar program which resulted in a deeper knowledge of school leadership. While other districts had not developed a formal program, participants indicated that the district was supportive by allowing teachers to participate in professional development opportunities designated for school leaders.

Sub-Question 3. *What types of professional development are provided to teachers?* All 10 participants discussed professional development as being an important factor in leadership. Professional development opportunities were categorized as internal and external sub-themes. Job-embedded or internal professional development opportunities included peer coaching, the use of consultants, and district, and school initiatives. Maxwell (1995) discussed the importance of "equipping" members of an organization through effective training, and not just training them to complete a particular task. Throughout the data collection, participants described professional development opportunities as a means to increase the knowledge and broaden the skill sets of teachers. The researcher identified the types of professional development as internal or external whereby activities that took place during the school day at school or within the school system were categorized as internal, and other events outside of the school or district being identified as external.

Professional Development.

Figure 5.3 Professional Development Sub-themes



Internal. DeLima (2008) found that when leadership was focused, and training was effective, peers felt the result had a positive impact on their teaching. Staff members who possessed an individual expertise were encouraged to assist their peers in guiding their learning to increase their knowledge and implementation in a given area. This belief was evidenced by the 10 participants in this study when they discussed the practice of peer coaching as one type of professional development. For example, participants discussed their use of their instructional partner or reading coach as a means of providing professional development in their schools. During observations, the researcher witnessed an instructional partner facilitating professional development to a team of grade level teachers. The group met to review student data using two different assessments. After the team discussed the data, the instructional partner shared a presentation that included a

particular program, the supporting research, and management recommendations. Teachers appeared to be engaged, asked questions, and continued with professional dialogue surrounding the topic. The instructional partner provided resources for the teachers, answered questions with confidence, and offered support for next steps in the process. During a separate observation, teachers were witnessed staying after an official meeting had adjourned to seek help from a classroom teacher on how to use a specific technology tool. The teacher immediately obliged by accessing the program and modeling how to use the program for her peers. In both situations, a peer provided professional development in academic content and methodology that could have an impact on instruction.

Participants also discussed providing consultants as job-embedded professional development. Two participants, Robin and Avery, obtained a consultant to work with their staffs in an awareness type of professional development. Consultants worked with the two staffs in identifying their personality traits and how best to work with each other based on personalities. Principals communicated that the results were positive in that colleagues were better able to understand each other. Other participants utilized consultants to provide professional development in academic areas of focus for their schools such as questioning strategies and writing. Patrick discussed ongoing professional development with a specific consultant during the school year when the focus was Quality Questioning. This enabled the team to develop a rapport with the expert and grow professionally.

Chew and Andrews (2010) found that enabling teachers to become pedagogical leaders was beneficial to teachers in their professional growth. Participants from the

study indicated that their districts supported the professional growth of teachers as leaders by providing training in their areas of concentration. For example, Linda and Sandra discussed training on the newly adopted curriculum standards and standards-based report cards. The district provided training to groups of teachers on the curriculum standards and continued to support teachers in becoming proficient in teaching the curriculum as well as implementing standards-based report cards. An expectation of training was that participating teacher leaders would return to their home schools and provide the professional development needed to be successful in teaching and learning.

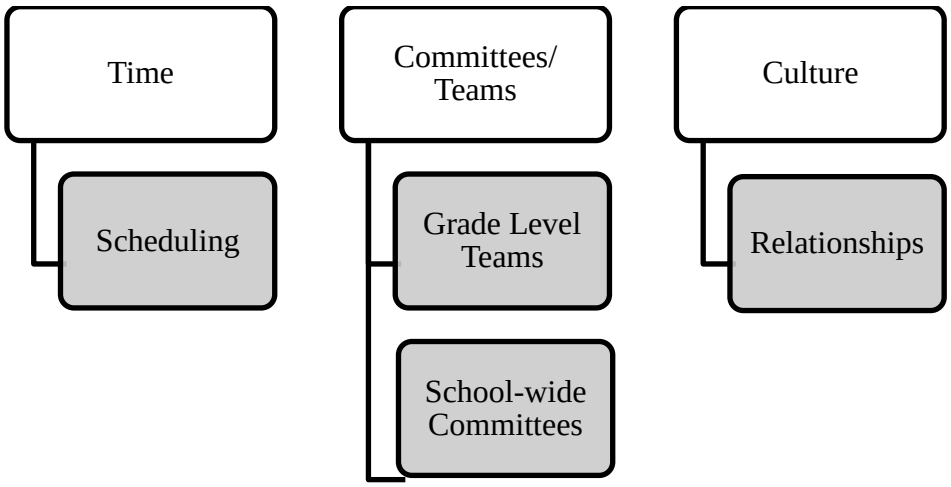
External. External or off-site professional development, the second sub-theme, discussed by the participants included workshops and/or conferences, and courses through institutions of higher education. All participants shared that teachers participated in workshops and/or conferences as a means of professional development. The range of workshops and/or conferences included district and school initiatives to offerings by the state or professional organizations for school leaders. Also, higher education opportunities were discussed by some participants. However, two participants, Patrick and Avery, described a partnership between their organization and a local higher education institution. According to these participants, the partnership included the school system paying one-third, the university paying one-third, and the individual teacher paying one-third of tuition costs. The school system was able to contribute to tuition through the use of private funding of benefactors. Because of this partnership, participants felt more teachers were able to acquire higher degrees which in turn, positively impacted their instruction. The practice of providing financial support to educators was only found in one district represented in the study. However, the

commitment and investment from the district level in helping teachers and administrators in professional development through higher education were impressive to the researcher.

Sub-Question 4. *How do principals promote collaboration among teachers?* Three fundamental goals pursued by transformation leaders are: (a) helping staff develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; (b) fostering teacher development; and (c) helping teachers solve problems more effectively (Leithwood, 1992). First, there must be evidence of staff conversing, observing and planning to maintain a collaborative culture. Next, leaders must provide clear goals for the staff that are realistic and attainable which will enhance teacher development. Last, when transformational leaders stimulate teachers to bring about improvement in schools, improving problem-solving is accomplished (Leithwood, 1992). This study revealed participants had structures in place to promote collaborative, professional school cultures and utilized teams to foster leadership development while also helping teachers solve problems.

