

9-19-2016

Principals' Perceptions Of Professional Development: Options That Support Effective Leadership

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PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
OPTIONS THAT SUPPORT EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Lisa Lee Geren

188 Pages

This study is designed to investigate the perceptions of elementary school principals in the state of Arkansas regarding what supports they need to be effective instructional leaders. Phase I of this mixed method study uses an online survey of 112 elementary school principals to better understand their descriptions of an effective instructional leader and the professional development supports they need. Phase II consists of personal interviews of 12 elementary school principals. The research revealed four overarching themes: Personal Attributes, Values Relationships, Leadership Skill Sets, and Meaningful Professional Development. Principals described effective leaders as visionaries, hospitable, empowering others, visible, good listeners, collaborators, ethical, and ones who improve instruction, manage people, data, and foster school improvement. The research data showed that adult learners learn through problem solving, mentoring, and in one-on-one coaching situations. They expressed a need for professional development that was applicable, used real-life situations, and was designed to improve their understanding of new concepts and ideas. Specifically, principals requested professional development on topics including progress monitoring, intervention

strategies, improving achievement among at-risk students, time management, teacher evaluation systems, and new curricula. Principals requested more support from human resources, specifically, the hiring of additional assistant principals who could assist with managerial tasks related to discipline, evaluations for classified staff, bus duty, and special education compliance issues, thus allowing more time for principals to embrace their roles as instructional leaders and to internalize the impact of their efforts on student achievement. Participating principals suggested district administrators arrange more frequent opportunities for principals to visit other schools and to meet with principals in their districts to gain a unified understanding of new information. They suggested that district administrators provide professional development in more comfortable locations and in small group settings that incorporate time to evaluate the impact of different strategies on students' academic performance. Finally, they desired professional development facilitated by high profile keynote speakers who are deemed as experts in their fields, as well as professional development that focuses on administrators' skill sets, progress monitoring, and migrant students.

KEYWORDS: Effective Leadership, Personal Attributes, Professional Development

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
OPTIONS THAT SUPPORT EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

LISA LEE GEREN

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Department of Educational Administration and Foundations

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2016

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PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In my heart, this is the most important part of this dissertation. This is my opportunity to thank special people who stepped out to encourage, support, and challenge me in ways I never knew.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Linda Lyman for serving as my dissertation chair. Over the course of the two years that it has taken to conclude my research, Dr. Lyman has served as an instructional guide, mentor, and valued friend. The product of this work would not have been completed without her insights and direction. I would like to also express my deep appreciation to Dr. Lydia Kyei-Blankson, my statistician; Dr. Dianne Renn, and Dr. Guy Banicki. Each provided resources and new understanding and insights. I could not have asked for a better group with whom to collaborate on such a study. I have thoroughly enjoyed my entire experience within the Educational Administration and Foundations Department of Illinois State University.

I would like to thank my husband of 41 years for his sacrifices and relentless encouragement to finish this lifelong goal. I am blessed to have you in my life. To my children—Lauren, David, Richard, Megan, Jordan and Nick—thank you for understanding the need to spend countless in the library researching and writing. My prayer is that you truly understand that learning is a life-long journey that never ends. And finally, to my heavenly mother, who instilled in me a passion for learning, living and savoring life. I am eternally grateful and miss you dearly.

L. L. G.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This study seeks to understand what supports elementary principals believe they need to become effective instructional leaders in their respective buildings. Walker and Carr-Steward (2006) believe the more we understand and facilitate the intrinsic and extrinsic abilities of novice principals as they meet the challenges of initial leadership roles, the more students and new principals themselves will benefit.

The function of the elementary school principal has always been to be the leader of the building in some manner; however, with the high stakes of academic accountability, the principal's role as the instructional leader has never been more prominent. Today's principals must find a balance between building administrative leadership and developing collaborative supports that focus on teaching and learning in the classroom (Green, 2010). The nationwide academic push in 2001 with No Child Left Behind reframed the role of the principal from that of a school manager—who made sure every student had a desk, the cafeteria was supervised, and someone was there to meet the buses upon arrival—to a high stakes accountable, instructional leader.

Additional functions of the school leader include serving as a catalyst in curriculum and instructional delivery, completing managerial responsibilities comprised of the school budget, facility scheduling, building operations, and the very tenuous task of balancing community and stakeholder relationships (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). Fullan (2014) states that principals are typically trained

to meet the managerial responsibilities of their jobs, but they are seldom provided enough training on how to lead professional development as the instructional leaders within their schools. Murphy's (1993) definition of instructional leadership concentrates on the functions of leadership as they link to instruction and student learning. Today's broader definitions of an instructional leader are more abundant and global than those of the 1980s. Moving from the role involving traditional duties, including allocating building resources, reviewing teachers' lesson plans, and ordering and managing curriculum, being the instructional leader in today's schools encompasses a more in-depth kind of leadership (Youngs & King, 2002). The focus of the instructional leader shifted to a more complex understanding of the need for quality, embedded professional development, an emphasis on foundational technology, and data analysis (Youngs & King, 2002). According to Bennis and Nanus (1985), "Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right things" (p. 20).

Context of the Problem

Providing appropriate professional development for the teachers as well as building a culture and climate for learning are considered essential skills for a principal. Clearly, however, instructional leadership needs to be about more than data analysis.

Should a principal focus on being an *instructional* leader or a *learning* leader? What difference does the terminology make? Each phrase sets up a different metaphor, with *instructional leadership* suggesting an external focus on the data, teaching process, and the teachers. In contrast a *learning leader* models learning, values relationships, and attends to the learning needs of everyone who comes in the school door. A principal with a deep understanding of learning and how it happens has a better chance of enhancing learning for everyone involved in a school community. (Lyman, 2016, pp. 10-12)

Student achievement and the success of the school (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) are directly attributed to effective school leadership. The school principal is essentially responsible for everything school related, both in and out of the facility (Barth, 1990). DuFour and Marzano (2015) posit that the educational leader of the school is the most critical component of a school's success. Effective principals are an essential component in leading successful instructional progress and monitoring organized systems within the school (Peterson & Kelly, 2002).

In today's educational world, when a school fails to make adequate yearly progress (AYP), the principal is the one held solely accountable (Darling-Hammond, 2004). With this paradigm shift comes significantly longer time commitments, jumping from what was once a comfortable 8-hour day during the workweek to 12- to 14-hour days and at least one Saturday each month working in the school office catching up on critical paperwork. Compound that with severe budget cuts, mandated teacher evaluation reform, and an increase in high poverty student status, and you have the makings for an overworked, highly stressed, burned-out principal. "You're never in a place where you can relax. You're always thinking about the next thing that needs to be done" (Finkel, 2012, p. 51). Time management is critical and must be managed in a way "we don't fall prey to the tyranny of the urgent" (Finkel, 2012, p. 55). The principal's role of knowing what kinds of teaching are occurring in the classrooms and driving good instruction on a consistent basis is a juggling act at best.

Elementary school principals are especially challenged with the task of balancing the fine line between home and school, parent's participation, and dealing with the so-called helicopter parents, who serve as both active advocates for their child and vocal

school critics (Hiltz, 2015). A principal's focus often includes the education of these parents and how they can support their children academically. Elementary principals are mandated to perform in increasingly difficult roles (Ruff & Shoho, 2005). Students who have strong and healthy connections with faculty members at school are better prepared to learn social and emotional skills and teachers and principals who model these skills connect better with students (Osher & Fleischman, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

New evidence indicates that districts can enhance teaching and learning by focusing on the selection and strategic placement of strong principals (Mitgang, 2012). The accountability of principals has changed significantly over the past years, while the charge to create good relationships is still an essential part of the job. School principals face responsibilities they cannot entirely control, including building a positive climate and culture, long-term student academic change, and inspiring teacher leaders. For the most part, principals are focused on the right things but do not always have the skills or the professional development they need to implement these changes and are often under considerable stress and pressure (Patzner, Voegtlin, & Scherer 2013).

The environment in which these skills are learned is critical. Mezirow (2000) explores transformational learning that promotes a variety of ways of thinking that are inclusive, discriminating, and integrative of experience. Instructional leaders and school districts across the nation face the task of transparent accountability and a laser-like focus on progressive student achievement. However, with this emphasis come the question of what makes an effective instructional leader and what supports do instructional leaders need for success.

School superintendents and school boards across the nation hold high expectations for building leaders to work hand-in-hand with their faculty and staff, to maintain strong and positive communication with parents, and, most importantly, to academically move all students in a positive direction. These are difficult tasks and, often even through exhaustive measure, more difficult to master at best. Now, more than ever, with the new Arkansas State evaluation system implemented in 2013-2014, the stakes become even higher given that up to 20% of a principal's personal evaluation is based on the academic progress of all students (Baker, Oluwole, & Green, 2013). Donaldson and Donaldson (2012) assert that formative evaluation can provide a personal growth plan for teachers. Studies on the success of school principals indicate an extensive range of expectation of the instructional leader in today's institutions. Hale and Moorman (2003) and LaPointe and Davis (2006) report that instructional leaders not only fill the role of supporting teachers and staff but also must establish an environment that supports student achievement.

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of this study was to collect and analyze the thoughts of practicing Arkansas elementary school principals regarding their perceptions of what is needed to become more effective instructional leaders. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) report that “Principal candidates and existing principals are often ill-prepared and inadequately supported to organize schools to improve learning while managing all the other demands of the job” (p. 5). Barth (1990) argues that there is limited research concerning the skills needed for principals to be effective instructional leaders, especially in light of the changing expectations of the role of the school principal.

The past two decades have seen an ongoing debate over two conceptual models: instructional leadership and transformational leadership. Instructional leadership differed from transformational leadership when the new leadership characteristic called shared vision was introduced and the value of human resources became front and center within the school organizations (Hallinger, 2003).

This research will provide district administration with the knowledge of the supports school principals perceive they need to be effective instructional leaders. Provided with the support they need, principals in turn will become effective instructional leaders (Leithwood, 2003). This study explored, from a school principal's perspective, what supports they perceive needing in order for them to become more effective building leaders. By identifying these essential supports, school districts can scaffold more effective professional development opportunities.

Research Questions

The research questions were designed to elicit responses from practicing elementary school principals actively serving in the state of Arkansas. The perceptions of principals were gathered through an online survey and through personal interviews. The research questions guided the study and allowed the participants the opportunity to present and discuss their perceptions of what professional development and district supports are needed to build the capacity of effective instructional building leaders. The four underlying research questions were:

1. How do principals describe an effective instructional leader?
2. What professional learning/development opportunities are typically offered by districts to enhance leadership effectiveness of elementary building principals?

3. What supports do elementary building principals believe they need to become effective leaders able to take on the in-depth challenges they face in the educational world?
4. How can district administration better support school principals in their role as instructional leaders?

Research Design

This descriptive study elicited the perceptions and beliefs of currently employed Arkansas public school elementary school principals as those views relate to instructional leadership. For the purpose of this research, a mixed method approach was used. Saldaña (2011) suggests, “Mixed methods research utilizes a strategic and purposeful combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis for its studies” and both together should be reflected in the final report (p. 27). Creswell (2005) defines quantitative as “a type of educational research in which the researcher decides what to study, asks specific narrow questions, collects numeric (numbered) data from participants, analyzes these numbers using statistics, and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased, objective manner” (p. 39). Interviews are typical of qualitative research and allow for identifying the essence of human experience through understanding the experiences of the participants in the study and their relationships to each other as patterns from their interviews emerge (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative research is defined as:

a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the participants, asks broad general questions collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants, describes and analyzes these words for themes, and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner. (Creswell, p. 39)

In summary, in this study, school principals selected at random from elementary schools in the state of Arkansas were given the opportunity in Phase I of the research to respond to an online survey. In Phase II, a purposive sample of survey respondents who indicated that they were willing to participate in a personal interview were selected for interviews focused on six questions about what professional supports they deem necessary to become effective instructional building leaders. The combined and integrated information from this two-phase study may help us better understand how superintendents and school districts can support their principals and guide them to become effective school principals.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in this study and have specific meaning in the context of the study:

1. *Andragogy* is the method and practice of teaching adult learners.
2. *Effective instructional leadership* provides properly implemented strong leadership and direct instructional help that establish a coherent curriculum for a school system (Duke, 1987).
3. *Effective school* is a place where all students can learn. The school is student-centered and offers academically challenging programs (Lezotte, 1992).
4. *Principal leadership* is a variety of leadership roles including managerial, political, and instructional leadership (Cuban, 1988).
5. *Professional development* is defined as “facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the application of this knowledge in

practice” (Buysse, Winton, & Rous, 2009, p. 239).

6. *Transformative learning* is defined as a progression in which the “meaning perspective,” including “thought, feeling and will” (Mezirow, 1978, p. 105), fundamentally changes understanding.

7. *Self-directed learning* in education emerges as a central construct, designed to be the means through which a human being adapts to external reality in permanent transformation, but even more the purpose of self development and personality development (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2012; Abraham, Upadhya & Ramnarayan, 2005).

8. *Learning Leaders* model learning, value relationships, and attend to the learning needs of everyone who comes in the school door. “A principal with a deep understanding of learning and how it happens has a better chance of enhancing learning for everyone involved in a school community” (Lyman, 2016, p.12).

Delimitations of the Study

This study was based on several assumptions. First, the researcher fully anticipated that each of the respondents would provide truthful and accurate responses to the questions. Second, it must be understood that it is difficult to accurately account for the variations of the experiences of each principal. Third, this researcher fully understood that the information gleaned from the participants in this study was applicable to those who specifically participated in this study and could not be assumed to represent the opinions of those who did not participate in the study.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations needed to be acknowledged and addressed regarding this research. These limitations, which highlight the weaknesses of the research, may be beneficial to future researchers wishing to conduct similar studies and research (Creswell, 2013). The participants in Phase I of the research, an online survey, were chosen through a random sample of 500 elementary school principals, thus selection bias was present. Also, the survey solicited principals to describe professional development supports they believed would assist them in becoming effective principals. The principals' perceptions may not accurately reflect the reality of the need. There were no guarantees that the survey instrument could provide totally accurate responses depending on whether the respondents' answers were based on personal bias, successes, or failures. The sample of school principals was limited to those selected and willing to participate in the survey, thereby decreasing the ability to apply the findings to other situations.

Significance of the Study

There has been a shortage of effective elementary school principals across the country (Peterson & Kelly 2002). This study obtained professional information from a select group of elementary principals to determine what principals need to develop as effective school leaders. The findings from this research will be beneficial to central-office school district administration by providing clear direction about the professional development needs for elementary school principals. This research will provide an opportunity to better understand and establish district programs and networking supports for principals to become effective instructional building leaders. A profound influence on student achievement may result by supporting the learning process of school principals.

Place of Self in Research

As a researcher, I am a veteran school administrator of 17 years and have served as a school administrator at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels in the states of Arkansas and Illinois. Through my extensive experience, I have had the opportunity to notice and observe both excellent instructional building leaders and struggling, unsuccessful building leaders all within the same school districts. I developed my ideas and perceptions as to what specifically made a difference in leadership development, but wanted to hear from others. I wanted to understand why some principals were effective and others were not? What supports, professional development, and professional guidance did they perceive made a difference in their leadership skills?

Organization of the Study

In Chapter I, an introduction to the study is developed. Chapter II, Review of Literature, is divided into an introduction, evolving definition of principals as effective leaders, an overview of state and district professional development, and professional development and theoretical perspectives. Chapter III lays out the methodology used for the study and the reasons for choosing this specific method. This chapter includes the selection process for the participants and the interview procedures and protocol. Chapter IV contains the findings collected from the participants in the survey and interview processes. Presentation of the survey findings are followed by findings from the Phase II interviews. Chapter V presents the conclusions of the research, answers to the research questions, a summary of the data from both quantitative and qualitative information gleaned, and recommendations for further study based on the data gathered and analyzed.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The single biggest way to impact an organization is to focus on leadership development. There is almost no limit to the potential of an organization that recruits good people, raises them up as leaders, and continually develops them.
–John C. Maxwell

Typically, superintendents throughout the United States formulate, determine, and mandate professional development support based on what they perceive their principals need in order to be effective leaders in their school districts. Before educators can be chosen to serve as principals, college professors in university preparation programs throughout the country work to model and develop candidates' skills for the work of leadership. Examination of the literature reveals little attention; however, to what on-the-job support the principals themselves believe they need to become effective instructional school leaders. The purpose of this chapter is to review the research and theoretical literature on developing leadership effectiveness of school principals. The purpose of this research was to discover what on-the-job support school principals believe they need in order to empower their faculty and staff to implement committed visions of a transformational excellence.

Three major categories of literature relevant to the research will be addressed in this chapter. First, I will focus on evolving definitions of effective principal leadership. In the second section, I will provide an overview and critique of the state and district level professional development support principals are typically offered to strengthen their

effectiveness as instructional leaders. Finally, I will consider how professional development support grounded in adult learning theories might better meet what school principals perceive to need.

Part One: Evolving Definitions of Effective Leadership as a Principal

The purpose of this section of the literature review is to document the evolution of the role of the school principal, followed by a discussion of the characteristics and functions of effective principals. Then my focus will move to how leadership is redefined as it has evolved and what is known about developing effective instructional leaders. Finally, I will discuss the impact of effective instructional leaders, followed by a summary of this section of the literature review.

Evolution of the Role of the School Principal

Education in the United States has remained relatively static over the last 100 years, and the majority of schools continue to revolve around the industrial model: “leaders act in a hierarchical framework that is also transferred to the classroom where teachers by and large expect compliance from their students” (Larson, 2009, p. 50). Reflecting on the early history of education and the definitions of effective instructional leadership in America, one finds principals are nonexistent and “the administration of schools is hardly differentiated from teaching” (Campbell, 1987). Throughout the country, teachers in one-room schoolhouses performed a variety of tasks, including clerical, janitorial, and administrative, on a daily basis (Pierce, 1935; Sheets, 1986). As the business of education developed and grew, so did the tasks, which require the teachers to assume responsibility for them (Campbell, 1987). With these tasks came the designation of the “principal teacher” who continued to function in the classroom as well

as serve as “controlling head of the school” (Pierce, 1935, p. 11).

The word *principal* referring to the head of the school first appeared in the Common School Report of Cincinnati in 1841 in written communications by Horace Mann (Pierce, 1935). Principals’ primary duties are “the performance of minor administrative tasks, discipline,...some teaching” (Cooper, 1979, p. 272). Also included are the responsibilities of plant and building maintenance and personnel supervision (Pierce, 1935).

The Department of Elementary School Principals and the Department of Secondary School Principals, established in the 1920s, officially recognized the position of principal as a professional educator. With the recognition, educational training programs to equip people for the role of a school administrator were created (Murphy & Hallinger, 1987; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). The public started to hold the school principal accountable for the effectiveness of schools (Tyack & Hansot 1982) and teachers expect principals to maintain order in the schools and guide them toward better instructional methods (Clark, Lotto, & McCarthy, 1980). Central office support was established where principals served as their link to the schools (Cubberly, 1923; Morris, Crowson, Porter-Gehrie, & Hurwitz, 1984). In the midst of these changes, educational theorists began to do research on the role of the principal and other school administrators (Cubberly, 1923; Elsbree, 1967; Gregg, 1957; Griffiths, 1959).

Metaphors reveal much about the culture of an organization, including meanings that organizational participants attach to events and roles (Bolman & Deal, 2015).

Bredeson (1988) believed metaphors could “broaden perspectives, enhance understanding, and provide insight into the organization, operation, and administration of

schools” (p. 23). Schlechty (2003) describes how we use language to frame school organizational behavior where the school is viewed as the tribal center and the principal as the chief priest. When the school is shaped in the metaphorical language of a factory, the principal’s role is that of an industrial center manager. When the school is shaped in the metaphorical language of a hospital, then the role of the principal is that of a chief-of-staff (Beck & Murphy, 1993). School metaphors influence how educators comprehend the various environmental stakeholders, such as parents and regulatory agencies. Perrin (1987) posits, “Metaphors open us to experiences in certain ways and close us in others. Metaphors invite us to participate in the constitution of reality while, at the same time, barring us from the consideration of rival alternatives” (Perrin, 1987, p. 265).

The late 1980s marked the middle of instructional reform when the role of the principal was established as the instructional leader. The role of the instructional leader was transformed (Carlin, 1992; Louis, Murphy & Smylie, 2016) and reshaped, setting the foundation for change. As part of this change, principals were forced to move from managing to facilities reform (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Gone were the days of traditional school management. Today’s effective principals must be visionaries who lead through shared decision-making, collaborations, and the empowerment of teachers via their professional learning communities (PLCs).

The role of the principal changed from that of a managerial position, where the focus is squarely on student discipline, supervision, and the day-to-day operations of the building, to that of an instructional leader or principal teacher. “Instructional leadership requires principals to be consummate team builders who could shape a vision of success for all students, cultivate leadership in others, help teachers upgrade their skills and use

data to foster school improvement” (Portin, 2009, as quoted in Mendels & Mitgang, 2013, p. 23). Neumerski (2012) defines an instructional leader as someone who focuses their work on the teaching and learning that takes place in a school. Principals must see the need to move way from managerial school administration to becoming the “primary teacher developer and architect of collaborative learning” (Drago-Severson, 2012, p. 4).

However, stemming from the continuing reform, the role of the instructional leader has continued to be reframed (Carlin, 1992; Louis, Murphy & Smylie, 2016). This reframing process has, in turn, established the building blocks for change. Fullan (2014) posits that moving the direction of a school isn’t easy. Often those teachers opposing the change are louder than those who support it. That is because the opponents have a clear understanding of what they have to lose or give up with the new change; while the proponents only have a theoretical or abstract idea of what they will gain. It is the principal’s role to work through the resistance through feedback, deep communication and input from all stakeholders.

Moving from managerial frameworks, instructional leaders now work with a shared vision of collaboration, shared decision-making, and empowerment of the teacher leaders within the school building (Louis, Murphy, & Smylie, 2016). In *Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution*, Maeroff (1996) reveals that there is reform and significant change when the principal draws upon the strength of the teacher leaders.

Effective schools are imperative to the academic success of the children. There is no gold standard or formula for effective principal leadership design to promote educational change that impacts students in our failing schools. Not only is effective principal leadership not prescriptive, but also the definition of *effective* leadership is

elusive at best. Since *No Child Left Behind* (2001), there has been a fervent plea for assistance to address the epidemic of children at-risk of failing in schools across this nation. Along with those cries for urgent reform is the assumption that leadership will emerge to save the children from the pitfalls of failing schools.

Before *No Child Left Behind* (2001), the role of the school principal was that of a school manager responsible for making sure all students had desks and the buses arrived on time. With the high stakes continuing, however, school leadership began transforming. The evolution transitioned the principal role from managerial to that of a learning-oriented culture leader directly linking student achievement and growth to the effectiveness of the building principal. Mountains of information and data on underachieving student performance created urgency throughout the nation to implement new innovative programs and initiatives including cooperative learning, professional learning communities, and state-wide common core standards. Along with those urgent calls for reform loomed an underlying assumption that a new breed of leadership would emerge to execute change.

Current research reveals compelling new evidence that school principals could change the outcome of student achievement, which is forcing school districts across the country to take a serious look at their building leadership (Leithwood & Ahah, 2016). Leadership in a school is second only to teaching when it comes to influencing student learning. The new role of principals as instructional leaders must shape the vision of the school, cultivate teacher leadership within the building, and use data to drive grounded decisions for school improvement (Portin, 2009).

Transformational Reframing of Instructional Leadership

Today's educators and state and local policymakers seek a framework for instructional leadership with the focus clearly on sustainability for school-wide improvement. This framework of sustainability can only happen through the development of leadership capacity. Fullan (2016) defines "leadership capacity" as broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership. Those schools with a strongly established leadership capacity fuse together learning and instructional leadership and embed it in the professional practice of the building. Fullan (2016) reminds us that the intentional restructuring of school leadership is a major undertaking and that within school improvement restructuring are the critical themes of learning for all children, as well as social justice and ethical values. However, for this new kind of instructional leadership to be successful, it must be systemic and artful in the mix of approaches. Fullan (2016) also suggests that by providing principals with support for implementation and improving their pedagogy in instructional practices, principals will better understand the professional development that is being presented and will continue to learn. Fullan (2016) contends that the leader's passion is rooted in the climate and culture of the school and clearly focused on breaking the current social structures that are blocking student achievement. Fullan (2016) believes it is important that the instructional leader be able to communicate and develop meaningful relationships. Fullan (2016) continues by stating that there is a strong importance on customer friendliness and the ability to focus on human needs and that truly important leadership is the kind that touches individuals differently. Moral leadership values are deeply rooted in the leaders' awareness of the needs of the children they serve and a genuine understanding of the importance of their

work as instructional leaders. Greenfield (1991) posits it is this kind of servant leadership that cannot be dictated or mandated. Moral leadership within the school brings members of the school community together around the common goal of student success.

New standards of leadership require that teachers and principals move away from norms of “privatism and adversarial relationships” to those standards that encourage collegiality and commitment (Miles, Saxl, & Lieberman, 1988, p. 148). Moral leadership humanizes and makes real the process of leadership by placing emphasis on treating the followers well (Fullan, 2016). Fullan (2016) claims that what is missing in the current model of school leadership is the feeling of passion, unification, and social justice that brings with it a feeling of warmth and inclusiveness.

From the outshoots of reform grew an increased emphasis on school-based management with an intense interest in instructional leadership. With instructional leadership comes a shared responsibility to include teacher leaders as well as instructional leaders. However, the big question appears to be what kind of leader it takes to attack and conquer this nation-wide dilemma of struggling schools? Furthermore, the bigger question is what is an effective leader? In addition, what supports do principals believe they need to become effective leaders able to take on the in-depth challenges they face in the educational world today? Current changing organizational environments spawned new conceptions of leadership, perhaps most notably that of the transformational leader.

In discussions of transformational leadership, one controversial issue has been around what creates transformational leadership? On one hand, Burns (1978) posits that transforming leadership “...occurs when one or more persons *engage* [original italics] with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of

motivation and morality” (p. 20). Hargreaves, Boyle, and Harris (2013) suggest that “Uplifting leadership isn’t just about being positive or self-confident. Uplifting leadership embraces many of the positive and optimistic attributes of inspirational and transformational leadership” (pp. 162-163).

Bennis and Nanus (1985) suggest developing transformational leadership is done by developing a unified vision of the school organization, developing solid commitments, and trust, which in turn facilitates organizational learning. On the other hand, Hattie (2015) maintains that instructional leadership has a greater impact on student performance outcomes than does transformational leadership. Katz and Back (2014) contend that there is a significant positive impact on teaching, curriculum, and student learning through formal and informal instructional leadership by the school principal. Connelly (2010) posits that, “There’s no such thing as a high-performing school without a great principal. . . . You simply can’t overstate their importance in driving student achievement, in attracting and retaining great talent to the school” (p. 34). Others, such as Greenleaf (2002), support transformational leadership through a servant leadership by defining responsibilities, setting goals, and developing plans to reach the goals.

In Bass’ (1996) original framework of the transformational leader, there are four distinguishing criteria, known as the 4-I’s: such a leader is said to motivate people by inspiring them, to stimulate them intellectually, to afford them individualized consideration and to exude a kind of idealized influence over them. Depending on the context, transformational leadership does not substitute for transactional leadership (Bass, 1996). “The best leaders are both transformational and transactional; transformational behaviors augment the effects of transactional behaviors” (Bass, 1996, as cited in

Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008, p. 178). Bass and Avolio (1993) found the following:

Leaders who are concerned about organizational renewal will seek to foster organizational cultures that are hospitable and conducive to creativity, problem-solving risk-taking, and experimentation. First, there is an articulation of the changes that are desired. Next, the necessary changes in structure, processes, and practices are made and are widely communicated throughout the organization. Finally, a new role and behavioral models are established and reinforced that become symbols of the "new" culture. (p. 115)

Leithwood and Janzi (1996) state that a school principal may exhibit transformational leadership qualities by implementing the following six dimensions: (a) articulation and sharing of a vision, (b) fostering group goals, (c) individual support to subordinates, (d) intellectual stimulation, (e) appropriate behavior modeling, and (f) high performance expectations. These leadership styles are considered innovational collaborative structures and processes. Bass and Stogdill (1990) posit that leadership need not and should not be limited to one individual holding a supervisory position.

Characteristics and Functions of Effective Principals

Fast-forward to the 1980s and the directional flow of influence shifts from principals reaching out to the community in an engaging manner to community reaching into the schools in an effort to guide, shape, and mold the educational process of the children in the community (Murphy, 1990). “The belief that principals are instructional leaders is, indeed, widespread in the literature of the 1980s” (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 151). Many scholars worked to understand and identify common traits of effective principals, including Hallinger and Murphy (2013), Leithwood and Azah, (2016) and Murphy, Hallinger, and Weil, (1984).

Definitions of an effective principal. In discussions of effective leadership, the struggle to define leadership has led to definitions from a variety of points of view. From

the 1950s, we can consider Cartwright and Zander (1953), Halpin and Winer (1957), and Hemphill (1958). In one controversial definition, Cartwright and Zander (1953) define leadership as the “performance” of the functions that assist the group in achieving their objectives (p. 538). Cartwright and Zander (1953) suggest that leadership consists of actions that build group cohesiveness, improve the quality of the group interactions, and make resources available to followers. On the other hand, Halpin and Winer (1957) define leadership as “the behavior of an individual when he is directing the activities of a group toward shared goals” (p. 6). Still others, such as Hemphill (1958), define leadership as: “To lead is to engage in an act that initiates a structured interaction as part of the process of solving a mutual problem. Leadership acts do not include various acts of influences that occur outside mutual problem-solving” (p. 98).

By 1993 things were changing. The educational research of Joseph Rost (1993) provided a grounded definition of effective leadership. He posited, “leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purpose” (p. 102). Furthermore, he described four elements that must be present in order for leadership to exist, including relationships based on influence; both leaders and followers are involved in the relationship; both leaders and followers intend real change and both leaders and followers develop mutual goals.

In Rost's third essential element of leadership, both leaders and followers intend real change. "Intend means that the changes are purposeful and are in the future" (Rost, 1993, p. 117). Through their words and actions, both leaders and followers exhibit proof of their intent for real change. "Real means that the changes the leaders and followers intend are substantive and transforming, not pseudo changes or shams. To be leadership,

the intention to change is all that is required "(Rost, 1993, p. 117).

These mutual purposes are developed through a "noncoercive, influence relationship" (Rost, 1993 p. 123) and are purposes rather than goals. Both leaders and followers reflect upon their purposes rather than focus on realizing them. Because followers and leaders are involved in leadership together, their purposes become mutual. Gibb (1947, as cited in Rost, 1993) defined leadership in terms of "an influence relationship" (p. 882) and "distinguished leadership from headship and along the way insists that leadership was a non-coercive relationship between a leader and the followers" (p. 50).

Issues with leadership definitions. Both Rost (1993) and Elmore (2000) have issues with leadership definitions. On the one hand, Rost (1993) revealed two standing issues with leadership definitions. The first problem is that leadership definitions become synonymous with leader. The second problem is an assumption that leadership is good management and that the word "good" means effective but does not necessarily reflect moral goodness (Rost, 1993). Other definitions of an effective leader in an educational context vary; however, scholars confirm that being an effective leader includes intense and continuous work with teachers using evidence to improve their classroom instruction delivery (Blasé & Blasé, 1998; Heck, 1993; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Kerr, Schuyler, Ikemoto, Marsh, Darilek, Stuttorp, Zimmer, & Barney 2005; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstorm (2004) reported that effective school leadership is critical to teaching the factors that relate to student success.

Richard Elmore (2000), however, defines effective leadership as the guidance and direction of instructional improvement and refers to this definition as “deliberately deromanticized, focused, and instrumental” (p. 13). Elmore (2000) continues, “Leadership tends to be romanticized in American culture, especially in the culture of schooling, both because we subscribe heavily to trait theories of success—people succeed because of their personal characteristics, more than because of effort, skill, and knowledge” (p. 14). The leadership Elmore (2000) describes is different from the standard framing in the literature on management-leaders, or managers, who exercise “control” over certain functions in the organization. Certain routine organizational functions, such as bus schedules, supervision, and others, require some control. However, the word “control”, when applied to student achievement, is a dubious concept because one does not “control” the student achievement processes. Rather, the principal leads and provides a sense of direction. The majority of the knowledge children learn comes from an interaction with the people who deliver instruction—the teachers—not with the people who manage—the principal (Elmore, 2000).

Both Rost (1993) and Elmore offer a similar framing or definition of leadership. Deal (1987) also describes an effective instructional leader as a problem solver as well as a resource provider. He uses the metaphor of the principal functioning “as engineer or supervisor” who utilizes his time “resolving conflicts” (p. 239), developing plans, implementing policies, and securing the resources addressed to the barrage of problems. Deal (1987) continues and explains that the instructional leader serves “as a power broker or states person” (p. 239), which thrusts the instructional leader into the role filled with conflict. Deal (1987) writes:

The principal as power broker sees conflict as a natural by-product of collective activity...the principal spends considerable time in the ring dealing with conflicts—as a participant or as a referee. The principal as statesperson works to build coalitions. He or she knows the special interest groups and tries to find common ideological groups on which the groups could work together. The principal rarely used his or her power directly inside the school. Internal solidarity is used freely as a bargaining chip, as scarce resources are allocated to individual schools within the district. (p. 240)

Control implies that the controller knows what the controller should do, whereas guidance and direction imply some degree of shared expertise and some degree of difference in the level and kind of expertise among individuals (Elmore, 2000). It is this problem of the distribution of knowledge required for large-scale improvement that creates that imperative for the development of models of distributed leadership. This shift requires first, a redefinition of leadership, away from role-based conceptions and toward distributive views, and second, a clearer set of design principles to guide a practice of large-scale improvement.

Attempts to conceptualize leadership and the role of the school leader continue to defy clear explication. Organizationally, the power of leadership is traditionally rooted in the theory that leadership is assumed formal roles “legitimated by hierarchical structures, that is, those persons who by right of ownership or appointment occupied legitimate places of authority within an organization or social group (Leonard & Leonard, 1999, p. 237). Taylor’s (1911) “efficiency model” posits that the most efficient approach to work is to “de-skill” most employees by moving from craft operations to narrowly defined repetitive tasks. His idea is to provide each worker with a task that “specifies not only what is to be done, but how it is to be done and the exact time allowed for doing it” (Taylor 1911, p. 255). Max Weber’s “Universal List of Management Principles” offered

14 principles of management aimed at helping managers ascertain what to do to manage more effectively (Leonard & Leonard, 1999). These initiatives follow the premise of the one-way command structure, where the principal is the sole leader making decisions and assigning power to subordinates when and where needed (Leonard & Leonard, 1999).

There are several conceptualizations of leadership approaches including the trait of “great man” where, during the first half of the century, specific physical or psychological qualities were identified which attracted others to follow. The situational leadership theory centers on the organization’s climate, culture, and characteristics of those within the organization.

The contingency perspective of leadership emphasizes dissimilarities in an organization’s circumstances. Such variants reveal that different types of leadership are required to achieve group effectiveness (Leonard & Leonard, 1999). In essence, Taylor strove to maximize output while minimizing the input of people, machines, and time. Taylor provides a methodology to systemize Ford’s model of efficiency. The importance of distributed leadership is derived from the fact that large-scale improvement requires concerted action among people with different areas of expertise and mutual respect that stems from an appreciation of the knowledge and skill requirements of different roles. Quality school leadership follows a recognizable format.

Often a charismatic principal takes over a struggling school and quickly establishes new goals and expectations. This principal creates new organizational routines and procedures that will transform the school culture and climate over time. These routines and procedures create a more satisfied teacher who, in turn, produces a better learning environment for the students that then equates to better student

achievement and school improvement (Spillane, 2005). These stories of “heroics of leadership” (Spillane, 2005, p. 143) are problematic for two reasons. First, the school leadership is centered on a specific leader, usually the school principal, and secondly on their attention to leadership practices. The leaders focus in on the “what” of leadership, including the structures, functions, and roles, rather than the “how” of school leadership, including performance of leadership routines, functions, and structures. Hallinger and Murphy (2013) explore to better understand leaders and the *why* of leadership.