Collaboration. Kohm and Nance (2009) concluded that principals who implemented collaborative cultures focused on arranging the conditions to allow others to develop their goals. The researcher in this study gathered data from all participants that supported the authors, Kohm and Nance. Three sub-themes were encompassed by this theme: Time, committees, and culture.

Table 5.4 Collaboration Sub-themes



Time. Scheduling time for teachers to collaborate in grade level teams, vertical teams, and specialized teams was evident by the responses in all schools participating in this study. For example, not only did participants discuss how time was provided to the teams, the researcher observed teams meeting at their scheduled times to analyze data, share instructional strategies, or participate in professional development. The majority of schools were able to provide one-hour weekly grade level collaborative time. The remaining schools were not able to give time for the entire grade level on a weekly basis due to a large number of teachers within the grade levels. However, the participants from these schools were able to schedule monthly time for the entire grade level teams to meet. Participants also utilized professional development days embedded in the school calendar to promote collaborative planning efforts. Days ranged from three half-days to seven whole days of planning, depending on the school system. The provision of time within the academic calendar and the master schedule was indicative of the commitment of the principals' belief in the practice of collaboration among staff members. Harris (2003) and Walhstrom & York-Barr (2011) voiced their support of principals providing structures that afforded teachers collaborative meeting times.

Committees/Teams. Also, participants implemented the practice of teams, as a way to promote collaboration among staff members. All participating schools discussed the presence of grade level teams led by a teacher. Some principals appointed the grade level chairperson. However, the majority of the schools allowed the teachers to select their leader each year. Again, duties ranged from facilitating grade level meetings, presenting information gained through professional development, and being a liaison between the principal and the team, to participating in leadership training during the summer months on how to serve the grade level team members effectively. One of the districts represented in the study provided a monetary stipend to team leaders due to the additional demands and expectations of the district.

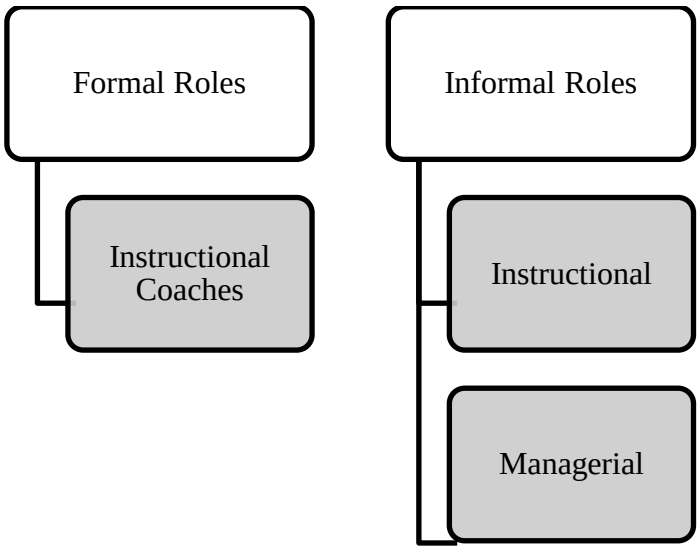
Culture. Participants also discussed the third sub-theme, establishing and maintaining a culture of collaboration. Research completed by Donaldson (2007) and Morgan, Williams and Plesec (2011) concluded that developing trusting and collaborative relationships was an important factor in the influence of teacher leaders among colleagues. The results of a collaborative culture in schools can be summed up by the following statement. India shared, "Building that culture in your school makes everyone feel valued." In these instances, if team members feel valued and respect individuals involved in the collaborative process, working with each other effectively should be the outcome.

Sub-Question 5. *What leadership opportunities are available to teachers?* Leaders, followers, and situation were defined in the distributed leadership framework of Spillane et al. (2004) wherein the leader refers to the principal and other leaders serving in a formal leadership capacity. Furthermore, followers refer to teachers and others within

the school. In this framework, followers move in and out of roles, depending on the situation. The focus on how the leader practices distribution among leaders and followers and the interactions that occur during the task is essential in distributed leadership (Spillane and Diamond, 2007). This study showed how principals distributed leadership in providing opportunities to teachers through considering and utilizing their strengths.

Leadership Opportunities. Harrison and Killion (2007) discussed the presence of teacher leaders in formal positions such as instructional coaches and their roles in leading groups of teachers. These authors further found that teachers in the positions as mentioned above assisted other teachers in areas such as differentiating instruction, planning lessons, exploring teaching methods, analyzing data, and developing action plans. The last theme, leadership opportunities, described opportunities based on the formal roles and informal roles of teachers.

Figure 5.5 Leadership Opportunities Sub-themes



Formal roles. Some leadership opportunities were attached to the position of the teachers. For example, a reading instructional coach was present in all 10 schools. One of the participants also had a technology coach as well as a math leader as a part of their

school-wide team. Most participants indicated that their instructional coaches played an integral role in aiding them as instructional leaders by leading data meetings, assisting in walk-throughs, modeling, and providing support to teachers with specific needs. Although these positions included guiding teachers as a part of their job description, there were varying degrees of implementation in the role of coaching and leading teachers.

Informal roles. Participants also discussed leadership opportunities of teachers who were not hired in a formal leadership position. The researcher collected interview data that supported the sentiments of Barth (2001), Donaldson (2007) and Reid (2011) whereby these scholars argued that all teachers are instructional leaders and can build capacity among their peers. For example, participants shared instances where teachers with an individual expertise led professional learning teams, sponsored clubs, participated on specific committees, or otherwise facilitated in certain situations. Furthermore, the researcher observed classroom teachers, which were not deemed formal leadership teaching roles such as an instructional coach, leading their peers in PST meetings in some of the school settings. Other leadership opportunities emerged in the study in the managerial aspect. Participants noted that teachers led committees that focused on scheduling and morning and afternoon duties that supported arrival and dismissal procedures. There were also examples of teachers leading in specific situations relative to severe weather issues, school environmental projects, and school-wide discipline plans.