Redefining leadership. Redefining leadership continues to foster debate about program content and how to prepare schools leaders. In 1993, the National Policy Board of Educational Administration identified 21 specific categories or domains for professional development of school principals that supported the understanding that both skill and knowledge base should “provide a platform for practice” (Thomson, 1993, p. ix).

Design principles derive from the fact that large-scale improvement processes run directly against the grain of the existing institutional structure of public education, and, therefore, it is difficult to do anything consequential about large-scale improvement without violating some fundamental cultural or managerial principle of the existing structure (Elmore, 2000). Programs were faulted for their lack of clearly defining good educational leadership that hones in on the influence of leadership on teaching, learning and academic achievement (Orr, 2006).

Both scholars and policymakers agree that principals must be supported with skills to impact substantive school change that translates to an increase in student achievement (Glickman, 2002; Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Orr,

2006). According to Adams and Copland (2005), no state has been successful in creating principal licensure policies for school leadership that clearly focus on student achievement and learning. The problem, then, is how to construct and establish consistent ways for people to engage in activities that promote the learning of new ways to think about and do their jobs. Increased accountability along with the ever-growing complexities makes the role of a school principal difficult. Crow (2006) states “higher expectations for principals in the areas of instructional leadership, increased public scrutiny of public schools, and the promotion of privatization as a public policy agenda, has significantly changed the role of the school principal” (p. 310).

Drath (2001) proposes that leadership changes depend on our way of life, in the ways we understand and, more importantly, in the ways we interrelate with each other. He helped move the field to a relational view of leadership. It is Drath’s thought that leadership surfaces in a “taken-for-granted idea that leadership comes to us in a distorted form from the past and from cultures essentially different from our own, an idea that has therefore lost much of its power to make sense to us in our time” (Drath, 2001, p. xiv). Because of this, Drath posits “leadership is something leaders possess as an individual attribute and therefore leadership is given by, created by, leaders” (Drath, 2001, p. xiv).

Relational leadership allows for a new way of understanding, a new way of making leadership happen from that of the current, personal leadership that highlighted the character and skill of the leader. Kenneth Gergen (1997) coins the term *relational* meaning that individuals are “constituted by their relations” (Draft, 2001, p. xv). In 1997, Kegan developed the idea that adults develop throughout their lifetime creating more complex and global structures of understanding themselves and their view of the

world. Etienne Wenger (1999) adds the concept that when people work together, meaning and identity are created. In his book, *The Deep Blue Sea: Rethinking the Source of Leadership*, Drath (2001) states there are three leadership principles, including personal dominance, interpersonal influence, and relational dialog.

Personal dominance is a form of understanding leadership as a characteristic or personal quality of a leader. Here, leaders lead because the followers are certain of the truth of their leadership. The word dominance refers not to domineering but that the leader is the source of leadership for the followers. Interpersonal influence is a manner of understanding that leadership develops when people communicate, agree, disagree, plan and negotiate together, and through this process a leader will emerge. In this principle, the leader rises because he is the most influential person in the group. The characteristics of the leader enable them to assume this role and influence their followers.

Drath's third leadership principle of relational dialog happens when people acknowledge shared work together using collaboration and dialog that develop context honoring a variety of differing world views. Relational dialog establishes leadership as a social system that happens when people participate in thoughtful collaboration.

Principal as the problem solver. Problem-solving and providing resources and supports to teachers are important characteristics of an effective instructional leader.

Beck and Murphy (1993) believe that instructional leaders who solve problems and provide vital resources are perceived to be perceptive enough to secure materials, funds, time, and information. The eighties brought forth an abundance of articles, books, and interest in education, especially about topics on the school principalship (Beck & Murphy, 1993). The principal served as the instructional leader, guiding both teachers

and students toward academic success and accountability (Murphy, 1993).

The principal also became the problem solver and provided the resources and support necessary to facilitate the process. The 1980s also placed the principal as the school visionary who communicates to all stakeholders the vision of the ideal school. Finally, Beck and Murphy (1993) share that the instructional leader is responsible for leading the school and crafting the vision into reality. One of the dominant assumptions in the eighties was that the principal could influence the vision and was directly involved in the teaching and learning process in the school. “Most often, the metaphor used in discussions of this assumption is that of principal as the instructional leader” (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 149). Greenfield (1987, as cited in Beck & Murphy, 1993) states that the concept is a “slogan guiding the efforts of reformists” (p. 75) of the eighties decade.

Principal as the instructional leader. Murphy (1993) suggests that good school principals have a clear goal of “promoting student cognitive growth” (p. 334) and “effective principals are able to define priorities focused on the central mission of the school...[and] intervene directly and constantly to ensure that priorities are achieved” (p. 335). Murphy (1993) emphasized the word “intervene” suggesting that being an instructional leader mandates school principals to be active in each and every classroom.

Clark and Lotto (1972) focus on the fact that the principal is the instructional leader and that effective school administration focuses on “program leadership and direction” (p. 4) and centers around “student achievement as [the] primary outcome of schooling... and monitor and evaluate student progress” (p. 5). Smith and Andrews (1989) cite studies where effective instructional leaders are “articulate, skilled, and expert in human relations” (p. 60) and all are successful instructional leaders in their building.

While writers in the eighties agreed that having a vision is important, it is good instructional leaders' work to actively move the school toward the vision by initiating and facilitating change necessary to accomplish this goal as a change agent (Beck & Murphy, 1993). Bennis and Slater (1998) state that principals must “possess a transitional power” (p. 84) and work to persuade others in the school to share their vision. Leaders who have the capacity to serve as change agents “harness the energies of followers and direct these energies toward the realization of ideals” (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 16).

Principal as the communicator. Bennis (1984) believes that one does not have to have “ingeniously constructed organizational structures, carefully constructed management designs and controls elegantly rationalizes planning formats or skillfully articulated leadership tactics” (p. 70). However, it is his view that the principal’s ability to communicate a clear and committed vision implores others to excel (Bennis, 1984). Foster, Loving and Shumate (2000) uses metaphors to describe the leaders needed to drive schools in the 21st century. He encourages administrators to be “agents of transformation” (p. 21) as they work to reach the goals of “democratization of the [educational] institution and the building of community” (p. 25).

Developing Effective Leaders

Many scholars have studied how to develop effective leaders. Fullan (2014) describes three lessons in developing effective leaders. These lessons are intricately interrelated and include the vital need for slow knowing, the importance of learning in context, and the need for leaders at all levels within the school organization.

Slow knowing. Claxton (1998) states that *slow knowing* is even more important than ever when leading from a chaotic framework in a school. Claxton’s rationale for

this is: “Recent scientific evidence shows convincingly that the more patient, less deliberate modes are particularly suited to making sense of situations that are intricate, shadowy or ill defined” (p. 3). When conditions are complex, and nonlinear, we need more *slow knowing*.

One needs to soak up experience of complex domains-such as human relationships through one’s pores, and to extract subtle contingent patterns that are latent within it. And to do that one needs to be able to attend to a whole range of situations patiently without comprehension; to resist the temptation of foreclose on what that experience may have to teach. (Claxton, 1998, p. 192)

Slow knowing is more of a disposition that does not take a long time when practiced.

Learning over time. Fullan’s (2016) second lesson of learning context over time is essential. Learning is greatest when it is established within the setting where one works, because it is more specific or customized and it is more social because it involves the group. This type of learning is successful because it develops leadership and improves the organization at the same time. This most important factor for ensuring that students are academically successful at the school level is the direct leadership of the building principal. Fullan (2016) considers the guidance and direction as essential part of leadership.

Need for leaders at all levels. The third and final lesson Fullan (2014) posits is the need for leaders at all levels. Within this framework, there are two kinds of leaders. The first is the obvious level where all leaders from the rank-and-file leader to the head of committee leaders are encouraged to become better leaders. The second kind of leader is the more fundamental that cannot be activated from the top down, but are nurtured up close in the daily routines that require leaders to surround us with nurturing leadership. When leaders look for opportunities to reward leadership at all levels within the business

of school, leadership for the future become a natural by-product.

Need for Future Instructional Leaders

Other scholarship has supported approaches to developing future instructional leaders. Today's schools are focused toward the future and are in need of leadership that is reportedly in short supply and continues to worsen (Fullan, 2016). As highlighted in "Policy Focus Converges on Leadership," the cover article of the January 12, 2000, issue of *Education Week*,

After years of work structural changes-standards and testing and ways of holding students and school accountable, the education policy world has turned its attention to the people charged with making the system work. Nowhere is the focus on the human element more prevalent than in the recent recognition of the importance of strong and effective leadership. (p. 1)

Greenfield (1987) used the analogy of a potter and a principal: as the potter transforms the clay into a pottery vessel then principals, too, transform their students and teachers into a viable, thriving organization through their leadership. He notes that while the pot is a final piece, the business of school is not; it demands continual attention.

In the eighties, numerous others, including the American Association for School Administrators, spoke of revolutionary change reform and restructuring of the school systems across the nation, calling for instructional leaders to create good and effective schools (Beck & Murphy, 1993). The metaphors of that time suggested schools were dysfunctional and not successful and principals were expected to be change agents as they "lead in the search for better schools" (Achilles, 1987, p. 18). There was a sense of crisis and urgency in the 1980s and, as John Goodlad wrote in his book entitled *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future* (1984), American schools were in trouble. In fact, the problems of schooling were of such crippling proportions that many schools

might not survive. It was possible that our entire public education system was nearing collapse.

That tone demanded urgent attention to address the sense of crisis in the schools in the 1980s. The message to school principals was that they must act now to save the schools or have any hope of rescuing them (Beck & Murphy, 1993). It was noted that when significant strife was apparent, principals occupied their time with managerial activities. Beck and Murphy (1993) posit that was because administrators needed to feel in control. One way of presenting the idea of control was to adopt the “businesslike” tone during the 1980s. When problems and criticism increased, principals moved more towards objective rational management strategies.

The instructional leader’s impact on student academic achievement is second only to that of the classroom teacher. It is the instructional leader’s ability to build the capacity of the teachers through high quality and focused professional development (Leithwood, Patton, & Jantzi, 2010). The role of the principal is linked to instructional leadership and, since the early 1980s, the role has been burdened with the responsibility of school reform. In 1985, Greenfield (as cited in Mackenzie & Corey, 1992) referred to the principal as the instructional leader of the school. Chitpin (2014), suggests that professional development should include: (a) a network of peer support to help them make decisions and resolve common problems; (b) an innovative model of reflective professional development; (c) a database of sound empirical studies, evidenced-based research and practical literature that would lead to an informed decision-making process; and (d) a jointly produced web site to facilitate the above activities and to provide convenient access to information.

Weber (1989) broadened the concept of instructional leadership by defining five functions of instructional leadership that are performed by the principal. These include (a) defining the school mission, (b) promoting a positive learning climate, (c) observing and providing feedback to teachers, (d) managing curriculum and instruction, and (e) assessing the instructional program.

The direct and indirect impact of instructional leadership on student achievement accounts for about one-fourth of total school effects, and that supports an interest in improving instructional leadership in our schools. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) outlined 21 responsibilities of a school leader in their meta-analysis of school leadership. Likewise, Cotton (2003) identified 25 leadership responsibilities. Furthermore, a compelling 10-year study by Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) on school leadership reveals that student academic achievement increases in schools where the principal and teachers collaborate and work together in a shared leadership role. Together there is a clear alignment with the documents, roles, and responsibilities of each stakeholder within the partnership.

Green (2010) developed a model that aligned to the ISLLC standards and viewed the leadership development of a principal using four dimensions to describe the progression. Dimension 1 places and empathizes a shared understanding of oneself and others and enables the development and growth of a shared vision aligned with shared goals. Dimension 2 highlights the instructional leaders' focus on understanding relationships and the complexity and the multifaceted nature of schools, including their culture and climate. Dimension 3 focuses throughout the school community to include all stakeholders. Dimension 4 highlights the importance of the principal's role in creating

positive change using best practices as well as strong communication of those practices and expectations.

Madsen, Schreoder, and Irby (2014) highlight that when principals focus on the development of skills of the teaching staff, development of teacher knowledge of curriculum, professional learning communities program coherence, and technical resources, then student achievement and sustainability increase. The effective leader wove together skillful participation among teachers; parents and communities had a shared vision, valued inquiry, and collaboration as well as reflection. These pieces worked together to create a new concept of instructional leadership. Research into effective school leadership suggests that these features are key components to the school improvement process (Barth, 2001; Eaker & DuFour, 2015; Lambert, 1998; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Schmoker, 2016; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001).

Effective instructional leadership consists of two distinct themes: (a) talking to teachers to promote reflection, and (b) promoting professional growth (Blasé & Blasé, 1998). With the changing role of the principals also comes the recasting of district leadership from that of “compliance cops to helpers-in-chief for principals and their teams” (Mendals & Mitgang, 2013, p. 23).

Summary: Supporting Principals

The change to viewing the principal as an instructional leader influences views about how to support principals. Now supporting principals includes: (a) selecting principals who are ready for the challenge in even the most underperforming schools, and (b) fully supporting those building principals especially in their novice years. “All too often, training fails to keep pace with the evolving role of the principals,” according to

Mitgang (2012) in a report by The Wallace Foundation.

The cognitive task of effective school leadership is complex at best, and many of the complex ways of processing thought are not learned in the university classroom but on the job and in many cases with little support. The concept of effective leadership could peel back into layers that include personal or trait characteristics, powerhouse influencers, and behavior characteristics that include the actual behaviors and activities of the effective leader.

The power of the leader relates to the upward and downward movement of their perception of their power and their ability to lead. A leader must sustain upward influence in order to secure resources, obtain the approval for proposed change, protect the interest of the teachers, and learn the clout necessary to move the school forward and, without this, the effective leader is less likely to develop an effective exchange with the collaborators (Cashman, Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1976; Patchen, 1962). Over the past decade, the educational research validates the importance of an effective instructional leader (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013; Heck, 1993; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2015; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Murphy, 1990; Supotz, Sirinides, & May, 2009).

At the same time, state and federal mandates for increased student achievement outcomes for all children and schools are striving to improve the quality of teacher practice and principal leadership. Research literature identifies the school principal as a major facilitator in creating school change and creating schools that work to support teachers who strive to meet the needs of children (Cherian & Daniel, 2008; McLeskey & Waldon, 2002; Pugach, Blanton, Correa, McLeskey, & Langley, 2009). There is

compelling new evidence that school principals significantly influence, support, and enhance the teaching and learning within their schools. This laser-like attention to school leadership stems from the fact that quality school principals can make a significant difference in the classrooms. School success correlates with educational leadership. The restructuring of understanding and the importance of principals' leadership evolves through waves of reform to reflect the new vision of instructional leadership.

States across the nation have the power and authority to establish policy related to leadership preparation programs and licensure reform (Herrington & Wills, 2005; Hess & Kelly, 2005). Education department officials as well as state legislators have the opportunity to overhaul and reform administrative licensure regulations; however, according to Hess and Kelly (2005), states actually have little motivation to change licensure systems that are currently in place. For example, during the 2013 legislative session at the State Capitol, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) had a legislative proposal (HB496) to modify professional development requirements for administrative licensure renewal (Section 2B-45 of the School Code). Due to time constraints, this legislation did not pass both houses of the legislature. Unfortunately, the section of the School Code that dealt with professional development for administrators (Section 21-7.1) automatically ended on June 30, 2013. Currently, the 2016 School Code requires 60 hours of professional development to acquire a license and 36 professional development hours to renew a teaching/administrators' license. However, pressure to increase student achievement is forcing policymakers to make positive changes as evident in the ISLLC standards by the National Association of School Boards of Education.

In the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) journal, Murphy (2005) counsels states how to implement standards to “...bring the vision of student-centered leadership embedded in the *Standards to life*” (pp. 15-16). Learner-centered leaders worked with a common vision for high achievement of all children and are clear about their performance results. Being learner-centered means that their own leaders create processes and structures that enable adults, as well as students, to participate and learn. These leaders are committed to increasing their own knowledge, skills, and capacities through professional development, peer mentoring, and the establishment and support of school-wide learning communities.

The newly coined term “shared instructional leadership” defines what is seen in schools today in ways of looking at school reform. Beare (1998), Gonzales and Lambert (2001), and Stoll, Fink and Earl (2003) posit that the theory of instructional leadership is identified through teacher empowerment, capacity building, and, more importantly, teacher leadership. Senge (1990) refers to shared instructional leadership in terms of a learning organization and defines a learning organization as an organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly deserve, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.

Part Two: An Overview of State and District Professional Development

Next, I will provide a definition of professional development followed by the philosophical orientations of professional development. Then I will present an overview of both state and district level professional development support offered to school principals including job-embedded, institute days, on-line courses, conferences, and

participation workshops.

Definition of Professional Development

The term ‘professional development’ is a broad phrase that encompasses a vast number of experiences and should incorporate the andragogical needs of adult learners to be effective (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). In addition, professional development is intensive, on-going and connects to practice to be effective (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon (2001). Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) concur with Guskey’s (2014) model of professional development that includes: training, observation and assessment, involvement in the development and improvement process, study groups, inquiry and action research, individually guided activities, and mentoring.

Meaningful Professional Development refers to learning which is essential for practitioners to enhance their pedagogical content knowledge and skills and, in turn, to enhance student outcomes (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Learning Forward (2011) defines professional development as a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improve an educator’s effectiveness. Bambick-Santoyo (2012) wrote that, in general, professional development offered to principals is often a one-shot training that does not afford them the opportunity to collaborate over an extended period of time or give them an occasion to implement and reflect on their learning. According to Bambick-Santoyo, (2012), teachers must be given time to interact with the content of the professional development and learn through ongoing active engagement in practice. The literature offered by Chitpin (2014), suggests that school principals should participate in

professional development that includes: (a) a network of peer support to help them make decisions and resolve common problems; (b) an innovative model of reflective professional development; (c) a database of sound empirical studies, evidenced-based research and practical literature that would lead to an informed decision-making process; and (d) a jointly produced web site to facilitate the above activities and to provide convenient access to information.