First, one participant spoke in detail regarding school safety in that there was a teacher on staff who possessed vast knowledge and interest in inclement weather. That same staff member was respected and trusted by peers to lead them in situations relative to school safety. Therefore, when situations arose with severe weather, the principal sent

another staff member to his classroom, so he was available to assist her in ensuring safety for students. Next, the same participant also elaborated on teacher leadership relative to the development and maintenance of their school pond, a community environmental project that allowed students to observe the natural habitat of various species. Two teachers led this particular team who were responsible for involving all faculty and students in connecting the environmental project to their science curriculum. The principal reminisced how she had an expert come to work with staff members in how to be successful with a particular professional learning team. After the first year, the lead teachers were able to proceed with leading the charge on their own. Although classroom teachers are not hired into a formal leadership position, they can still be impactful and effective as a leader among teaching staff. Last, three other participants discussed the use of teachers leading the staff in developing and monitoring school-wide discipline plans. In each case, teachers approached the principals regarding the need for a plan that would be consistent across grade levels and in resource classes. Because the administrators listened to and trusted their teachers with the task, those staff members were able to work with their peers to develop and gain the support for the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan. In all of those cases, participants not only believed in the capacity of their teachers but also were aware of the credibility of the teachers among their peer groups. Therefore, although those teachers discussed were not hired into formal leadership positions such as an assistant principal or instructional coach, they were still impactful and effective as leaders in their schools.

Implications of the Study

Professional Learning Communities

Participants discussed the presence of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in all 10 schools. However, principal participation and understanding of PLCs ranged from a basic awareness level to full understanding of the purpose and implementation of a PLC. One participant discussed her confidence level about the quality of teams in the school. She mentioned a consultant working with them in the past to provide a structure for teachers in working in PLCs. However, she felt she needed to revisit the model to ensure teams were functioning at a high level. At the other extreme was a principal who was well versed and felt comfortable in training her teachers in the PLC process. For example, she held sessions with grade level teams to present the work of DuFour and DuFour (2004). She further explained that she worked with teachers for a nine-week period to ensure their understanding of what was expected of each team and/or community of which they were involved. This participant felt her staff members had a real understanding and commitment to the process which allowed her to feel confident in allowing teachers to lead their peers in specific areas fully.

Throughout this study there were examples of teams analyzing student data, sharing instructional strategies, and conducting instructional walk-throughs as a function of PLCs. First, one participant spoke frankly of how specific student data had been provided to teachers in the past to look at goal setting and instructional implications. During the time of this study, Patrick had begun the practice of requiring individual teachers retrieve their own student data, where previously the principal or the

instructional coach had given it to them before. He felt that this practice alone had impacted the ownership of teachers by feeling more connected to the process. The analysis of data was a recurring theme with participants in the study and included formative assessment data obtained through specific programs of which some were computer-based, and others were administered via paper and pencil. During observed meetings, the researcher listened to discussions and witnessed teachers providing assessment information for specific students. Therefore, the conclusion on behalf of the researcher was that schools were highly involved in using student data to serve best students based on their specific needs.

Next, the sharing of instructional strategies occurred in different scenarios according to the interviews and observations. The researcher observed teachers sharing strategies in meetings for specific areas as well as for specific reading interferences. For example, in one meeting the grade level teachers were being guided in a discussion by the instructional coach in the area of reading comprehension. Previously, the instructional coach had given the classroom teachers a resource that showed them how to scaffold large amounts of text for students. This particular grade level was departmentalized in that one teacher taught Language Arts, another taught Math, and the third teacher taught Science and Social Studies. Each teacher provided input into how the resource had worked for them. The Science and Social Studies teacher was excited when sharing his experience with the tool because he had noticed the applying the strategy in other situations without being prompted to do so. In a different meeting, the researcher observed teachers discussing the results of a specific formative assessment which indicated specific reading interferences for students. As one teacher shared the lack of

progress of a student, other teachers interjected how they had worked with students in the past with the same challenges. The instructional coach also referred to a previously discussed strategy that would possibly benefit the student. Meetings were a way of providing collaborative time to assist each other in providing the best possible instruction for students. Also, one participant, India, mentioned that some of the best interactions occurred when the principal or instructional coach visited classrooms and observed first-hand particular challenges students and teachers were facing with instruction. Because of being present in the moment, the principal and or instructional coach were able to provide guidance to the classroom teacher which added to building the capacity of teachers as well as strengthening a culture of collaboration.

Last, six participants discussed the active use of instructional walk-throughs or rounds as a function of their PLCs. The practice of allowing teachers to observe other teachers with a specific focus was beneficial to teachers as well as principals in that the walk-throughs affirmed whether or not the school as a whole was on the same trajectory about instruction. For example, while observing a meeting at Sandra's school, teachers discussed how much they had learned during the last walk-through which had as its focus a new phonics program. Upon hearing their insecurities during data meeting, the principal assured them she would have someone provide more professional development for those who were still unsure of their quality of implementation. This act of reassurance could be another way the participant instilled trust with her staff members which would have an overall impact on the culture of collaboration.

Due to the tasks demonstrated by these teams, leadership practices such as communication and facilitation were expected of teacher leaders. Because several of the

principals communicated through their team leaders, follow-through was imperative. Therefore, team leaders had to be dependable and organized to be able to carry out the process for the principal. In many cases, the participants met with grade level representatives together to provide a consistent message. Then, in turn, the team leaders would meet with their peers to communicate information. Having the structure of the PLCs in place provided principals a way to easily communicate using more of a team or shared approach to leadership.

Teachers were also expected to facilitate meetings with their peers. One participant, Nancy, utilized the leaders of specific PLCs on a routine basis. For instance, the English Language Arts leader was charged to work with a team of five teachers who possessed expertise in the area of reading. The team developed modules to present to faculty members throughout the year during faculty meetings. Simultaneously, the Math PLC completed the same process wherein they were also expected to facilitate meetings where they presented information to their peers. Nancy explained that either faculty meetings or professional development days were used for these meetings to occur. Again, the implementation of PLCs allowed teachers to build their skill set in leading others.

Because there was a vast range of understanding and implementation of PLCs on the part of the principals, the researcher concluded that opportunities for professional development in the area of effective PLCs should be offered and or revisited routinely. Also, effective communication and facilitation methods should be offered to teacher leaders who are charged with tasks of team leadership responsibilities. For example, when communicating with adults, the teacher leader should know what types of communication work best for their designated group. Also, it would be important to

consider how best to relay certain kinds of information. Some communication may require visuals where other topics could be shared verbally. Others may argue that all information should be in the written form as a standard practice. However, principals may make assumptions relative to the communication skills of the teacher leader. Facilitation of meetings was also found to be routine of teacher leaders in the schools. The researcher would also suggest principals provide an outline and/or agenda along with strategies for the adult learner. For example, when facilitating meetings, the leader should have a variety of methods other than reading information to the audience to keep them engaged in the activity. Exposure to these skills will help strengthen the leadership skills of teacher leaders.

Building Leadership Capacity

Principals developed leadership capacity among teachers through communicating a clear vision and mission, encouraging teacher participation, and supporting teachers in leadership practices. The first step in communicating a clear mission and vision began with participants working with their staffs to develop their beliefs as a school. The majority of participants utilized leadership teams to facilitate the process which included drafting the initial mission and vision statements. Next, following the development of the statements, the remaining staff members were asked to participate in revisions and approvals. Principals felt that by using a team approach and involving all school stakeholders in the process, the level of buy-in was beneficial to the organization. Last, all participants discussed the importance of referencing the mission and vision when guiding their decision making in situations varying from scheduling to instruction. India stated, “You’re making those critical decisions on scheduling, on programs, school

traditions, about celebrations. You're using that mission statement to guide those decisions." Modeling this behavior for teachers enabled staff members to observe an active practice in keeping the mission statement at the forefront of making decisions which is extremely important in the daily life of a school administrator.

Teacher participation was also encouraged and expected by principals in decision-making, teamwork, and leadership roles. Several participants commented that they looked for teacher leaders during the interview process by identifying those candidates who displayed leadership potential. Principals mentioned that they needed teachers to have a voice in their schools. Therefore, the researcher surmised that principals yearned for teachers who were competent in their content and had the ability to connect with others. Because most participants verbalized the importance of teachers being able to assist in leadership, teachers needed to be knowledgeable in their content area(s) as well as be able to communicate or relate to their audience to truly lead others.

The study also revealed that participants were able to accomplish participation through the use of teams and or committees. Teachers were expected to be a part of as well as lead various teams. In many cases, the chairpersons of the teams rotated each year or every two years to allow everyone an opportunity to lead their peers at a given point in time. Participants explained that the rotating the team leaders provided more teachers the opportunity to lead. This practice could also be viewed as a strategy to help build capacity in higher numbers of teachers.

Throughout the teaming process, principals showed support to teachers by attending meetings, being actively engaged, acquiring resources, allocating time for collaboration, and reinforcing the focus of team leaders. It was important for participants

to be actively involved in meetings being led by teachers because the message was being communicated that the work of the specific team was significant to the success of the school and that principals were showing their support of the team leaders. Also, principals mentioned the need to assist with acquiring resources, mainly because of budget and/or community connections. For example, the researcher observed one meeting where a student was being discussed and the family needed some necessities due to an eviction. The principal, Paul, volunteered immediately to make contact with a particular organization that would be able to assist the student and his family. This action on the part of the principal allowed teachers to return the focus of the meeting to the instructional aspect of the needs of the student. This work also allowed teachers to gain knowledge of the organization and how it supported families within the community. Because administrators are many times privy to different monetary and non-monetary resources, the practice of attending meetings could alleviate the loss of time in teachers trying to figure out solutions related to outside resources.

The impact principals had on building capacity of teachers through a clear mission and vision, involving teachers in school activities, and supporting teachers in leadership could have contributed to individual and collective growth in the area of teacher leadership in this study. Through the utilization of collaborative teams, participants were able to meet the challenge of involving all staff members in decisions as well as providing support to those teacher leaders who were serving as facilitators. When teachers are given the opportunity to participate in the mission and vision of a school and be involved in school teams, they should feel their voice is important in the overall function of the school. Participants explained they all understood that leading a school

was no longer the sole responsibility of the principal. Therefore, they believed in the involvement of teachers to provide the best educational experience possible. From a management perspective of facilitating the process of the efficient and effective use of teams to build capacity, some principals faced challenges of controlling their time. Of the 10 participants, four of the principals did not have assistant principals. On the other hand, seven of the schools had one assistant principal, regardless of the number of students they served. Although the principals of the three largest schools had one assistant principal, they faced similar time management challenges as smaller schools without an assistant principal because of the large numbers of students. Because the job of the elementary principal has become so vast, the importance of building capacity has never been more timely, but at the same time, presents its own challenges for the principal.

Professional Development

Different types of professional development were provided to teachers as communicated by participants as internal, or on-site, and external, or off-site. Internal professional development included peer coaching, consultants, district, and/or school initiatives. Peer coaching consisted of teachers working with colleagues in providing training on a concept or skill. For example, when the state adopted new math standards, Paul explained that two classroom teachers who were former math coaches volunteered to lead their peers in grade level groups. One teacher worked with the primary grades, K-2, and the other teacher worked with the intermediate grades, 3-5. Because the teachers felt competent and were highly respected by the other teachers, Paul agreed that it would be a good idea to allow them to facilitate the learning of the new math standards. Another example, communicated by Avery, was that of the use of a software program all teachers

were expected to use for student assessment. Avery took notice of how efficient a specific teacher was in using the program. Therefore, before one of the district's professional development days, Avery approached the teacher about leading a rotation of small groups in how to best use the program. He also had other small groups running simultaneously, all with a different focus. Avery mentioned that he noticed teachers approaching other teachers more freely after that type of professional development had been offered to them. The researcher concluded this opportunity was a positive experience that enhanced the collaborative culture the principal was trying to nurture.