Principals who embrace their own professional learning and development are able to build a school's capacity by helping teachers develop their knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Jonassen and Land (2012). There should be a balance between professional development opportunities that offer collaboration with colleagues in order to share ideas as well as programs that can be flexibly delivered to meet the time constraints that principals experience Salvesen (2016).

Philosophical Orientations

Three philosophical orientations that have steered the education and professional development of school principals over the years include traditional management, craft, and reflective inquiry.

Traditional model. The traditional model, usually provided at the college or university level, exposed the studying principal to the research based on management and the behavioral sciences. It is through these types of programs that general principles of administrative behavior and rules are mapped out to ensure organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Within these programs, the participant is usually the recipient of passive knowledge, where learning activities are institutional and generally not tailored to specific learning interests or needs (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002). Critics describe existing

university programs as very inadequate (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Levine, 2005). The academic community highlighted problems in Levine's (2005) study but failed to acknowledge that programs had indeed made significant changes (Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, 2005). University professors agreed that some programs are inadequate and are in need of reform (Young, Petersen, & Short, 2002).

Craft model. Much like “train the trainer,” in the craft model the principal is expected to shadow a principal colleague and learn from their interactions, decisions, and responses, as well as gaining insights into how to deal with the students, parents, and the public. This observer also learns from watching other colleagues respond to crisis and situations not presented in a textbook fashion. It is through the craft model that principals in training learn the practical wisdom from experienced practitioners in a real-life school situation (Daresh & Alexander, 2015).

Reflective inquiry model. In the reflective inquiry approach to professional development, the school leader is encouraged to generate knowledge through the process of systemic inquiry. The goal is to develop the skills of principals so they could make informed, reflective, and self-critical judgments about their professional practice. Here the principal is an active learner and the source of knowledge in their self-reflection and engagement. Principals are challenged to reflect on their personal values and beliefs about their roles as effective school leaders. Reading and journaling are fundamental practices in the reflective inquiry approach to professional development for effective school principals (Daresh & Alexander 2015; Fenwick & Pierce, 2002).

Delivery Models

The most commonly used model of professional development is the training model, which involves a presenter or group of presenters, who deliver expertise through group-based activities such as conferences, workshops, and seminars (Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2014).

Training model. Most effective training happens when the objectives and participant outcomes are clearly communicated (Guskey, 2014). The advantage of this method is that the presenter is sharing a common message; however, a disadvantage is the inability to individualize content and provide choice (Guskey, 2014).

Peer coaching and clinical observation models. Guskey (2014) notes that the best way to learn is through observation and assessment, which could be conducted through peer coaching and clinical observation. Participants benefit from shared experiences and collaborative reflection. Active engagement by the participant is critical for optimal learning, according to Bandura (1977). Professional development activities that engage the learner in problem-solving have also been found to be more effective in meeting the needs of the adult learners (Ingalls & Arceri, 1972). The approach is most effective and more likely to enhance knowledge and skills that will influence change when it is sustained over a period of time, involves a substantial number of hours, and has a greater emphasis to content that is connected to other professional development (Garet et al., 2001).

Professional development school partnership model. Along with ISLLC, the Professional Development School (PDS) outlined a partnership process that develops resources from the university and makes them available for teachers in schools. The

model offers a wide variety of resources principals could access for support as they develop these visions. The PDS model allows for collaboration between the school leaders and university faculty to determine school needs and establish common goals. The Professional Development School model for instructional leaders is important to school reform because it values collaboration and a sharing of resources that allows for the development of partners in the process (Teitel, 2008).

Seminars and online model. Shaha, Glassett, Copas and Huddleston (2016) asserted that educational leaders substantively benefit from professional development offered through seminars and online. Shaha et al. (2016) found that online and on-demand professional development integrated with seminars results in a more positive impact on student achievement than either approach separately.

National Models

Nested learning communities. The concept of school as a learning community—or, more appropriately, a collection of numerous nested learning communities—has attracted growing interest since the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) introduced Leading Learning Communities in 2001. NAESP defines learning communities as places in which adults and students work collaboratively and demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement of performance. NAESP defines one of the six core attributes of a professional learning community as Supportive and Shared Leadership, where relationships forged between administrators and teachers lead to collaborative leadership in the school, where all members of the PLC grow professionally and learn to view themselves as leaders and learners.

Wallace Foundation. A variety of entities played a role in professional development offerings from the national level. Among influential players are the Wallace Foundation and other national organizations. National conferences also provide opportunities for principals across the country to network and share in professional development. Throughout the country there is a wide array of educational companies specializing in on-line professional development workshops, seminars, and training. Salvesen (2016) suggests non-traditional formats for professional development that were electronic-based and/or involved the use of the Internet. Shaha, Glassett, Copas and Huddleston (2016) asserted that educational leaders substantively benefit from professional development offered through seminars and online. Shaha et al. (2016) found that online and on-demand professional development integrated with seminars results in a more positive impact on student achievement than either approach separately.

The Wallace Foundation supports several districts in Colorado, New York, and North Carolina that stepped up the professional development training for their principals. Professional associations, such as Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), created in-service academies, seminars, and workshops similar to those at a university level and characterized by the traditional format. Within these workshops, seminars, and academies, the content is changed periodically based on the administrators' needs. This approach is unique because of its short-term delivery and its highly focused topics (Daresh & Alexander, 2015). Workshops, seminars, and academies are unlike university or college-based programs because they are more client-driven. In learning opportunities such as these the principal is personally motivated to seek professional development. Adult learners are motivated by both intrinsic and external

factors. Lecturers recognize that praising and building on the self-esteem of students motivates them to learn. However, “motivation is frequently blocked by barriers such as negative self-concept and time constraints” (Knowles, 1994, p. 68).

SAM process. Also initially funded by the Wallace Foundation is the School Administrator Manager (SAM) process work. SAM is a professional development process using a unique set of tools to change a principal’s focus from school management tasks to instructional leadership—activities directly connected to improving teaching and learning. Research has determined that principals gain the equivalent of 27 extra days of instructional leadership time in their first year using the SAM process and up to 55 days by the third year. The process is designed to help the principal be reflective about how to best work with teachers to improve teaching and learning. The SAM process uses a unique collection process called Time/Task Analysis™ to determine how much instructional, management, and personal time a principal uses. The theory is that if the principal utilizes at least 51% of their school day in an instructional mode rather than a managerial mode, student achievement will increase (Turnbull, Whit, & Arcaira (2012).

ISLLC standards. In 2008, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) developed a framework around school leadership knowledge, behavior, and dispositions. Instructional leaders are also charged with the delivery of this vision that is focused on improving all students with an instructional program that promotes optimal learning (ISLLC, 2008). This places school instructional leaders under extreme pressure to perform. The ISLLC standards are premised on student-centered learning as the measure of educational success. Each standard begins with the phrase, “An administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by...” These

expectations establish a focus “nurturing a vision, sustaining a growth-oriented school culture, managing the organization effectively, collaborating with families and communities, acting with integrity, and participating in the larger social and cultural context” (Lashway, 2003, p. 2).

The ISLLC standards had a strong emphasis upon the school administrator as an educational leader. Though the need for collaborative process to create desired educational outcomes is given some mention in the document, there is vagueness in the language that relates to the outcomes indicators (Pitre & Smith, 2004).

Harvard Principals’ Center. Founded in 1981 and located in the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the Harvard Principals’ Center is a membership organization dedicated to aspiring and experienced educational leaders. The Center organization provides professional development and personal support to school leaders who in turn influence the character and quality of education as school educators.

The voluntary participation encourages instructional leaders to develop their insights and share them with other school leaders. Participants at the Harvard Principals’ Center are supported in their growth by working in a structured and protected setting, maximizing diversity, using principals as a resource, and providing support through an variety of formats (Barth, 1986). The Principals’ Center is interested in what principals know and do, and in what others think principals should be able to know and do” (Barth, 1986, p. 7).

Learning Forward. According to the Learning Forward webpage, “Learning Forward is the only education association working solely to increase student achievement through more effective professional learning” (<http://learningforward.org/>). Formerly the

National Staff Development Council (NSDC), Learning Forward changed its name in 2010 “to reflect not only the association’s growth over its history, but to better represent the vision of the association as a powerful advocate for educator and student learning” (<http://learningforward.org/>). The non-profit professional educators’ organization is devoted to structuring the success for all students through professional development of school leaders, and school improvement. Learning Forward seeks to provide educators with job-embedded professional development that is results-driven and standards-based (<http://learningforward.org/>).

ASCD. Founded in 1943, the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development changed its name to ASCD in 2009 following a lengthy history of growth and expansion of educational professional development through a variety of venues, including journals, books, conferences, webinars, blogs, and courses. In addition, ASCD hosts an annual leadership conference and exhibit show, on-line, professional development, institutes and symposiums that support and develop educational leaders throughout the United States (<http://www.inservice.ascd.org/about-inservice/>).

Pre-service and In-service Preparation

There are two distinctive periods of preparation of the principal: pre-service and in-service development. Pre-service preparation training consists of graduate coursework and district or state level induction programs (Hess & Kelly, 2005). These came almost universally to be reflective of the ISLLC standards. Given that student academic success hinges on the teacher’s capacity to provide quality instruction, school instructional leaders must be able to develop, design, and deliver quality professional development to their faculty and staff that is meaningful and engaging. Preparation programs for new

principals are compelled to include quality experiences that equip incoming instructional leaders with the skills to identify the personal development needs of their staff and develop and deliver quality information to meet those needs (Casey, Dunlap, & Starrett, 2013).

University-based programs accredited by national organizations are redesigned to reflect the ISLLC standards. Previously they indicated shortcomings, such as a disconnection from real-world complexities, an outdated and weak knowledge base, and curriculum that failed to establish a foundation in effective teaching and learning practices (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). In addition, the lowering of admission standards and devalued certification standards are placing school principals in leadership roles when they are neither prepared nor adequately qualified (Davis et al., 2005; Levine, 2005).

School practitioners and scholars alike recognize that the current job responsibilities for principals today are not only unreasonable, but the traditional methods of preparation are no longer adequate (Davis et al., 2005). Aspiring principals as well as existing principals are often ill prepared and inadequately supported to develop school improvement initiatives while managing all the other demands of the job (Levine, 2005). The lack of unqualified and insufficiently trained school principals lead to a nationwide deficit (Roza, Hill, Sclafani, & Speckman, 2004). There is much criticism of the university training and what professional development both before and on the job should look like (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). Colleges, universities, and those who lead them are experiencing tremendous pressure from societal changes.

State and District Sponsored Professional Development

Culturally responsive schools and leaders, although rare, inform us about the capacities leaders need to develop, which in turn inform us on how to reform principal preparation programs (Gordon & Ronder, 2016). The State professional development initiatives are usually organized around principal preparation program standards. Today's school principals are expected to develop, implement, and sustain a vision for their school using a framework clearly articulated from the federal, state, and local level. Through the Illinois State Administrators' Academy, for example, comprehensive arrays of professional development opportunities that support and strengthen the leadership are offered to school leaders. These trainings include Administrative Leadership, Administrative Management, Common Core, Climate and Culture, Curriculum Development, Data and Assessment, Early Childhood, Legal, Educational Leadership, Technology, Support Staff, and Emergency Preparedness. The delivery methods range from online workshops and seminars to podcast library offerings and one-on-one principal mentoring.

School districts took on the responsibility of professional development by creating in-service workshops, academies, and seminars. These modern versions of the traditional model are similar to universities where the principal is subject to the "sit and get" delivery method. The content of the workshops is distinct because it tends to address a narrow range of subjects of highly focused topics (Daresh & Alexander 2015). However, unlike university-based professional development courses, these academies, workshops, and seminars run with the client or participants in mind. These types of professional development usually reflect the principal's personal motivation and design for

information rather than a need to meet degree or certification requirements (Daresh & Alexander 2015). DuFour and DuFour (2013) wrote that effective professional development should focus on curriculum, instruction, and student development. DuFour and DuFour (2013) explained that in order for professional development to be effective it must be: (a) ongoing, with sustained, rather fragmented; (b) collective, rather than individualistic; (c) job-embedded, with teachers/principals learning as they engage in their daily work; and (d) results-oriented, with activities directly linked to higher levels of student learning. From technology, decentralization, and site-based management, new government mandates create a bombardment of conflicting demands on today's principals. These changes are resulting in "a turning of the role of principal 90 degrees from everywhere" (Prestine, 1994, p. 150). The disconnect between theory, preparation, and practice leaves the poorly trained principals inadequately prepared for the challenges ahead in their school roles. Moreover, without a strong research-based mentoring and professional development plan, even these well-intended supports become ill conceived and ineffective "sit and gets."

Education scholars conclude that effective instructional leaders must be cultivated and developed to become high-performing school leaders and focus on the instructional integrity of their schools. Making the shift to developing effective principals has moved front and center among school superintendents due to the stringent accountability mandates. Marzano's (2004) research supported that, in order to improve student achievement, schools must have knowledgeable and effective leadership.

Today's principals are expected to formulate a relationship among staff members, acquire and allocate resources, promote professional development throughout the faculty

and staff, improve student achievement, and build community engagement (Drake & Roe, 2003). In order to support their efforts toward school improvement and revitalize their ongoing commitment to develop and sustain positive learning communities, principals need a variety of professional development opportunities to equip them with necessary tools (Evans & Mohr, 1999; Foster, Loving, & Shumate, 2000; Neufeld, 1997). For these reasons, much professional development is offered through school districts and focused on local needs.

Walker and Qian (2006) report that school principals continue their professional development through a variety of personal ways, including reading, networking, and personal meetings. Reading and journaling are fundamental practices in the reflective inquiry approach to professional development. Principals read critical professional literature that helps to broaden their perspective about leadership, teaching, and learning. In this approach, principals are encouraged to engage in reflective writing via journaling where they can document their failures, accomplishments, and "light bulb" moments. Networking involves linking principals for sharing concerns and effective practices on an ongoing basis. Networks tend to be informal arrangements that emerge when principals seek out colleagues who share similar concerns and potential solutions to problems.

Literature indicates that the confidence of school principals develops through adult professional development opportunities (Knight, 2006; Shidler, 2009). The quality of the professional development interaction is more important than the amount of time spent in the activity itself and is of high quality for the greatest impact on principals (Shidler, 2009). One of the most powerful and effective approaches to professional development is mentoring. A mentor is a professional colleague and critical friend who

assists the principal in understanding professional norms and job expectations and provides helpful advice and guidance (Daresh & Alexander, 2015).

Critique of Existing Professional Development

There is a deficiency in quality professional development for educators in the United States, yet school districts look toward professional development as the means for providing learning opportunities to their teachers and administrators (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Most frequently, these “sit and get” sessions still dominate the offerings and consist of conferences or 1-day workshops with little follow-up or application (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Systemic issues, including lack of time and opportunities to collaborate, are root causes for the ineffective professional development (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Donaldson and Donaldson (2012) cautions that principals need to guard opportunities to learn and grow and that their effectiveness depends on the allotment of time for study, the provision of resources, and trusting relationships.

Leadership training programs are found to be insufficient in the preparation of principals for their roles as effective instructional leaders (Hale & Moorman, 2003; Levine, 2005). The adult learning theory proposes adult learners are self-directed and inherently motivated. They learn best when they are permitted to tap into their personal experiences as resources to connect what they know to what they are learning, which gives purpose to their knowledge (Knowles et al., 2005).

Summary: Evaluation of Effectiveness of Professional Development

Professional development through networking is substantiated by the belief that collegial support is critical to becoming an effective instructional leader and that mutual

support helps to establish greater longevity and leadership productivity (Owens, 2001). Networking provides principals with the opportunity to share ideas and concerns over time. These informal opportunities tend to develop when principals seek out colleagues' experiences, situations, and concerns.

After synthesizing over 800 meta-analyses on the factors that influenced student achievement, Hattie (2015) concluded that the best way to improve schools is to organize teachers into collaborative teams. He suggests that there is clarity on what each student must learn and the indicators of learning the team uses to track progress. Hattie posits educators gather evidence of that learning on an ongoing basis and analyze the results together so they learn which instructional strategies are working and which are not. In other words, he urged schools to function as Professional Learning Communities. Marzano came to a similar conclusion where he described the PLC concept as "one of the most powerful initiatives for school improvement I have seen in the last decade." The quality of the individual teacher remains paramount in student learning, and the PLC concept is our best strategy for creating the system that ensures more good teaching in more classrooms more of the time (DuFour & Marzano, 2015).

Marzano (2004) posits the importance of collaboration among the teachers within a professional learning community. Barton and Stepanek (2012) posit that collaboration during professional development: encourages collective creativity, reduces isolation, and creates a sense of a shared responsibility for students' outcomes. Barton and Stepanek (2012) suggest that in order for professional development to be effective, facilitators must be able to articulate their outcomes in terms of data so that teaching practices and student learning improves. Furthermore, the researchers asserted that adult learners should

engage in problem solving, teamwork and collaboration in order to effectively meet their students' learning needs.

Marsh (2000) also identifies the significance of the principal working as the instructional leader creating viable learning communities within the school. With the establishment of these learning communities come the importance of the principal's skills in the art of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Elmore, 2000). Working together with teachers toward shared goals, the valid feedback and consistent monitoring of effective principal promote school-wide professional development (Alig-Miklarck & Hoy, 2005).

Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2004) stress the value of meaningful collaborative discussion. Traditionally, professional development for school principals is front-loaded with periods of intense courses followed by ongoing sporadic updating on a wide variety of topics with little or no systematic plan (Lashway, 2003).

Recently, policymakers and many practitioners started to realize the importance of coherent professional development centered on what principals need to better serve the needs of their buildings. "When leaders are learners themselves, they are better able to empathize and serve as models when they ask teachers to rethink their practice" (Lashway, 2003, p. 4). There has been dramatic growth in the formalization of mentoring programs across the country that are extended throughout a career cycle. This mentoring provides administrators with specific ideas and strategies as well as encourages them to be more reflective and analytical about their practice (Crow & Mathews, 1998).

Guskey (2014) found that various forms of professional development were successful in assisting principals and teachers with the implementation of new

instructional strategies. There is a shift in the focus of professional development for four reasons. The first reason is that educators see professional development as a dynamic and ongoing process that allows principals to experiment with new ideas and examine results. Secondly, professional development is recognized as systemic and intentional. The third reason evaluation of professional development has gained attention is to gather additional information that is used to guide reforms in both educational programs as well as in professional development. The fourth reason is due to the increased pressure for administrative accountability (Guskey, 2014).