Participants discussed math instructional support, classroom management, and technology as areas wherein assistance was given by teachers. Because only one of the 10 schools employed a math coach, the other schools depended on teachers to lead their peers in this area. Although the state employed teachers to work with schools in math content and delivery, principals felt the importance of having someone on site which was well-versed in the subject as well. Therefore, when teachers received additional training, the expectation was for them to present newly gained knowledge to their peers. Technology was similar to math in that only one of the ten schools employed a technology coach. All other participants identified those teachers who were technologically competent and consulted them in assisting others. Although classroom management was not an area discussed by all participants, three of the ten participants mentioned utilizing teachers who had proven success in managing the classroom were asked to work with new teachers on student behavior, as well as leading small group instruction. Overall, participants were able to detect the needs of their teachers, individually and collectively. If they were able to utilize someone among their staff to

assist teachers in need, principals either approached them with the prospect of training peers or teacher leaders volunteered their time.

In addition to peer coaching, instructional coaches were utilized in providing professional development to teachers in all buildings. One training included training on newly adopted reading programs along with newly adopted standards. Instructional coaches were instrumental in providing training for grade levels and the staff as a whole. In addition to instructional partners, teachers who possessed a specific expertise provided support and guidance to their peers. Increasing the number of instructional coaches in elementary schools could be a means to develop more instructional leaders in two ways. The person serving in that capacity would be able to practice leadership skills with adult learners. Also, the persons being taught by the instructional coach would be able to increase their competency in delivery as well as content.

Another form of internal professional development identified in the study was the use of consultants which were acquired by principals to facilitate professional development focusing on academics and school culture. Participants either contracted with consultants based on the recommendation of their district or through professional organizations where professional development may have been featured at a workshop or specific session. Participants who shared examples of professional development centered on team building felt that teachers were able to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each other in a non-threatening environment. Therefore, this type of training contributed to the overall positive climate of the school. Other consultants focused on academics such as questioning strategies, writing instruction, and learning targets. Having a process or procedure in place for the principal identify and or prioritize what

type of professional development offered to the staff could have a positive impact on the school as a whole.

Districts and or school initiatives such as leadership training were also discussed by participants. Two school districts represented in the study developed and implemented a program with an emphasis on providing additional training to aspiring school administrators. Both programs included one year of attending sessions where a variety of school leadership topics were presented to the teachers. One of the districts added another layer to the program by providing professional leave time to completers of the in-district program to support current principals in specific projects. This practice was mutually beneficial in that principals received assistance, and aspiring administrators were given the opportunity to participate in productive leadership tasks. Participants felt this method enabled the districts to meet and develop potential administrators for the future. The researcher was impressed with this model in that both the participant and the aspiring administrator were able to benefit from a program that was intended more to develop future leaders. Because funding for substitutes could be a potential barrier for districts to provide these types of opportunities, the researcher felt the district believed in and was committed to growing and developing their leadership pool.

Other district training included professional development for instructional coaches with revisiting their roles and expectations. Also, leadership training was provided to teams of teachers in the most recent adopted curriculum standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. One district focused on training teacher representatives from each school in the district, and in turn, those teachers were responsible for facilitating professional development at their schools.

External or off-site professional development included workshops and or conferences and higher education. Again, the expectation for attending teachers was that upon their return to their schools they would share knowledge and information gained with their peers. Higher education was also encouraged by participants in the area of teacher growth and professional development. For example, Janice spoke of having conversations with teachers about the seeking higher degrees. She stated there were two teachers specifically that she encouraged to obtain their degrees or certification in administration. Janice further explained that they were well respected by the teachers at the school, and they served in different leadership roles. She expressed that she felt both of the teachers would potentially be effective future administrators. However, one teacher in particular, said she enjoyed leading from the standpoint of a teacher. The other teacher had not been teaching very long but felt obtaining a higher degree in administration may be an option in the future. Although the participant had not been successful at that time in recruiting those specific teachers into administrator, her commitment to supporting teachers in leadership was evident as she spoke of what their futures could entail in a school leadership capacity. The researcher found it hopeful that with all the demands administrators face, they still loved the job enough to encourage others to join the profession.

One district experienced a unique situation in that the school district and a local university, and the teachers shared equally in the cost of tuition. Because of this partnership, participants felt they had a higher percentage than most schools of teachers with advanced degrees. Also, this enabled teachers to stay abreast of research, trends, and instructional practices in education. Furthermore, during conversations with the two

participants, the researcher witnessed a sense of pride and commitment to the district for providing opportunities and showing employees how much they were valued by investing in their education.

Although professional development was viewed as important by all participants, programs focused specifically on aspiring administrators were only mentioned in two of the five school districts represented in the study. More training should be provided to aspiring administrators as well as teachers in leadership roles. If the future of leadership in school districts in important, investing in teachers, both with and without administrative certifications, could be pivotal for school systems in retaining their teacher leaders. Therefore, as positions opened within the district, transitions could be seamless in that prospective administrators would already understand the mission and goals of the district.

Collaboration

Although collaboration among teachers was important to participants, encouraging the practice was intentional and was evidenced by the allocation of time, development of teams and committees, and support of a collaborative culture. For true collaboration to be effective, appropriate amounts of time were allotted to teachers. Participants were diligent in creating master schedules which provided blocks for meetings often referred to as common planning times. Most principals were able to deliver this time weekly for their grade levels, while other participants offered this time either monthly or bi-weekly. Faculty meetings were also used as collaborative opportunities as several participants indicated that traditional faculty meetings had changed to accommodate more professional development and collaboration, and fewer

announcements. Districts also recognized the importance of collaboration as evidenced by professional development days set aside in the school calendar, ranging from three half days to seven whole days. Overall, participants appreciated time allotted for professional development and collaboration. However, because the practice was relatively new, some participants felt that the planned activities were not always in alignment with their needs as a school. For example, one participant stated that when the additional time was added to the calendar, teachers expressed the need for more time to plan at the school level with their colleagues. The district administrators listened to the feedback and changed the format of the professional development time to include part of the day for district facilitation, and an equal component of the day for planning time at the schools to collaborate on the content received earlier in the day. Therefore, principals must communicate with administrators at the district when planning professional development to ensure that the professional development days are meeting the needs of the district as well as individual schools.