Daresh and Playkno (1994) note distinct differences in the needs of aspiring principals and actual practicing instructional leaders. Carr-Stewart and Walker (2006) confirm the findings and emphasize the importance of socialization and role clarification for new as well as currently practicing instructional leaders. Carr-Stewart and Walker (2006) acknowledge the importance of designing professional development programs to focus on socialization and self-awareness so that, as they grow, they could better define their values and determine how they fit in the community of the school. Roland Barth (1986) highlights that training and presenting professional development to practicing principals is often a challenge because they are leaders, have a difficult time being led, and they “build-up antibodies” (p. 156) to efforts for professional development.

Guskey (2000) asks in *Evaluation Professional Development*, “How do we determine the effects and effectiveness of activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge and skills of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students?” (p. 1). The delivery of professional development does not guarantee student success. “Highly effective professional development is often cited as the answer to

improving student learning yet current practices have been described as episodic, myopic and often meaningless” (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009). Effective professional development that improves principals’ practice is sustained and intensive, addresses student-learning needs, is job-embedded, has application to specific curricula, is collaborative, is intensive, ongoing and connects to practice, is evaluative, ongoing and connected practice and is evaluated (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Sparks, 2002).

Part Three: Professional Development and Theoretical Perspectives

Finally, I will consider how professional development support grounded in adult learning theories might better meet what principals perceive themselves to need. Much of the literature about effective leadership development describes program features believed to be applicable, but there is limited information about what principals believe they need to be effective instructional leaders and more importantly how as adults they learn as professionals. “Learning is an elusive phenomenon... the way people define it greatly influences how they theorize and go about affecting it” (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p. 16). Experimental theorists Piaget and Bruner centered their life’s work on understanding how learning occurs.

Learning Theory: Pedagogy and Andragogy

Two conflicting learning theories—*andragogy* and *pedagogy*—have specific relevance to the adult educator. The transfer of skills from older to younger generations traces back to the Stone Age when parents taught their children (Holden, Swanson, & Naquin, 2001). The organization of the educational system evolved during the Greek and Roman periods (100 B.C.-300 A.D). The origin of *pedagogy*, which serves as the initial

form of education, was implemented in the 7th century in cathedral schools (Knowles et al., 1978, in Ozuah, 2005). Ozuah (2005) defines pedagogy as “the art of science of teaching children” (p. 83). In the 8th century, teachers were responsible for decisions about what children learned and how they learned it (Ozuah, 2005). Pedagogy also helped the teacher to understand the anxieties of the adult learner and encouraged learners to problem solve and become self-directed (Bedi, 2004).

The pedagogical theory implies that student learners will simply learn what they are told to learn. Piaget and Bruner provide guidance to the educational field using data from children and animals through the study of pedagogy. It is through the lens of pedagogy that the learner is the recipient of the expertise of the teacher. Pedagogy is often considered the framework for all learning. It was not until the end of World War I that people in the United States and Europe recognized the unique characteristics of adult learners (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005).

Most people associate pedagogy with children and learning; however, the majority of adult learners are exposed to a classroom-learning environment that promotes pedagogical experiences as for a child. In some adults, those early childhood experiences are negative and, as an adult learner, they have a resistance to experiencing a similar classroom setting (McGrath, 1962). In certain circumstances, adults who had limited background knowledge of the field of study may have had to start from a pedagogical framework in which the lecturer initially explains the basics. As the course continues, the adult learners’ transition from pedagogical learners to more independent learners where they link newly learned knowledge to personal experience (McGrath, 1962).

Serving Adult Learners: Andragogy

Today's colleges and universities understand the financial impact of actively reaching out to adult learners by providing distance learning through online classes, cohorts that support small classes, and proven personal support to participants and flexible classes running both day and evening hours. As Connolly (1996) states, "Adult education is quite distinctive in its approach in that it aims to do substantially more than simply impart information to participants" (pp. 38-39). This is achieved by asking students questions and steering them to relate the new information to their workplace and real-life situations. This method of teaching adult learners is supported by research carried out by Laird (1998) who states, "the andragogical model held the view that the instructor should guide and not manage the content, which is the traditional approach to pedagogy" (p. 126). Innovative colleges and universities reaching out to adult learners are "adopting the andragogical theory of learning where professors use more questions because adults know a great deal" (Laird, 1998, p. 125).

The use of dialog in university classes with adult learners "aids students' understanding of the material discussed in the class" (Quilty, 2003, p. 63). Adults "tend to be centered in their orientation" (Knowles, 1980, p. 54) and in the university setting, something professors need to take into account when designing their classes to include problem-solving as well as interaction time with the student. When Knowles framed his adult learning theory model, he assumed a number of factors, such as the students' desire to participate and learn. However, when presented with professional development, that is not always the case and instructional leaders are often forced to attend professional development seminars, workshops, and the like when there is little or no interest. Houle

(1996) describes “the most learner-centered of all patterns of adult education programs” (pp. 29-30). Over the past 20 years, reactions to the old pattern has drawn adult education’s attention to the fact that they “should involve learners in as many aspects of their education as possible and in the creation of a climate in which both they and the students could fruitfully learn” (Houle, 1996, p. 30). This vision provides an opportunity for an alternative style in the classroom setting (McGrath, 1962). Through the andragogical method, students are encouraged to step into the college or university setting and participate as equals and no longer depend on the professor as the teacher in the pedagogical sense. “...Andragogy has been adopted by legions of adult educators around the world” (1993, p. 21).

German high school teacher Andrew Kapp authored the word “andragogy” in 1833. The term lay dormant until German social scientist Eugene Rosenstock, responsible for teaching downhearted German workers following World War I, came to use it in the early 1920s. Savicevic (2008) saw the need to teach adult learners differently from children. At that time, the European andragogy view expressed the critical element that in order to become more competent, adult learners should assist and help one another as they learn. E. C. Lindeman (1926) introduced the term to America explaining that it is an important method of teaching adults. Knowles attributes the development theories of Rogers, Maslow, Erikson, Havighurst, and others as contributors to the theory of andragogy as a learning theory.

As adults mature, their lifelong learning experiences and educational needs tend to become more complex due to a variety of variables they must manipulate in order to be successful in life (Woldkowski, 2011). As the research indicates, no one theory clearly

reveals how adults learn; however, the work of Knowles, Holton, and Swanson best explains how (Fidishun, 2000). McGrath (1962) explains that adult learners need to know why they are learning new knowledge and understand the benefits of acquiring a new skill before they are willing to participate.

Malcolm Knowles

Malcolm Knowles advanced the term “andragogy” in 1966 from Dusan Savicevic (Reischmann, 2004) and infused his meaning into the word based on his ongoing research in adult education. The term andragogy “is based on the Greek word *aner* (with the stem *andr*) meaning man, not boy” (Knowles, 1980, p. 42). Knowles considered andragogy as “the art and science of helping adults learn” and established the basis for the field of adult learning by contrasting the differences between adult and child learners (Knowles, 1984, p. 43). Knowles was also influential in informing adult learning theory (Knowles, 1978). Principally, Knowles cited the contribution of Tough’s (1978) work with adult learners as instrumental in teaching how adults learn naturally and how they organize their learning activities and seek out supports. Michael Knowles was also influenced by the quantity of learning that occurs when adults learn naturally in contrast to when they are intentionally taught (Knowles, 1978).

Definitions of Andragogy

Knowles defines andragogy as a set of core adult learning principles that apply to all adult learning situations. The goals and purposes for which the learning is offered are separate issues. Adult education professionals should develop and debate models of adult learning separately from models of goals and purposes of their respective fields that use adult learning (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2014). This word pedagogy resulted from

the first endeavor to understand how people learn, but it was initially focused on specifically how children learn. The word andragogy was later coined to apply to how adult learn. In this section, I will develop how the early pioneers then laid out the work of contemporary scholars of adult learning. There are similarities between adults and children in how they process language, interact and communicate; however, many researchers propose adults learn differently (McGrath, 1962).

Knowles' research and work is widely supported and used by educators worldwide (Chen, Kim, Merriam, & Moon, 2008). Knowles' research focuses on six assumptions: (a) adult learners are self-directed; (b) their experience is a resource for learning; (c) their learning focuses on a social role; (d) time perspective is immediate application; (e) they are intrinsically motivated; and (f) they want to problem solve, and they need to know why they are learning (Holton, Knowles, & Swanson, 2005, p. 4).

Adults want to know why they need to learn something before undertaking learning (Knowles et al., 2005). Facilitators must help adults become aware of their "need to know" and make a case for the value of learning and they are responsible for their lives (Knowles et al., 2005). They need to be seen and treated as capable and self-directed. Facilitators should create environments where adults develop their latent self-directed learning skills (Brookfield, 1998). Adults come into an educational activity with different experiences than do youth (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2012; Knowles et al., 2005; Caffarella & Merriam, 2000). Individual differences in background, learning style, motivation, needs, interests, and goals create a greater need for individualization of teaching and learning strategies (Brookfield, 1998; Silberman & Biech, 2015). The richest resource for learning resides in adults themselves; therefore,

tapping into their experiences through experiential techniques (discussions, simulations, problem-solving activities, or case methods) is beneficial (Brookfield, 1998; Knowles et al., 2005; McKeachie, 2002; Silberman & Biech, 2015). Many adults are ready to learn things they need to know and do in order to cope effectively with real-life situations (Knowles et al., 2005). Adult learners want to learn what they could apply in the present, making training focused on the future, or that does not relate to their current situations, less effective.

Adults are life-centered (task-centered, problem-centered) in their orientation to learning (Knowles et al., 2005). They want to learn what will help them perform tasks to deal with problems they confront in everyday situations and those presented in the context of application to real life (Knowles et al., 2005; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2012). Adults are responsive to some external motivators (e.g., better jobs, higher salaries), but the most potent motivators are internal (e.g., desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem). Their motivation could be blocked by training and education that ignores the adult learning principles (Knowles et al., 2005). Knowles believes that adult learners must feel a value is attached to the learning in order to participate in the opportunity to learn. Knowles (1984) posits that adult learners value learning when it is presented in ways it could be used in real life.

It is through this multidimensional way that adult learners best integrate new learning. Bye, Conway, and Pushar (2007) state that adult learners see value in providing feedback by showing interest, learning and enjoyment in the process of learning new concepts and information. Merriam (2001) posits that there is no one adult learning theory that fully captures the complexities of the adult learner. However, there are

current theories that, when blended together, capture the experiences, characteristics, and adult mannerisms of learning (Holton, Swanson, & Naquin, 2001). It appears andragogy is not an all-encompassing theory of adult learning but it continues to ignite a debate and “constitutes one piece of the rich mosaic of adult learning” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 278).

As adult education started to organize in the early 1920s, teachers started to experience problems within the pedagogical frameworks. It became apparent that the transfer of knowledge premise to adults was insufficient. Teachers found the adult learners to be resistant to the standard pedagogical strategies and experienced soaring dropout rates (Knowles, 1980). The need for adult education brought about significant changes in the way education was delivered to the adult learners. It is through Knowles’ andragogical approach that adult learning needs are seriously considered.

Assumptions About Adult Learning

There is an assumption that adults have the ability to be self-directing and are able to take ownership of their learning. Unfortunately, that leads to the additional assumption that the learners’ characteristics emphasized in andragogy are applied to all adult learners. This error in thinking is referred to as universality. The issues of universality are common in adult education. This is reflected when the view of one particular group becomes representative of the experience of the entire population (Flannery, 1994). The characteristics of being self-directed and personally motivated are simplified to represent qualities of adult learners, despite the fact that marginalized people, including people of color and immigrants, are discouraged from seeking these skills (Greer & Mott, 2009; Hvitfeldt, 1986; Lee, 1999; Marcano, 2001; Pratt, 1993). Andragogy does not take into

account either the social or political perspectives of adult learners (Pearson & Podeschi, 1999; Sandlin, 2005).

There are numerous critiques of andragogy. Louis, Leithwood, Walstrom, and Anderson (2010) demonstrate that the theory has become a theory of a recognized principle in adult education. Grace (2001) considered Knowles' theory demolished by the 1990s, and Pratt (1993) shared that Knowles' method was not the remedy for a teaching approach in all-adult education. Scholars in both the United States and abroad continued work to establish andragogy as a method for teaching adult learners. Savicevic (2008) compiled the historical journey of andragogy throughout the world and considered his reflection on Knowles' work in sustaining andragogy into the future. The current research on andragogy continues to grow to include how adult learners are learning through the Internet (Henschke, 2009). Isenberg (2007) established an innovative framework for uniting andragogy with Internet learning where she focused on the six pillars of lifelong adult learners.

Future of Andragogy

As far as the future of andragogy, it appears that it has “much to contribute to the future of adult education and learning” (Henschke, 2009, p. 36). It is Henschke's (2009) belief that additional discussions should move beyond Knowles' work to include worldwide perspectives of others so that theories and adult learning could be combined and deepened and, with continued research, andragogy established as a scientific, academic discipline. Moving ahead from the work of Knowles, the foundation of adult learning today is built upon three frameworks. These frameworks are the learner, the learning process, and the background of learning.

Rising from ongoing internal debates from the lack of universal consensus, four significant research areas drive the development adult leaders. Those research areas are self-directed learning, critical reflection, experimental learning, and learning to learn (Brookfield, 1998).

An initial step for adult learning begins when adult learners take control over their learning in the self-directed phase setting by setting personal goals, selecting the appropriate resources needed to learn, determining methods for their personal learning, and finally developing the ability to assess their learning progress (Candy, 1991; Field, 1991; Knowles, 1975). Many non-traditional adult learners spend less time in the classroom due to professional commitments, but it is important that the adult learner feels safe in the classroom and not embarrassed to make mistakes. When the learning environment is safe, the adult learner can better understand why the mistake was made, correct it, and learn from the mistake based on educational and lifelong experiences (Erickson, 2009).

According to research by Tillema and van der Westhuizen (2006), adult learners placed into a community with similar interests had a better chance of learning success. This type of shared goal within a group learning environment provides a continuous structure that supports personal learning (Tillema & van der Westhuizen, 2006). Adult learners are known for the accumulation of knowledge and experience they gain from their professional experiences and believe they are acknowledged for bringing these talents into the classroom (Fidishun, 2000).

Thinking critically and contextually is the second phase of the adult learning theory and is wrapped inside the circles of psychology, logic, dialectical thinking,

working intelligence, reflective judgment, post-formal reasoning, and epistemic cognition (Brookfield, 1998). The concept of ideological critique is important to critical reflection.

Giroux (1983) posits,

The ideological dimension that underlies all critical reflection is that it lays bare the historically and socially sedimented values at work in the construction of knowledge, social relations, and material practices... it situates critiques within a radical notion of interest and social transformation. (pp. 154-155)

Transformative Learning as the New Andragogy

Other theorists, including Mezirow and Kegan, studied the individualized characteristics of adult learners. Mezirow's focus on transformational learning started in 1978 where he theorized that transformational learning occurs when the learners are focused to reflect and reassess their current knowledge paradigms (Mezirow, 2000). Research on transformative learning is ever growing as it attempts to frame pedagogy with explicit practices for fostering critical reflection, self-efficacy, and an overall constructivist approach to learning. Much like Freire, Mezirow takes a constructivist approach to transformational learning, believing knowledge is created from interpretations, and those interpretations become influenced by a new experience (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2012).

Mezirow believes there are two categories of learning: transformational and informational. "Transformational learning allows us to recognize and assess our structures of assumption and expectations that frame our thinking, feeling and acting" (Mezirow, 1978, p. 84). Informational learning describes learning *how* we know it (Illeris, 2009). There is a growing interest outside the education field searching for a theoretical lens to better understand how adults learn. Future understanding of adult

learners includes additional information and a more global understanding of survey research designs, the engagement of theoretical frameworks beyond the current dominant perspective, and finally the social nature of transformative learning (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Transformative learning influences the field of not only adult education but also how we think of adults as learners and how we think in relationship to andragogy. According to Taylor and Cranton, (2012), transformative learning “has accomplished what the study of andragogy had hoped to and much more” (p. 16).

Andragogy’s research is encumbered by a variety of difficulties including the incompatibility of studies and learner control (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). According to Taylor and Cranton (2012), transformative learning theory has far surpassed andragogy, providing a new identity for the field—a theoretical framework that guides both research and practice. Therefore, many other disciplines showed an interest in engaging in transformational learning as a way of making sense of progressive education (p. 17). While transformative learning embodies the core assumptions associated with best practices when teaching adult learners, at the same time it is faced with tension between societal change and the individual. Taylor and Cranton (2012) hope that this tension moves research toward a more unified transformative learning theory.

Critical Social Theory

Critical social theory frames the structure, culture, and day-to-day lives of people. According to Brown (2004), this theory highlights the educational ideas, policies, and practices of those in the dominant social class while at the same time works to dehumanize and silence all those not ranking in the dominant class. “It is precisely in understanding the normative dimensions of education and how they intertwine with

social, structural, and ideological processes and realities that critical theory plays a key role” (p. 154). Calling for a change of the role and responsibilities of instructional leaders, there is a need for professors to restructure their teaching to speak to the issues of power and privilege in an effort to address social justice issues.

Effective leaders are known to “take responsibility for their learning, sharing a vision for what could be, assess their own assumptions and beliefs, and understand the structural and organic nature of schools, prepare programs to carefully craft authentic experiences aimed at developing such skills” (Brown, 2004, p. 78). By exposing aspiring principals to ideas they find uncomfortable and encouraging them to explore the new concepts, an understanding of the transformation of control ideologies and ideologies could occur.

Principals’ Perspectives on What They Need as Learners

By promoting and encouraging active engagement of adult learners, learners are encouraged to actively collaborate with educators in the field. Adult learners need opportunities to take control of their learning through discussion and dialog with each other, opportunities to write, demonstrate, and take the initiative to problem-solve. These opportunities build their knowledge as well as their confidence. Through participation in an environment of motivated colleagues and supports, the adult learner is inspired to gain more knowledge as a developing learner.