In addition to providing time for collaboration, participants utilized teams to guide teamwork efforts. Participants discussed the importance of leadership teams in keeping the staff and other groups centered on the mission and vision of the school. Committees and/or teams focused on instruction and management. For example, schools established teams for English Language Arts and Mathematics. Other committees and or groups included technology, school improvement, safety, gifted education, and character education. Also, groups were used to develop procedures for student behavior and the master schedule. Therefore, teachers were able to collaborate and impact academic

programs as well as overall management of the school because participants realized the importance of involving staff members through the use of different teams.

Growing a culture of collaboration was evident through scheduling and expectations of teamwork. As shown in the results of interview and observation data, beliefs of participants supported a nurturing environment for collaboration. Expectations of leadership, respect, and trust were discussed as ways to support a collaborative culture. Participants shared the importance of encouraging teachers to use their voice, referring teachers to team leaders, and giving permission to school leaders to guide staff in specific situations. Being approachable and allowing teachers to question processes without repercussions were significant to participants in building trusting relationships with their staff. Also, many participants shared that informal discussions were as important in creating a collaborative culture as formal meetings. Creative scheduling methods for providing collaborative planning should be emphasized in working with aspiring and current school administrators.

Leadership Opportunities

Opportunities for leadership were grouped into two categories, formal roles, and informal roles. The study revealed opportunities were available to teacher leaders through formal roles such as an instructional coach, reading coach, math coach, and technology coach positions. Teachers in those positions worked closely with principals in providing professional development through presentations, discussions, modeling, and instructional walk-through activities. They were also involved in different teams such as PST, data meeting teams, and curriculum standards committees. Also, informal roles such as grade level leaders and committee chairpersons provided opportunities for

leadership. Grade level chairpersons often facilitated teams in analyzing data and sharing instructional strategies. Furthermore, committee leaders were given the opportunity to plan, schedule, and facilitate academic and managerial team meetings. Individuals also emerged as leaders in sharing their areas of strengths through training groups of teachers in using technology or working with their peers one on one to model and support their learning in specific areas. More leadership opportunities should be developed in schools, especially in circumstances where assistant principals are not part of the faculty. For example, each school in the study had, on staff, at least one instructional coach for the area of reading. However, providing positions such as assistant principals, and instructional coaches for math and technology at each school would also increase the number of formal roles for teachers, thereby increasing the number of opportunities. Another approach to providing more leadership opportunities would be for teacher leaders more planning time which could be used to work with other teachers. This approach may also entail monetary resources in that students of the teacher leaders would need an additional person who would provide instruction while the assigned classroom teacher provided support to other teachers. The importance of allowing teachers to collaborate through planning and/or modeling effective instructional practices could be validated through more implementation.

Recommendations for Future Research

This qualitative case study examined the practices of 10 elementary principals in the development of leadership within others. The participants were from the northern region of one southeastern state. First, a quantitative study including a large number of principals within the same state could be conducted on the same topic to compare results.

Participants would be surveyed on specific practices and behaviors that support developing leadership in others. Likewise, because school leadership challenges are similar across the nation, a quantitative study including other states could be performed to determine if practices were analogous. National leadership organizations for elementary principals could be used as the conduit for the survey process.

Second, a mixed-methods study including teachers and other school leaders could focus on specific characteristics of leaders and the methods they use to support leadership development of others. Utilizing quantitative data would provide a greater number of perceptions regarding this concept. However, combining the quantitative data with in-depth interview data could offer the opportunity of elevating the study in a more personal way to the reader. Comparing the findings from the perceptions of principals and the insights of teachers, and other school leaders would be noteworthy for existing research in this area.

Third, a qualitative study involving novice principals who had previously been involved in collaborative teams could be conducted to determine how and if their experiences impacted their preparedness as a principal. Participant selection would include including participants who had participated in PLCs or collaborative teams as a teacher. Results of the interview data could provide researchers with specific information in how the implementation of collaboration among teachers could assist aspiring principals to be better prepared for the role of a school administrator.

Overall Significance of the Study

This qualitative case study revealed specific practices exhibited by elementary principals in developing leadership with others. Dedication of providing time for existing

structures to be successful was imperative for administrators to nurture leadership. Participating schools were involved in PLCs, collaboration, and professional development. The foresight and ability of principals to provide adequate time allowed these structures to impact opportunities for teachers to practice leadership within the organization as well as influence instructional effectiveness.

The results of this study included three areas. First, the research may have contributed to the literature centered on the practices of principals in leadership development. This study potentially added to the body of work in the K-12 arena that focuses on the methods deployed by administrators to support the development of leaders within schools. More specifically, practices of elementary principals could be enhanced in the literature and thus in practice.

Secondly, in addition to the growing research supporting teachers in leadership opportunities should be available to those in educational leadership roles. Existing literature confirms the importance of administrators encouraging teacher leadership. Our current time is one where sharing leadership is a necessity for schools to be successful. Therefore, this research may have added to the body of work by clarifying the significance of principals nurturing and developing leadership in others.

Last, results provided information to practitioners in the field with insights to nurturing leadership development in others. K-12 school administrators could utilize methods discussed in the study to complement their practices in developing leaders within their schools. Furthermore, practitioners could share this information with K-12 district administrators in preparation for leadership academies for existing and aspiring school administrators. For those school systems which have implemented such

leadership training, information from the study could be integrated with their session offerings. Also, for school districts which do not provide training for new, existing, or aspiring administrators information from this case study could offer individuals and or organizations knowledge in this broad area of leadership.

Conclusion

The increasing number of accountability measures, changes in educational reforms, and growing responsibilities are impacting how educational leaders approach leadership (Goldring& Greenfield, 2002; Murphy, Manning, & Wahlberg, 2002; Harris & Townsend, 2007; Flanary, 2009; Halliger, 2011). Therefore, the practice of a school administrator being the sole leader has shifted to more of a collaborative effort (McAdamis, 2010; Camburn, Rowan, and Taylor, 2003, Barth, 2013, and Wilhelm, 2013). Effective educational leadership requires principals to work with other administrators and teacher leaders to meet the demands placed on principals today.

The purpose of this research was to conduct a qualitative study that focused on specific practices exhibited by elementary principals in the northern region of a southeastern state for the purpose of nurturing leadership development. A central research question with five sub-questions guided the data collection which resulted in five themes, Professional Learning Communities, building capacity, professional development, collaboration, and leadership opportunities.

This qualitative study discovered that there were specific practices implemented by leaders to nurture leadership development. As the results revealed, principals overwhelmingly felt that teachers are leaders and should be afforded the chance to operate in that role. First, participants were able to foster leadership development in

teachers by implementing PLCs whereby teachers were able to work with their teams to identify and meet the needs of students. Two types of PLCs, grade level teams and vertical teams, were discussed in the study. The purpose of both teams was to provide appropriate instruction once student data had been analyzed by all teachers involved in the education of a student. The teachers then shared effective instructional strategies among each other. In some instances, the principals and teams of teachers participated in instructional walk-throughs to gain observe strategies in practice. Both types of PLCs involved lead teachers communicating with staff members and facilitating meetings.

Second, building capacity among teachers was discussed by participants as an avenue for the growth of teacher leaders. Participants noted that even during the hiring process, they sought out candidates whom they felt would be a leader in their schools. Furthermore, participants expected teachers to be involved in developing the mission and vision of their schools. Principals also expressed they wanted teachers to be a part of decision-making. Therefore, many of the participants utilized leadership teams to ensure participation. The researcher discovered principals were supportive of teachers by entrusting them with specific responsibilities. In two of the districts represented, teachers were also supported through programs initiated by the school district wherein teacher leaders were able to participate in activities and professional development to expose them to the duties of practicing administrators.

Third, this study also concluded that professional development played a major role in nurturing leadership development. Participants shared examples of professional development that was offered internally such as peer coaching, the use of consultants, and school/district initiatives. Examples of teachers receiving professional development

through peer coaching from instructional coaches and/or other classroom teachers were discussed in the study. Next, principals utilized consultants to provide professional development to teachers to introduce or provide more information on an area deemed as a focus for their schools. Last, there were two school/district initiatives wherein teachers received professional development specific to leadership. External professional development opportunities included workshops or conferences whereby teachers participated in to gain more knowledge in the area of school leadership. Also, higher education was a source of professional development in which participants encouraged teachers.

Fourth, providing structures for collaboration was revealed as important to principals. Participants were purposeful in building time into the master schedule, creating teams within the school environment, and building trust among staff members to assist in the overall culture of collaboration. Scheduling proved to be one of the challenges for participants to ensure time for collaboration. However, it was important enough to principals to provide time for their teachers to work together, as reflected in their master schedules. Creating and implementing teams for grade levels and school-wide committees were also relevant to participants to involve all staff members in decision-making. Therefore, by providing time and teams for collaboration, principals also created a culture for the importance of collaboration.

Fifth, leadership opportunities were provided to teachers working in formal and informal leadership roles. Formal roles such as an instructional coach allowed teacher leaders the opportunity to provide professional development and collaborate with teachers in instructional practices. Also, teachers who were not hired in a leadership

position participated in leading teams and providing peer support in their areas of strength. Not only were teachers leading out in academic areas, but assisted principals with the managerial aspect of leadership as well.

Implications were shared by the researcher that included (a) providing on-going training and support for principals in implementing effective PLCs; (b) utilizing teams to build capacity of teachers (c) providing more professional development opportunities from the district level with a focus in leadership; (d) guiding aspiring and current school administrators in creative scheduling to support collaboration; and (e) increasing the number of formal leadership positions in elementary schools.

The researcher made three recommendations for possible follow-up studies. The first suggestion involved a quantitative study wherein a larger group of participants within the same state would complete a survey based on specific practices and behaviors that support the development of leaders. Also, the study could be expanded to include participants from other states, by utilizing national leadership organizations to publicize the survey. The second recommendation for a follow-up study involved a mixed-methods study including teachers and administrators that would focus on specific characteristics of leaders and methods employed to support leadership development. A third recommendation included a qualitative study comprised of novice principals who had previously been involved in collaborative teams as a teacher to determine if there is a connection in collaboration and preparedness as a principal.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER OF RECRUITMENT FOR SUPERINTENDENTS

Letter of Recruitment for Superintendents

March 5, 2013

Dear Superintendent,

I am currently enrolled in EPR 799, a dissertation course at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. I would like to interview and observe one to three principals in your school system for my study, *A Qualitative Study of Leadership Practices Exhibited by Elementary Principals that Develop Leadership in Others*. Participants will be chosen based on three criteria. First, the principal has received training from one of the state universities in mentoring teachers enrolled in an Educational Leadership program. Second, the principal is currently practicing as an elementary school principal. Last, the school led by the principal has met Adequate Yearly Progress for the last three years. The IRB Protocol Number is E121204002. The purpose of this qualitative research study on this topic will allow me to explore specific practices used by elementary principals to nurture leadership in others.

This study will begin in March, 2013 and end in June, 2013. The study will include a one hour audio recorded interview with the principal and one observation of the principal in a meeting with a group of teachers. Data gathered from the interview and observation will be used for research purposes only. Furthermore, all data collected will be coded to maintain confidentiality.

In order for me to begin the study, I will need permission from the superintendent or designee by March 15, 2013. The letter would need to include the title of my study and permission granted to complete the study in your school system. I am enclosing a self-addressed envelope for your convenience if permission is granted for me to work with principals in your school system.

If you have questions about your rights as a research site, or concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the Office of the Institutional Review Board for Human use (OIRB) at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) at (205) 934-3789 or 1-800-822-8816. If calling the toll-free number, press the option for "all other calls" or for an operator/attendant and ask for extension 4-3789. Regular hours for the Office of the IRB are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT, Monday through Friday. You may also call this number in the event the research staff cannot be reached or you wish to talk to someone else.

Participation is voluntary and principals will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. There will be no compensation for their work. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you might have concerning the process. My direct contact information is provided below.