The compelling and ongoing practice of building capacity of all students is an undertaking and monumental task that school districts across the nation seek to secure. However, by supporting adult learning, i.e., of the principals, there can be a profound influence on student achievement in a positive manner (Drago-Severson, 2011). It is

when adult learners grow and learn through participation in their professional learning that they then render a genuine difference for all educational stakeholders.

Kegan's Orders of Mind Theory

Robert Kegan's (1982) theory of adult development examines and describes the way humans grow change over the course of their lives. This constructive-developmental theory combines the *construction* of an individual's understanding of reality with the *development* of that construction to more complex levels over time. Kegan proposes five distinct stages—or “orders of mind”—through which people may develop. His theory is based on his ideas of “transformation” to qualitatively different stages of meaning making. Kegan explains that transformation is different from learning new information or skills. New information may add to the *things* a person knows, but a *transformation* changes the *way* he or she knows those things. Transformation, according to Kegan, is about changing the very *form* of the meaning-making system—making it more complex, more able to deal with multiple demands and uncertainty. Transformation occurs when someone is newly able to step back, reflect on something, and make decisions about it. For Kegan (1982), transformation learning happens when someone changes, “not just the way he behaves, not just the way he feels, but the way he knows—not just what he knows but the *way* he knows” (p. 17).

Kegan (1994) states there are five orders of mind. The first order describes the meaning making of small children, and the fifth order describes the theoretical stage of development highly unusual in any population and never found in people before midlife. In Kegan's first order, young children cannot yet hold the idea of “durable objects”—which is the notion that things in the world retain the same qualities over time. The

second order is thought to belong exclusively to older children and adolescents, but there is increasing evidence that adults could spend many years in this order as well (Adult Development Research Group, 2001). Demographic evidence shows that between 13% and 36% of adults aged 19-55 (depending on the study population) make meaning in this order or in the transition between this and the third order. People begin to enter into the third order during adolescence, and there is a great deal of evidence that they could live much or all of their lives in this order. Studies indicate that there is a large percentage of adults—of all ages, occupations, and social-economic classes—who inhabit this world. Kegan (1994) found that between 43% and 46% of adults aged 19-55 make meaning at the third order or in the third-fourth transition. The fourth order seems familiar to those who work with adults, because it is the order that looks the most like modern images of the way adults are supposed to be in North American culture at the turn of the millennium. The most surprising realization about this order, in fact, is that so many adults have not yet reached this level of complexity. Research shows that between 18% and 34% of adults between 18 and 55 make meaning at this order (Kegan, 1994).

Finally, Kegan offers a fifth order, which is never seen before midlife and is seen only rarely, although development beyond the fourth order into transition between the fourth and the fifth orders are more prevalent. Kegan (1994) reports that between 3% and 6% of adults aged 19 to 55 make meaning in the transition between the fourth and fifth orders; no adults in the studies Kegan reported made meaning at the fifth order. (But since the age range of these studies is relatively young, it is likely that there would be more people in the fifth order in a more mature population.)

Stages of Learning

The constructive-development theory of adult development (Kegan, 1994) acknowledges that adults make sense of things by continually striving to make sense of their experiences. The world of the adult learner is ever changing, and developmental changes are understood as the adult learner works to make sense of these changes. As adults learn, they pass through two stages of learning known as instrumental and socializing (Kegan, 1994). It is important that principals have a clear understanding of these stages for sustainable and effective cultures of mature learning. By shaping around the adult learner and creating growth and learning opportunities, trainers could play an important role in meeting the adaptive changes instructional leaders must face (Drago-Severson, 2011).

Instrumental stage. Instrumental learners “orient toward following rules and feel supported when others provide specific advice and explicit procedures as they could accomplish their goals” (Drago-Severson, 2011, p. 61) and seek to understand specific processes and exact answers. Instrumental learners grasp the learning of new strategies but not the application of the new material. Instructional leaders continually work to develop their personal growth, and there is a compelling challenge that the training must consider as they work to build capacity for these adult learners. We know that “supporting adult learning has a direct a positive influence on increasing student achievement” (Drago-Severson, 2011, p. 2). It is imperative that the professional development has a direct correlation to positively influencing student achievement.

Socializing stage. Socializing learners are entwined in the perspective of others and how their opinions could be incorporated in the reflection of the work. It is here

where the application of the knowledge is grounded as the information is spread to others through the application and from learning from each other (McWhirter, 2014).

Learning Designs

Growth is defined by Eleanor Drago-Severson (2011) as an “increase in cognitive, emotional or affective, intrapersonal (the way self-relates to self), and interpersonal (the way self-relates to others) capacities to better manage leading, teaching, learning and living” (p. 10). Drago-Severson (2011) developed a three-strand Learning Design standard model that includes: (a) apply learning theories and research models; (b) select learning designs; and (c) promote active engagement (Learning Forward, 2011).

Applying learning theories is a powerful constructive theory that adult learners learn in different ways by making sense of their personal experiences. Adult learners need opportunities to interpret their experiences along with differentiated kinds of supports in order to process information, learn, and grow. Feedback is an important concept in the component. Mentoring, when a person is providing and receiving feedback, is a significant part of offering appropriate support.

The standard assists professional learning for administrators that increases the educators’ effectiveness and in turn helps to transform student achievement. Effective professional development for the adult learner could be more effective when the presenter moves beyond the delivery of the content and looks at the personal experiences of the adult learner and builds from that perspective. It is through professional development that is delivered in a way in which the adult learner is respected, valued, and given the opportunity to bring with them their personal experiences that increases the effectiveness to achieve the selected outcomes. The experiences that are created by these professional

development opportunities and the variety of forms of diversity within them are more important than the structure (Learning Forward, 2011).

Summary and Conclusions

Education in the United States, despite its' is in a catastrophic state, is one of the most important mechanisms driving the future of our nation. The promise of students' future success lies in the ability of school leaders to provide the highest quality of education possible. According to the literature, the two most important factors in ensuring student academic success are the quality of the teacher and the effectiveness of the school leader (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). The reality is that many schools are being led by principals who are not prepared for the rigors of the job (Levine, 2005). The solutions to the dilemma range from reconstituting the school by hiring new administration and teachers or train those currently in these positions to face the challenges of the job (USDOE, 2005).

The art of learning to do the challenging and difficult job well requires on-going scholarship, taking place in university pre-service classrooms as well as through guided, job-embedded practice at the district level (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). Serving as an effective instructional leader requires extensive knowledge of learners and learning, teaching techniques, behavior management, and the content itself. Professional knowledge requires many years to master, yet, due to change, is always evolving (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). Job-embedded professional development—skillfully implemented and supported by federal, state, and local policy—constitutes a powerful lever to advance student learning.

No doubt, educational delivery to today's children and the preparation of educators have changed over the past few decades. The changes bring an acute awareness among educational providers charged with educating children in new ways and at higher levels. In order to meet these challenges, colleges and universities must produce school administrators who have the knowledge and aspiration of the kinds of schools required in the future (Grogan & Andrews, 2002). DeVita (2005) has questioned whether today's principals are receiving the essential and critical preparation necessary to become the effective and transformational instructional leaders needed to improve the schools of the future.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This chapter describes the research design and procedures that were used to explore the elementary school principals' perceptions of what makes effective instructional leaders and the support they need. In the chapter the researcher will present the characteristics of the research design; explain research questions and the purpose, discuss positionality, the role of the researcher, and ethical issues; and describe the data collection and data analysis procedures that will be applied in the study.

Characteristics of Mixed Method Research

A concurrent mixed-methods research design, as described by Creswell (2013), was applied in this study. The study was conducted in two phases. First, a quantitative survey was used to gather data from a sample of elementary school principals regarding their perceptions of what constitutes effective instructional leadership. Second, qualitative interviewing was used to explore thoughts and experiences related to the topic from a purposefully selected group of participants.

According to Creswell (2005), "Mixed Method designs are procedures for collecting, analyzing, and linking both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a multiphase series of study" (p. 53). Creswell (2013) posits that this method most likely originated when Donald Campbell and Donald Fiske combined the quantitative and qualitative methods to study the validity of psychological traits in 1959. Mixed method is based upon the premise that, when combining the quantitative with the qualitative

methods, the researcher can better explore, analyze, and explain the problem than if left to utilize one or the other separately (Creswell, 2013).

Mixed Method design helps the researcher offset the limitations within both quantitative and qualitative discovery methods. The concept emerged from the idea of triangulation and merging a variety of data (Creswell, 2013). “It is not enough to simply collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data: they need to be ‘mixed’ in some way so that they form a more complete picture of the problem than they do when standing alone” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p. 7). Triangulation, according to Creswell (2005), “... is a design of collaborating evidence from different individuals (e.g., a principal, and a student), types of data (e.g., observational field notes and interviews), or methods of data collection (e.g., documents and interviews) in descriptions and themes in qualitative research” (p. 252).

A Mixed Method research design is a procedure used to collect and analyze data by combining both qualitative and quantitative data within a single study to truly understand the research problem. By using a mixed method approach, the research can provide more depth of understanding than either type by itself. “It is a legitimate inquiry approach” (Brewer & Hunter, 1989, p. 28). While Mixed Method research had been in practice for several decades “only recently has the genre emerged as an approach that brings the nice-separated quantitative and qualitative paradigms together to form a new epistemological, theoretical and methodological way of working, when appropriate for the research purpose and question” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 11).

Quantitative researchers have long complained about the lack of opportunity to include context or setting within their studies. Qualitative research provides the

opportunity for the researcher to establish clarity of the contextual setting and personal insights of each participant. Qualitative strategies frame the role and biases of the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In contrast, Tashakori and Teddlie (2010) explain that the mixed method design provides the researcher with a variety of tools for data collection to respond to questions that cannot be answered with a qualitative or quantitative approach alone. By combining the methods, the researcher can obtain insight into different levels of data analysis.

In this study, I conducted the data collection and analysis in two phases as I focused on understanding and exploring elementary school administrators' perceptions regarding effective leadership and the supports they believe they need to be effective building leaders. The quantitative methods research techniques provided an excellent means by which to explore perceptions. By implementing quantitative research, I asked specific, narrow questions, collected numeric data from study participants, and analyzed the numbered data using statistics. Vogt (2007) posits,

Because there is no 'right method' in research, the purpose of research cannot be to use it. Rather, the point is to learn something new, and not new to you, but new to the community of researchers and professionals interested in your question.
(p. 7)

According to Creswell (2005), the most important aspects of quantitative research are the collection, analysis, and reporting the results of the study.

As Miles and Huberman (1994) posit, with a qualitative design, "the researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors 'from the insider' through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding, and of suspending or 'bracketing' preconceptions about the topics under discussion" (p. 6). Creswell (2005)

explains that qualitative research is a process of gathering information from a respondent in the form of words.

“From the start of data collection, the qualitative analysis is beginning to decide what things mean-is noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, casual flows, and propositions” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). Creswell (2003)

identifies the four key components of qualitative research:

- (1) employs multiple interactive and humanistic methods in a natural setting
- (2) is basically interpretive and “emergent rather than tightly prefigured”
- (3) “views social phenomena holistically”
- (4) incorporates researcher’s self-reflection, introspection, and “acknowledgment of biases, values, and interests.” (pp. 181-183)

Merriam (1998) defines the characteristics of qualitative research to be: “The goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, and inductive orientation to analysis, and findings that are richly descriptive” (p. 11). Merriam (2001) further explains that qualitative studies generally gather informational data through a variety of methods including interviews, document analysis, observations, and phenomenon descriptions. From this information develops the “identification of reoccurring patterns (in the form of categories, factors, variables and themes) that cut through the data or in the delineation of a process” (p. 11). According to Bryant and Miron (2004), researchers must consider three notable challenges: gathering enough data to address the research question(s), organizing the data that has been gathered, and interpreting the collected data.

Creswell (2013) posits that the concept of Mixed Method research began in the early 20th century. Campbell and Fiske refined the Mixed Method approach in 1959 and the rationale for using Mixed Method expanded as scholars continued to triangulate data

using multiple sources to produce differing perspectives on data collected. Russek and Weinberg (1993) explained that each of the research methods provided “distinct strengths to broaden the study and afforded deeper insights” (p. 13). A Mixed Method research study permits the researcher to understand complex information both quantitatively and qualitatively. According to Creswell and Clark (2007):

Mixed Method research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection of data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems that either approach alone. (p. 5)

Tashakori and Teddlie (2010) explain a mixed method approach as “The broad inquiry logic that guides the selection of specific methods and that is informed by conceptual positions common to Mixed Method practitioners (e.g., the rejection of “either-or” choices at all levels of the research process (p. 97). Finally, Saldaña (2011) suggests “Mixed Method research utilizes a strategic and purposeful combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis for its studies” (p. 10). There are three types of Mixed Method designs: triangulation, explanatory, and exploratory. For the purpose of this study, I used the triangulation Mixed Method design, where I gave equal priority to both the quantitative and qualitative data.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the perceptions of elementary school principals concerning what was needed to become effective instructional leaders. In the 2003 report *Preparing School Principals: A National Perspective on Policy and Program Innovations* endorsed by the Institute for Educational

Leadership and the Illinois Education Research Council, authors Hale and Moorman

suggest:

While the jobs of school leaders—superintendents, principals, teacher leaders and school board members—have changed dramatically, it appears that neither organized professional development programs nor formal preparation programs based in higher education institutions have adequately prepared those holding these jobs to meet the priority demands of the 21st century, namely, improved student achievement. (p. 1)

The past two decades have seen an ongoing debate over the conceptual models: instructional leadership and transformational leadership. Instructional leadership differed from transformation leadership when the new leadership characteristic called shared vision was introduced, and the value of human resources became front and center within the school organizations (Hallinger, 2003).

This research provides district administrators with knowledge of the supports school principals believe they need. Provided with that support, principals can become effective instructional leaders (Leithwood & Azah, 2016). Thus, this study explored, from the school principal's perspective, what supports are necessary to become an effective building leader. By identifying these essential supports, school districts can scaffold effective professional development opportunities to develop better elementary school administrators.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do principals describe an effective instructional leader?
2. What professional learning/development opportunities are typically offered by districts to enhance leadership effectiveness of elementary building principals?

3. What supports do elementary building principals believe they need to become effective leaders able to take on the in-depth challenges they face in the educational world?
4. How can district administration better support school principals in their role as instructional leaders?

Research Design

This study was conducted in two phases. Quantitative Phase I consisted of a Survey Monkey delivered online survey. The online survey of Arkansas elementary principals in the five geographic regions of the state, which included the Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, Southeast and Central regions, captured student demographics, school demographics, principal's experience, and level of education. Qualitative Phase II consisted of interviews. This interpretive approach was used to explore and capture the perceptions of a selected group of elementary school principals and what they believe they need to be effective instructional leaders. The participants were selected based the quantitative study of which principals were willing to be interviewed. This group of participants was invited to participate in interviews using a semi-structured protocol. An interpretive perspective facilitated an in-depth approach for expanding upon the results of the online survey by using follow-up personal interviews. Phase II involved individual interviews to gain a greater understanding of what elementary school principals believed they need to be effective instructional leaders. In this research study, the initial on-line survey resulted in preliminary descriptive statistics, whereas the personal interviews provided more detail, clarifying the experiences of each principal's support needs and their meaningful understanding of effective instructional leadership.

The interpretive approach allowed the researcher to uncover each elementary school principal's leadership support needs on a more personal and individual basis, and to understand better the impact of those supports. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) point out that interpretive analysis can involve an open-minded imagination by which the researcher works to derive several different angles or perspectives on the phenomena being researched. The Phase II interview process further examined the perceptions of elementary school instructional leaders. "The aim is to arrive at structural descriptions of an experience, the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced" (Merriam, 1998, p. 159).

Participant Selection

Participant selection is a very important component of the study design. According to Saldaña (2011), "The major criterion for appropriateness is whether the subject of the researcher's study is central to the participant's experience" (p. 52). The Phase I quantitative survey was sent to a random sample of 500 elementary school principals selected from the Arkansas Association of Education Administrators (AAEA) principal membership registry. The interview participants were purposefully selected from those who responded to the Phase I survey and indicated that they were willing to participate in an interview. Following Creswell's (2013) example, I assigned a number to each individual in the registry to protect their anonymity.

From the Phase I survey information gathered and analyzed, participants were selected from each of the five Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) geographically identified regions (see Appendix B) and interviewed in the qualitative Phase II component. This yielded a sample size of 12 practicing elementary principals statewide.

Specifically, there were three volunteers from the Northwest region, three from the Northeast, two from the Southwest region, two from the Southeast region and two from the Central region. Saldaña (2011) suggests a group of three to six participants affords a broader field for analysis. Following Saldaña's (2011) lead, the researcher served as the "primary instrument" (Saldaña, p. 20) and planned, facilitated, and oversaw all components of the interview project from start to finish. The researcher was able to "work in a rigorously curious and ethical manner to achieve the project goals" (p. 20).

Data Collection Procedures

Participant data collection is an effective manner to solicit and document "information in their own words, an individual's or group's perspectives, feelings, opinions, values, attitudes, and beliefs about their personal experiences and social world, in addition to factual information about their lives" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 32). In Phase I, an online survey developed for the purpose of the study was delivered to a random sample of 500 elementary school principals within the five region areas as identified by the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrator registry. For Phase II, principals were purposefully selected from those who volunteered to be interviewed. Data gathered from this survey assisted in developing the findings in the Phase II interview questions. The survey instrument was posted from April 18-May 19, 2016. A semi-structured interview protocol was used for the Phase II interviews. Creswell (2005) recognizes qualitative research as a process of collecting information in the form of words from purposefully selected participants facilitated by general questions from the researcher.

Instrumentation

Online Survey

The survey included the participant's name, age range, grade levels served, number of students served, size of district, and socioeconomic percentage of the school and district. The demographic questions on the survey were used to gather information concerning student population, grade levels of service, the school's socioeconomic percentage, and principals' level of education (see Appendix C). The closed-ended multiple-choice response items were used to collect information on principals' administrative experience from the principals within the five regions identified in the state of Arkansas. Other questions included rating their perception of their leadership skill level as accomplished, competent, developing or beginning; their preferred ways of learning, knowledge of how technology can be used to support instruction, and identifying their professional development topic needs. Participants had the opportunity to respond to one open-ended question in the on-line survey, "How do you describe an effective principal?" Finally, the online survey data was used to identify potential principals to interview by asking respondents to indicate if they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview.