Sincerely,

Wanda Davis

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF RECRUITMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Letter of Recruitment for Participants

Date

Dear Principal,

I am currently enrolled in EPR 799, a dissertation course at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Because of your ability to collaborate with teachers in leading your schools, you are invited to participate in a qualitative research study, *A Qualitative Study of Leadership Practices Exhibited by Elementary Principals that Develop Leadership in Others*. The IRB Protocol Number is E121204002. The purpose of this qualitative research study on this topic will allow me to explore how elementary principals nurture leadership in others.

This study will begin in January, 2013 and end in April, 2013. If you choose to participate, you will complete a one hour audio recorded interview with the researcher and be observed once in a meeting with a group of teachers. Data gathered from the interview and observation will be used for research purposes. The researcher will contact you prior to the interview and the observation. The materials will be explained and discussed at this time so that you will feel comfortable with the process. I will also keep a reflective journal during the research process to assist me in being intentional in the process.

All data collected will be coded to maintain confidentiality. You will also have the opportunity to review data collected during your interview. Please respond honestly and in detail. As the researcher, I will keep your information confidential.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the Office of the Institutional Review Board for Human use (OIRB) at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) at (205) 934-3789 or 1-800-822-8816. If calling the toll-free number, press the option for "all other calls" or for an operator/attendant and ask for extension 4-3789. Regular hours for the Office of the IRB are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT, Monday through Friday. You may also call this number in the event the research staff cannot be reached or you wish to talk to someone else.

Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. You will not receive any compensation for your work. I will provide my direct contact information. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you might have concerning the process.

Sincerely,

Wanda Davis

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Time of interview: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Position of Interviewee: _____

Introduction

(Participant's name), I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Everything we say is on record unless you request otherwise during the interview. As stated in the recruitment letter, I am conducting a study for a dissertation study at U.A.B. The purpose of this study is to explore how elementary school principals nurture leadership development. Remember, I am taking notes and will tape the interview in order to transcribe the discussion for our research study. At the conclusion of this interview, I will ask you for a pseudonym that you would like me to use in order to protect your anonymity when referring to you in the study.

Questions

- Have responsibilities changed for you since the time you became a school administrator to now? If so, how have you handled the changes in responsibilities? (Follow-up) Explain if and how you may involve teachers more in your responsibilities.

- Would you discuss your philosophy of leadership and how it guides your behavior as a principal?

- What type of individuals do you look for as leaders within the school context? (Follow-up) What types of characteristics do you look for in school leaders?

- What types of guidance do you provide for those you see as school leaders?

- Please share examples of situations where teachers assist you in instructional leadership responsibilities? (Follow-up) Outside of serving in a formal capacity such as an instructional coach, how do others assist you in this area?
- What specific tasks do others at the school level assist you with in management and operational responsibilities? (Follow-up) How do you decide what these tasks are?
- Are professional learning communities in place in your school? If so, describe their make-up and how they function.
- Please give examples of how you communicate with leaders regarding the mission, vision, and goals of the school. (Follow-up) Explain if this is done as a team or whether you communicate these alone.
- In what ways do you collaborate with other school leaders?
- Will you identify and discuss specific structures that are in place to encourage collaboration among school stakeholders? (Follow-up) How do you schedule time to meet and collaborate?
- Can you give examples of professional development opportunities provided by you or the district to improve leadership skills? (Follow-up) Explain how you inform teachers of specific opportunities.

Conclusion

Thank you for your time. May I meet with you again in the next couple of weeks if I need to clarify anything? Please be assured that confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study and reporting process. At this time, what name would you like for me to use when I reference you in the study?

APPENDIX D

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Observation Protocol

Role of Observer**:** To observe interactions of principals and teachers regarding instructional and operational issues during a team or faculty meeting

Type of Meeting_____

Date_____ Time_____

Observer_____

	PLCs	**Building Capacity**	**Professional Development**	**Collaboration**	**Leadership Opportunities**
Involvement of Principal					
Involvement of Teachers					

APPENDIX E

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Reflective Journal

Documents	PLCs	Building Capacity	Professional Development	Collaboration	Leadership Opportunities
Meeting agendas					
E-mail					
Meeting minutes					

APPENDIX F

MULTI-CASE ANAYLSIS CHART

Multi-Case Analysis Chart

	PLCs	Grade level PLCs	Vertical PLCs	Mission and Vision Teams	PD	Collab
School 1						
School 2						
School 3						
School 4						
School 5						
School 6						
School 7						
School 8						
School 9						
School 10						
	Time	Teams	Culture	Learning Opp.	For. Roles	Inf. Roles
School 1						
School 2						
School 3						
School 4						
School 5						
School 6						
School 7						
School 8						
School 9						
School 10						

APPENDIX G

IRB APPROVAL FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

Institutional Review Board for Human Use

Form 4: IRB Approval Form
Identification and Certification of Research
Projects Involving Human Subjects

UAB's Institutional Review Boards for Human Use (IRBs) have an approved Federalwide Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). The Assurance number is FWA00005960 and it expires on January 24, 2017. The UAB IRBs are also in compliance with 21 CFR Parts 50 and 56.

Principal Investigator:	DAVIS, WANDA Y
Co-Investigator(s):	COLLINS, LOUCRECIA
Protocol Number:	**E121204002**
Protocol Title:	*Distributed Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Leadership Practices Exhibited by Elementary Principals*

The above project was reviewed on 12/17/12. The review was conducted in accordance with UAB's Assurance of Compliance approved by the Department of Health and Human Services. This project qualifies as an exemption as defined in 45CF46.101, paragraph 1,2.

This project received EXEMPT review.

IRB Approval Date: 12/17/12

Date IRB Approval Issued: _____

Cari Oliver
Assistant Director, Office of the
Institutional Review Board for Human
Use (IRB)

Investigators please note:

IRB approval is given for one year unless otherwise noted. For projects subject to annual review research activities may not continue past the one year anniversary of the IRB approval date.

Any modifications in the study methodology, protocol and/or consent form must be submitted for review and approval to the IRB prior to implementation.

Adverse Events and/or unanticipated risks to subjects or others at UAB or other participating institutions must be reported promptly to the IRB.

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