Interview Protocol

Phase II involved interviewing 12 principals who expressed their willingness to be interviewed in response to a survey question. A semi-structured interview protocol gained a rich description of the perceptions of each participant. I used a semi-structured approach asking basic questions, but asked participants to elaborate by using phrases such as, "Tell me more about that." I controlled the questions and still engaged

participants in conversations that drew out information regarding opinions. I conducted the interviews using a semi-structured format consisting of six focus questions (see Appendix D). All interviews were digitally recorded.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the Phase I online survey provided detailed information including number and percentages of participant responses for each question. The response to the open-ended question about describing an effective instructional leader was coded for patterns and themes. The descriptive numerical data were reported in terms of numbers and percentages of responses displayed in tables.

According to Patton (2005), qualitative research involves the analyses of data from direct fieldwork observations, in-depth, open-ended interviews, and written documents. The qualitative interview audiotapes were transcribed verbatim, coded, and responses analyzed for patterns and themes (Creswell, 2013) to better understand the perceptions of the selected participants regarding what is needed to become effective instructional leaders.

Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness, Authenticity, and Credibility

Qualitative researchers use various methods and criteria to ensure validity and reliability. The data collected from both the initial online survey and the follow-up Phase II interviews strengthened the validity of the study's findings. Patton (2005) suggests this process allows a mixed-methods study to triangulate by combining qualitative and quantitative methods. For the purpose of this study, I validated the accuracy and credibility of the information gathered using the strategies of member checking and triangulation with the Arkansas Association of School Administrators Database. Specific

school demographics and physical locations were verified by the regional state map and information provided by the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators in Little Rock, Arkansas. This researcher gathered extensive quotations and developed rich detailed descriptions from the participants' perceptions. This approach to triangulating the findings from both Phases I and II supported the emerging themes and patterns.

According to Creswell (2005), "Member checking is the process in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account" (p. 253). I provided, in writing, an opportunity for each participant to review the findings from their interview and inquired if the themes and descriptions were accurate and complete.

In qualitative research, the researcher has significant ethical responsibilities when interviewing participants. According to Yin (2015), the protection of each respondent is very important, and the researcher is charged with taking necessary steps toward professional accountability. Given the potentially sensitive nature of the participants' perceptions, I honored and respected their rights. Because of a limited focus on the study of elementary school principals in Arkansas, the participants may have been professional acquaintances. Therefore I followed the procedures and protocols established by Illinois State University and filed the required Instructional Review Board (IRB) documents in advance of the research. With IRB approval, participants identified for Phase II interviews were provided with two copies of the consent form. One form was signed by the participant and returned to the researcher prior to the interview. The participant kept the second copy of the consent form for their records. Each respondent received a written copy of their interview responses with the opportunity to clarify, delete, or add to the

information gathered. Each participant was also presented with the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

Creswell (2003) explains the importance of the researcher in protecting the rights and confidentiality of the participants in a study and outlines the following protocol:

- (1) the research objectives will be articulated verbally and in writing so that they are clearly understood by the informant (including a description of how data will be used),
- (2) written permission to proceed with the study as articulated will be received from the informant,
- (3) a research exemption form will be filed with the Instructional Review Board...
- (4) the informant will be informed of all data collection devices and activities,
- (5) verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports will be made available to the informant,
- (6) the informant's rights interests and wishes will be considered first when choices are made regarding reporting the data, and
- (7) the final decision regarding informant anonymity will rest with the informant. (Creswell, 2003, p. 202)

Each of the AAEEA membership elementary school principals received an email invitation and active link to participate in the Phase I online survey. All personal identification indicators were removed and each applicant was assigned a number in place of their name and personal information. Principals who were interviewed were assigned pseudonyms for purposes of the write-up of their interviews.

Role and Positionality of the Researcher

Patton (2005) stresses the importance of the researcher acknowledging and understanding any biases the researcher may have and work to avoid any negative effects these biases may present during the research process. Because of the significant role the researcher plays there were numerous ways the researcher can influence or skew the outcomes. I am a veteran public school principal who holds the same position and faces

similar challenges to those of the participants. My familiarity with the phenomenon under investigation heightens my sense of positionality. However, Tisdell (2002) establishes that in “conducting research, in spite of the best attempts to do otherwise, we tend unconsciously to project our experience or knowledge onto others’ stories” (p. 90). In my role as the instrument of the qualitative Phase II data gathering process, biases, such as well-developed personal opinions and preconceptions, were acknowledged (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2005; Stake, 1995).

The interpretive roles and responsibilities are impacted by the researcher’s sense of positionality and self-reflexivity with investigative process and analysis process.

According to Bloom (2002):

To be self-reflective is equated with “coming clean” as a researcher about how race, class, gender, religion, and person/social values influence the researchers understanding of the power dynamics of the research setting, the phenomena under study, and the researcher-respondent relationships. (p. 291)

Ethical Considerations

I had significant ethical responsibilities when interviewing participants. I received approval from the IRB at Illinois State University and insured that all research was conducted in compliance with the requirements and ethically executed.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The purpose of this research study was to investigate elementary principals' perceptions of the support they need in order to become more effective instructional leaders. To carry out the purpose of the study, a two-phase mixed-method research design was utilized. Phase I of the study was designed to collect data from elementary school principals who were employed in the state of Arkansas. The principals, who were selected through purposive sampling, were identified through the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (N=500). Of the 500 principals who were invited to participate in the study, a total of 112 (22.4%) responded. Each of the 112 participants completed a 20-question survey that was distributed through Survey Monkey, Inc., an online survey software and questionnaire tool. The survey was designed to collect the participants' responses to questions relating to their perceptions of effective instructional leadership. See Appendix C for a summary of the participant demographics. Results of the survey are reported in the first section of Chapter IV.

Phase II of the study was designed to collect qualitative data pertaining to elementary school principals' perceptions about the support they need in order to become more effective instructional leaders. Qualitative data were collected from 12 elementary school principals, who were purposefully selected to participate in semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes for each principal. The interviews were digitally recorded. Similar words and phrases were identified, color-coded, and

then grouped into emerging themes. The second section of Chapter IV presents the interview results. In Chapter V, data from Phase I and Phase II are integrated to answer to the research questions.

Data Analysis and Results from Survey

Questions One and Two were designed to collect data relating to the personal characteristics of each participant. Question One from the survey was designed to specifically identify the gender of the 112 participants. All participants responded to Question One. Responses provided by the participants indicated that the majority were female. Specifically, 79 (70.5%) were female and 33 (29.5%) were male. Table 1 displays the frequencies and percentages of the participants by gender.

Table 1

Question 1: Characteristics of Participants—Gender (n=112)

Gender	Frequencies	Percentages
Male	79	70.54%
Female	33	29.46%
Total	112	100.00%

Question Two from the survey instrument was designed to identify the ages of the 112 participants. All participants responded to Question Two. Responses indicated that the majority of the 112 participants (40 or 35.7%) reported being 55 years of age or older. Also of the 112 participants, 3 (2.68%) reported being between the ages of 25 and 34 years of age, and 33 (29.46%) reported being from 35 to 44 years of age. There were 36 (32.14%) who reported being between the ages of 45 and 55. Table 2 displays the age ranges reported by the participants.

Table 2

Question 2: Characteristics of Participants—Age (n=112)

Range	Frequencies	Percentages
25-34	3	2.68%
35-44	33	29.46%
45-54	36	32.14%
55 and older	40	35.72%
Total	112	100.00%

Question Three from the survey was designed to identify the geographical location of the schools where the participants were employed at the time of survey completion. Of the 112 participants, 111 responded to Question Three. Responses indicated that the majority of the participants were employed at schools located in rural areas. Specifically, 70 (63.06%) were employed at schools located in rural areas of Arkansas. There were 23 (20.72%) who reported being employed in schools located in suburban areas in Arkansas, and 18 (16.22%) reported being employed at schools located in urban areas. Table 3 displays the geographical locations of the schools where the participants were employed.

Table 3

Question 3: Geographical Locations of Schools (n=112)

Location	Frequencies	Percentages
Rural	70	63.06%
Suburban	23	20.72%
Urban	18	16.22%
Total	111	100.00%

The purpose of Question Four was to collect data relating to each participant's years of experience as an elementary school principal. Of the 112 participants, 111 responded to Question Four. Data collected for Question Four indicated that 24 (21.62%) of the participants reported having been an elementary school principal for 6 months to 3 years. Seventeen (15.32%) of the participants reported having been an elementary school principal between 3 to less than 5 years. The majority of the participants (30 or 27.03%) indicated having been a principal for 5 to less than 10 years. Sixteen (14.41%) indicated having 11 to 15 years of experience. Nine of the 112 participants (8.12%) indicated having 16 to 20 years of experience, and 15 (13.51%) indicated having 21 or more years of experience. Table 4 displays the frequencies and percentages relating to the years of experience as reported by the participants.

Table 4

Question 4: Years of Experience as an Elementary School Principal (n=112)

Years of Experience	Frequencies	Percentages
6 months to less than 3 years	24	21.62%
3 years to less than 5 years	17	15.32%
5 years to less than 10 years	30	27.03%
11 to 15 years	16	14.41%
16 to 20 years	9	8.12%
21 or more years	15	13.50%
Total	111	100.00%

Question Five was designed to collect data about the number of teachers the participants' supervised at the time the survey was completed. Of the 112 participants, 111 responded to Question Five. The data collected indicated that 17 (15.31%) of the

participants currently supervised from 1 to 20 teachers. The majority of the participants (55 or 49.55%) reported supervising 21 to 40 teachers. The second highest number, 29 (26.13%) of the participants reported supervising 41 to 60 teachers. Eight (7.21%) of the participants reported supervising between 61 to 80 teachers, and 2 (1.8%) of the participants reported the supervision of more than 80 teachers. Table 5 displays reported numbers of teachers supervised by the participants.

Table 5

Question 5: Number of Teachers Supervised (n=112)

Range	Frequencies	Percentages
1-20	17	15.31%
21-40	55	49.55%
41-60	29	26.13%
61-80	8	7.21%
More than 80	8	7.21%
Total	111	100.00%

Question Six was designed to collect data about the numbers of students who attended the elementary schools where the participants were employed. There were 111 of the 112 participants who responded to this question. The data for Question Six indicated that 8 participants (7.2%) reported being employed at schools with less than 200 elementary school students. The majority of the participants (59 or 53.15) reported being employed at schools with a student population between 201 to 500. Forty-one (37%) of the participants reported being employed at schools with a population between 501 to 900 students, and 1 participant (.9) reported being employed at a school with a

student population between 901 and 1000 students. Two of the participants (1.8%) reported being employed at elementary schools that had a population of more than 1,000 students. Table 6 displays the frequencies and percentages reported by the participants for Question 6.

Table 6

Question 6: Student Populations of the School Represented (n=112)

Population	Frequencies	Percentages
Less than 200 students	8	7.21%
201-500 students	59	53.15%
501-900 students	41	36.94%
901-1,000 students	1	.90%
More than 1,000 students	2	1.80%
Total	111	100.00%

Question Seven was included to collect data about the overall percentages of students who received free or reduced-priced meals at the site where the participants were employed. Of the 112 participants, 110 responded to Question Seven. Data indicated that none of the participants were employed at schools where 1% to 25% of the students received free or reduced-price meals. Twenty-three (20.91%) of the participants were employed at schools where 26 to 50% of the student body received free or reduced-priced meals, and 51 (46.36%) of the participants indicated that they were employed at schools where 51% to 75% of the students received free or reduced-priced meals. Responses provided by 36 (32.73%) of the participants indicated that they were employed at schools where 76% or more of the students received free or reduced-priced meals. Table 7

displays the numbers and percentages of students who received free or reduced-priced meals at the schools where the participants served as principals at the time when the survey was completed.

Table 7

Question 7: Numbers and Percentages of Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Meals (n=110)

Students	Frequencies	Percentages
1-25%	0	0
26-50%	23	20.91%
51-75%	51	46.36%
76% or more	36	32.73%
Total	110	100.00%

The eighth question was an open-ended item that was created to collect qualitative data about the participants' perceptions of effective instructional leaders. The question was: In your own words, describe an effective leader. Of the 112 participants, 94 (83.92%) responded to Question Eight. Each of the participants' responses were analyzed. Similar words and phrases were identified, color-coded, and categorized into major themes. Three themes emerged from the qualitative data collected from Question Eight. The themes are introduced at this point, but will be further elaborated in Chapter V.

Theme 1: Personal Attributes

The first theme was Personal Attributes. Personal Attributes refers to an individual's character traits or a person's behavior and attitudes that make up his or her

personality. Personal attributes include skills such as being approachable, being a good listener, having a sense of humor, being honest, and demonstrating trustworthiness. The theme, Personal Attributes, emerged through the identification of terms and phrases such as “encourager,” “kind-hearted and caring,” and “has a sense of humor.” One participant responded that an instructional leader is “Someone who can encourage staff as well as students to do their best.” Another participant described an instructional leader as being “committed.” Participants also described an effective instructional leader as being “a good communicator and a collaborator.” “Empowering,” “innovative,” and “reflective” are additional terms the participants used to describe effective instructional leaders.

Theme 2: Values Relationships

Values Relationships was the second theme identified. Values Relationships refers to the demonstration of genuine skills used to validate the positive values and traits of others such as giving praise, being respectful, being compassionate and being kind-hearted. The second theme emerged through the identification of terms and phrases such as “knows their teachers, students and staff,” “works alongside the faculty,” and “builds trusting relationships with others.” One participant wrote that effective instructional leaders are “willing to work alongside the faculty to accomplish goals.” Another participant commented that an effective instructional leader “will incorporate the involvement of parents, the community and school staff, working collaboratively to ensure that students are learning...” Other participants described an effective instructional leader as “someone who works collegially with the staff,” one who has “built a trusting relationship with the staff, students, and parents,” and one who “understands that without relationships, no great work can be accomplished.

Theme 3: Leadership Skill Sets

The third theme that emerged was Leadership Skill Sets. Leadership Skill Sets refers to the characteristics most commonly noted among successful leaders, such as having emotional stability, having good communication skills, having the ability to work collaboratively, being comfortable with change, and being a knowledge seeker. The third theme was identified through terms and phrases such “analyze data,” “makes informed decisions,” and “understands curriculum and instruction.” Participants reported that effective instructional leaders who demonstrate such leadership skill sets are those who are “Knowledgeable about best practices,” “stay abreast of current research practices,” and “are very methodical.” See Table 8 for a description of the three themes found in qualitative responses to an open-ended item about effective instructional leaders. Table 9 displays the themes and the supporting data identified in the participants’ descriptions of an effective instructional leader.

Table 8

Question 8: Descriptions of Themes

Theme	Title	Description
1	Personal Attributes	Refers to an individual’s character traits, behaviors, and attitudes that make up one’s personality. Personal attributes include skills such as being approachable, a good listener, having a sense of humor, being honest, and demonstrating truthworthiness.
2	Values Relationships	Refers to an individual’s demonstration of genuine skills used to validate the positive values and traits of others, such as giving praise, being respectful, compassionate, and kind-hearted.
3	Leadership Skill Sets	Refers to the characteristics that are most commonly noted among successful leaders, such as having emotional stability and good communication skills, being able to work collaboratively, being comfortable with change, and being a knowledge seeker.

Table 9

Question 8: Themes and Supporting Data from Participants' Descriptions of an Effective Instructional Leader

Themes	Descriptive Words and Phrases
1: Personal Attributes	--reflective, continuous, listens, energetic, positive, enthusiastic, creative, open-minded
2: Values Relationships	--works collectively, supports teachers, facilitates shared leadership collaborates with others, student-focused, available to all stakeholders, builds trust with teachers, students, parents, and community members
3: Leadership Skill Sets	--leads by example, has clear vision, highly visible in classrooms, knows best practices, understands assessment and data, sets high standards.

Questions Nine and Ten were included in order to collect data about the participants' perceptions of their own leadership skill levels and their application of effective leadership strategies. Question Nine required the participants to select one of four descriptors that best described their personal leadership skills: (a) Accomplished; (b) Competent; (c) Developing; or (d) Beginning. Accomplished refers to principals who have an extensive knowledge of their roles and responsibilities and execute them in a professional and effective manner. Competent refers to principals who reflect a solid understanding of their roles and responsibilities as a building leader. Their instructional leadership is aligned to the goals of the school and district. Developing refers to principals who reflect moderate understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a building leader and are in the process of striving to master those roles and responsibilities. Beginning refers to principals who appear to understand the roles and responsibilities assigned to building leaderships, but implementation is sporadic and not

entirely successful. All 112 participants provided a response to Question Nine. Twenty-three (20.54%) of the participants described themselves as being "Accomplished." The majority (61 or 54.45%) described themselves as "Competent." Twenty-six (23.21%) described themselves as "Developing." Two (1.79%) of the participants described themselves as "Beginning." Table 10 displays the frequencies and percentages of the leadership skill levels reported by the participants.

Table 10

Question 9: Descriptions of Leadership Skill Levels (n=112)

Descriptors	Frequencies	Percentages
Accomplished	23	20.54%
Competent	61	54.46%
Developing	26	23.21%
Beginning	2	1.79%
Total	112	100.00%

Question Ten required the participants to report the degree to which they used best practices. For Question Ten, the participants provided a response of either a "1", "2", "3", or "4". A response of "1" indicated that the participant "strongly agreed" that he or she used best practices as it related to effective leadership strategies. A response of "2" indicated that the participant "agreed" that he or she used best practices. A response of "3" indicated that the participant "disagreed" that he or she used best practices. A response of "4" indicated that the participant "disagreed" that he or she used best practices. Thirty-nine (34.82%) of the participants reported that they "strongly agreed" that they used best practices. The majority (72 or 64.29%) indicated that they "agreed." One participant (.89%) "disagreed" and none of the participants "strongly agreed" that he

or she used best practices as it related to effective leadership strategies. Table 11 displays the participants' responses to Question 11.

Table 11

Question 10: Use of Best Practices (n=112)

Response	Frequencies	Percentages
Strongly Agree	39	34.82%
Agree	72	64.29%
Disagree	1	.89%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Total	112	100.00%

Question 11 was designed to collect data about the participants' efforts to increase their knowledge about the utilization of technology to support instruction. For Question 11, participants responded with either "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree." Forty-one (36.61%) of the principals "strongly agree" that they build their knowledge of how technology is used to support instruction. The majority (70 or 62.5%) of the participants "agree" that they build their knowledge of how technology is used to support instruction. One participant (0.9%) "disagreed" that he or she builds knowledge of how technology is used to support instruction. None of the participants "strongly disagree" that they build their knowledge of how technology is used to support instruction. Table 12 displays the frequencies and percentages of participants' responses to Question 11.

Table 12

Question 11: Builds Knowledge of How Technology Is Used to Support Instruction (n=112)

Response	Frequencies	Percentages
Strongly Agree	41	36.61%
Agree	70	62.50%
Disagree	1	.89%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	112	100.00

Question 12 was designed to collect data about the participants' efforts to encourage the teachers they supervise to participate in sustained professional development. For Question 12, the participants responded with either "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree." The majority (74 or 66.07%) of the participants "strongly agreed" that they encourage the teachers they supervise to participate in sustained professional development. Thirty-eight (33.93%) of the participants "agreed" that they encourage sustained professional development among teachers. None of the participants either "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that they encourage the teachers they supervise teachers to participate in sustained professional development. Table 13 displays the frequencies and percentages for participants' responses to Question 12.

Table 13

Question 12: Encourages Sustained Professional Development Among Teachers (n=112)

Response	Frequencies	Percentages
Strongly Agree	74	66.07%
Agree	38	33.93%
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	112	100.00

Questions 13 through 18 from the survey were designed to collect data about the participants' perceptions of how various methods of professional development (seminars, conferences, problem-based projects, mentoring, coaching, and participating in graduate classes) increase their learning. Question 13 required participants to communicate the degree to which seminars and conferences are instrumental in meeting their learning needs. For Question 13, the participants either indicated that seminars and conferences were either "excellent," "good," "fair," "marginal" or "inadequate" in meeting their learning needs. Thirteen (11.61%) of the participants reported that seminars and conferences were "Excellent in meeting my learning needs." The majority of the participants (78 or 69.64%) reported that the seminars and conferences were "Good in meeting my learning needs." Twenty (17.86%) reported that seminars and conferences were "Fair in meeting my learning needs." One (.89%) of the 112 participants reported that the seminars and conferences were "Marginal in meeting my learning needs," and none of the participants reported that seminars and conferences were "Inadequate in meeting my learning needs." Table 14 displays the frequencies and percentages for participants' responses for Question 13.

Table 14

Question 13: Learns in Seminars and Conferences (n=112)

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
Excellent in meeting my learning needs	13	11.61%
Good in meeting my learning needs	78	69.64%
Fair in meeting my learning needs	20	17.86%
Marginal in meeting my learning needs	1	.89%
Inadequate in meeting my learning needs	0	0.00%
Total	100	100.00%

Question 14 from the survey required the participants to report the impact that problem-based projects, hands-on projects, and action research had on their learning needs. For Question 14, 32 (28.57%) of the participants indicated that the methods have been "Excellent in meeting my learning needs." The majority of the participants (60 or 53.57%) reported that problem-based projects, hands-on projects, and action research had been "Good in meeting my learning needs." Sixteen (14.29%) reported problem-based projects, hands-on projects, and action research had been "Fair in meeting my learning needs." Four (3.57%) of the participants reported that problem-based projects, hands-on projects, and action research were "Marginal in meeting my learning needs," and none of the participants indicated that problem-based projects, hands-on projects, and action research were "Inadequate in meeting my learning needs." Table 15 displays the frequencies and percentages of the participants' responses to Question 14.

Table 15

Question 14: Learns Through Problem-Based and Hands-On Projects and Action Based Research (n=112)

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
Excellent in meeting my learning needs	32	28.57%
Good in meeting my learning needs	60	53.57%
Fair in meeting my learning needs	16	14.29%
Marginal in meeting my learning needs	4	3.57%
Inadequate in meeting my learning needs	0	0.00%
Total	112	100.00%

Question 15 from the survey required the participants to report the impact of mentor support and collegial partnerships on their learning needs. For Question 15, the

majority of the participants (54 or 48.21%) indicated that learning through mentor support and collegial partnerships had been "Excellent in meeting my learning needs." Forty-eight (42.86%) reported that learning through mentor support and collegial partnerships had been "Good in meeting my learning needs." Ten (8.93%) reported learning through mentor support and collegial partnerships had been "Fair in meeting my learning needs." No participants indicated that learning through mentor support and collegial partnerships had either been "Marginal" or "Inadequate" in meeting their learning needs. Table 16 displays the frequencies and percentages of participants' responses to Question 15.

Table 16

Question 15: Learns Through Mentor Support and Collegial Partnerships (n=112)

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
Excellent in meeting my learning needs	54	48.21%
Good in meeting my learning needs	48	42.86%
Fair in meeting my learning needs	10	8.93%
Marginal in meeting my learning needs	0	0
Inadequate in meeting my learning needs	0	0
Total	112	100.00%

Question 16 from the survey required the participants to report the impact of coaching and collaborative relationships on their learning needs. For Question 16, the majority of the participants (63 or 57.27%) indicated that learning through coaching and collaborative relationships had been "Excellent in meeting my learning needs." Forty-one (37.27%) reported that learning through coaching and collaborative relationships had

been “Good in meeting my learning needs.” Six (5.45%) reported learning through coaching and collaborative relationships had been “Fair in meeting my learning needs.” No participants indicated that learning through coaching and collaborative relationships had either been either “Marginal” or “Inadequate” in meeting their learning needs. Table 17 displays frequencies and percentages for the participants’ responses to Question 16.

Table 17

Question 16: Learns Through Coaching and Collaborative Relationships (n=112)

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
Excellent in meeting my learning needs	63	57.27%
Good in meeting my learning needs	41	37.27%
Fair in meeting my learning needs	6	5.45%
Marginal in meeting my learning needs	0	0
Inadequate in meeting my learning needs	0	0
Total	112	100.00%

Question 17 from the survey required the participants to report on their learning through self-paced on-line professional development offerings. For Question 17, 10 (8.93%) indicated that learning through self-paced on-line professional development offerings had been “Excellent in meeting my learning needs.” Twenty-nine (25.89%) reported that learning through self-paced on-line professional development offerings had been “Good in meeting my learning needs.” The majority (53 or 47.32%) reported learning through self-paced on-line professional development offerings had been “Fair in meeting my learning needs.” Seventeen participants (15.18%) indicated that learning through self-paced on-line professional development offerings had been “Marginal.”

Three participants (2.68%) indicated that learning through self-paced on-line professional development offerings were “Inadequate.” Table 18 displays the frequencies and percentages for responses to Question 17.

Table 18

Question 17: Learns Through Self-Paced On-Line Professional Development (n=112)

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
Excellent in meeting my learning needs	10	8.93%
Good in meeting my learning needs	29	25.89%
Fair in meeting my learning needs	53	47.32%
Marginal in meeting my learning needs	17	15.18%
Inadequate in meeting my learning needs	3	2.68%
Total	112	100.00%

Question 18 from the survey required the participants to report about their learning through continuing education and graduate level coursework. There were 111 of the participants who answered Question 18. For Question 18, 25 (22.52%) indicated that learning through continuing education and graduate level coursework had been “Excellent in meeting my learning needs.” The majority of the participants (51 or 45.95%) reported that learning through continuing education and graduate level coursework had been “Good in meeting my learning needs.” Twenty-two (19.82%) reported learning through continuing education and graduate level coursework had been “Fair in meeting my learning needs.” Ten participants (9.01%) indicated that learning through continuing education and graduate level coursework had been “Marginal” in meeting their learning needs. Three participants (2.70%) indicated that learning through

continuing education and graduate level coursework was “Inadequate” in meeting their learning needs. Table 19 displays the frequencies and percentages of the participants’ responses to Question 18.

Table 19

Question 18: Learns Through Continuing Education and Graduate Coursework (n=111)

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
Excellent in meeting my learning needs	25	22.52%
Good in meeting my learning needs	51	45.95%
Fair in meeting my learning needs	22	19.82%
Marginal in meeting my learning needs	10	9.01%
Inadequate in meeting my learning needs	3	2.70%
Total	111	100.00%

Question 19 from the survey required the participants to prioritize eight professional development topics according to their order of importance. For Question 19, the participants ranked professional development topics on a scale of 1 to 8 with 1 being the highest priority and 8 being the least important. Results indicated that the three top choices for professional development topics were student engagement (28.28%), followed by curriculum and instruction (27.37%) and differentiation (12.62%). Table 20 displays the participants’ rankings of the eight professional development topics.

Table 20

Rankings of Professional Development Topics (n=112)

Ranking	Topics	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Student Engagement	28	28.28%
2	Curriculum and Instruction	26	27.38%
3	Differentiation	13	12.62%
4	Technology	10	10.00%
5	Assessment	10	9.01%
6	Classroom Management	9	8.41%
7	Student Discipline	6	6.12%
8	Parent and Community Engagement	3	2.97%

The final question, Question 20, was designed to invite the principals to participate in Phase II of the research study. Question 20 read, “To the question: Would you be willing to participate in a brief interview concerning professional development and leadership? If so, please complete the information request below.” Of the 112 participants, 24 responded. Twelve of the 24 respondents were purposefully chosen to be interviewed. Descriptions of the interviewees and their responses to the interview questions are reported in the next section of Chapter IV.

Summary of Phase 1 Survey Results

This section presented an analysis of the data that was collected from the 20-item survey instrument. The data indicated that 79 of the participants were female and 33 were male. The majority were 55 years of age or older and served as principals of schools located in rural areas in the state of Arkansas. Most of the participants indicated having been a principal for 5 to 10 years, and reported supervising 21 to 40 teachers. At the time of the survey, most of the principals were employed at schools where up to 75% of the students received free or reduced-priced meals.

The majority of the principals described themselves as competent and communicated that they had a solid understanding of their roles and responsibilities as a building leader. Most agreed that they work to build their knowledge of how technology is used to support instruction and strongly agreed that they encouraged teachers to participate in sustained professional development. Overall, they indicated that learning through mentor support, collegial partnerships, coaching and through collaborative relationships had been an excellent way to meet their learning needs. They also felt that learning through self-paced on-line professional development had been fair in meeting their learning needs and that learning through continuing education and graduate level coursework had been good in meeting their learning needs.

Analysis of the open-ended item (Question #8) from the survey yielded three themes: (a) Personal Attributes, a phrase that refers to an individual's character traits or a person's behavior and attitudes that make up his or her personality; (b) Values Relationships, a phrase that refers to an individual's demonstration of genuine skills to validate the positive values and traits, or behaviors such as giving praise, being respectful, being compassionate, and being kind-hearted; and (c) Leadership Skill Sets, a phrase that refers to the characteristics most commonly noted among successful leaders, such as having emotional stability, having good communication skills, having the ability to work collaboratively, being comfortable with change, and being a knowledge seeker. Collectively, the participants defined as an effective leader an individual who is empowering, innovative, and reflective; who is able to work with students, parents, faculty, staff and the community to achieve common goals; and who is able to analyze data in order to make rational decisions based on best practices. The participants' three

top choices for professional development topics were student engagement, curriculum and instruction, and differentiated instruction. The final question of the survey was included to invite the principals to participate in interviews. Of the 112 participants, 12 were purposefully chosen from the five regions in the State of Arkansas: Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, Southeast, and Central region. to be interviewed . The next section of Chapter IV will present the analysis of the qualitative data from the semi-structured personal interviews.

Data Analysis and Results from Interviews

This section of Chapter IV will present the qualitative findings for Phase II of the mixed-method study. The 12 elementary school principals who served as participants for Phase II of the study were chosen from the population sample of 112 principals who participated in Phase I. Each of the 12 participants voluntarily agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes. The purpose of the interviews was to collect qualitative data about elementary school principals' perceptions of the support they need to become more effective instructional leaders.

Demographics

Of the 12 principals, who were interviewed during Phase II, nine (75%) were female and three (25%) were male. Table 21 displays the frequencies and percentages of the participants for Phase II by gender. In addition, Table 22 indicates the frequencies and percentages of the 12 principals. Three (25%) reported being between 35 to 44 years old. Six (50%) reported being between 45 and 54 years-of-age and, and 3 (25%) reported being between 55 and 64 years of age. Table 22 displays the age ranges reported by the participants.

Table 21

Characteristics of Participants—Gender (n=12)

Gender	Frequencies	Percentages
Male	3	79%
Female	9	25%
Total	12	100%

Table 22

Characteristics of Participants—Age (n=12)

Range	Frequencies	Percentages
25-34	0	0
35-44	3	25%
45-54	6	50%
55 and older	3	5%
Total	12	100%

As it relates to the geographical locations of the schools where the participants were employed, 7 of the 12 (58.3%) reported that being employed at schools located in rural areas in the state of Arkansas. Three of the participants (25%) reported being employed at schools located in a suburban area and 2 (16.7%) reported being employed in urban area. Table 23 displays the geographical locations of the schools where the participants were employed.

Table 23

Geographical Locations of Schools (n=12)

Location	Frequencies	Percentages
Rural	7	58.3%
Suburban	3	25.0%
Urban	2	16.7%
Total	112	100.0%

Of the 12 participants, five (41.7%) reported having been employed as an administrator for 3 or fewer years. Three (25%) reported having been an administrator for from 5 to 10 years. One (8.3%) of the participants reported having been an administrator for between 11 and 15 years, and 3 (25%) reported having 21 or more years of experience as a school administrator. Table 24 displays the frequencies and percentages of the years of experience reported by the participants.

Table 24

Years of Experience (n=12)

Years of Experience	Frequencies	Percentages
3 years or less	5	41.7%
5 to 10 years	3	25.0%
11 to 15 years	1	8.3%
21 or more years	1	25.0%
Total	12	100.0%

The 12 participants of Phase II reported the numerical student populations of the elementary schools where they were employed at the time the interviews were conducted.

One (8.3%) of the 12 participants reported being employed at a school with fewer than 200 students. Seven (70%) of the participants reported being employed at an elementary school with between 201 to 500 students. Four (33.3%) reported being employed at an elementary school with a student population between 501-900. Table 25 displays the frequencies and percentages reported about the student populations of the schools where the participants were employed.

Table 25

Student Populations (n=12)

Population	Frequencies	Percentages
Less than 200 students	1	8.3%
201-500 students	7	58.3%
501-900 students	4	33.3%
Total	12	100.0%

The 12 participants also reported data about the overall percentages of students who received free or reduced-priced meals at the schools where they were employed. Three of the participants (25%) indicated that between 26-50% of the student population received either free or reduced-priced meals. Seven or (58.3%) of the participants indicated that between 51% and 75% of the student population at the schools where they were employed received either free or reduced-priced meals. Two (16.7%) of the 12 participants indicated that 76% or more of the elementary school students who attended the schools where they were employed received free or reduced-priced meals. Table 26 displays the numbers and percentages of students who received free or reduced-priced meals.

Table 26

Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Meals (n=12)

Population	Frequencies	Percentages
26-50%	3	25.0%
51-75%	7	58.3%
76% or more	2	16.7%
Total	12	100.0%

Principals' Profiles

To provide anonymity and to protect the confidentiality of each interviewee, the original names were changed and each participant was assigned a pseudonym. Table 27 displays the pseudonyms for each of the 12 participants. This section presents the profiles for each participant.

Table 27

Pseudonyms Assigned to the Participants

Identification	Pseudonym
Principal 1	Jennifer
Principal 2	Carl
Principal 3	Pam
Principal 4	Kim
Principal 5	Katie
Principal 6	Swofford
Principal 7	Calvin
Principal 8	Rebecca
Principal 9	Christy
Principal 10	Susan
Principal 11	Donnel
Principal 12	Kelly

Jennifer is a female between the ages of 45-54. Jennifer has less than 3 years of experience as a principal. The school where she was employed at the time of the interview is located in the suburbs. The elementary school where Jennifer serves as principal has a population of 501-900 students, 26% to 50% of whom receive free or reduced-priced meals.

Carl is a male between the ages of 55-64, who reported having 21 or more years of experience as an administrator. Carl is the principal of an elementary school located in a suburban area of Arkansas that serves between 201 and 500 students. More than 76% of the student population at the school receive free or reduced-priced meals.

Pam is a female between the ages of 55-64. Pam reported having 21 or more years of experience as an administrator. She serves as the principal of an elementary school located in a suburban area. The student population at the school is between 501-900. Between 26 and 50% of the students who attend the school receive free or reduced-priced meals.

Kim is a female principal, who reported being between the ages of 35 and 44. Kim has 21 or more years of experience as an administrator. The school where she is employed is located in a rural area of Arkansas. The elementary school where she serves as principal has a population of between 201-500 students, of whom 51 to 76% receive free and reduced-priced meals

Katie is a female between the ages of 45-54, who has between 5 to 10 years of experience as an administrator. Katie serves as an elementary principal at a school located in an urban area. The elementary school serves between 501 and 900 students. Of the student body, from 26% to 50% receive free or reduced-price meals.

Swofford is a male principal between the ages of 45 and 54. Swofford reported having between 5 to 10 years of experience as an administrator. The elementary school where he serves as principal is located in a rural area and houses between 201 and 500 students. The majority of the students, between 51% and 75%, receive either free or reduced-priced meals.

Calvin is a male principal who reported being between the ages of 45 and 54. He has less than 3 years of experience as an administrator. Calvin serves as principal at a school with a population of between 201 and 500 students. The majority of the students (51% and 75%) who attend the school, which is located in a rural area, receive free or reduced-priced meals.

Rebecca is a female between the ages of 35-44. Rebecca has less than 3 years of experience as an administrator. The school where she currently serves as principal is located in rural Arkansas. The school serves between 201 and 500 students. About 51% to 75% of the students receive either free or reduced-priced meals.

Christy is a female principal between the ages of 45 and 54. She has between 11 and 15 years of experience as an administrator and serves at a school located in a rural district. The school where Christy is employed houses between 201 and 500 students, 51% to 75% of whom receive either free or reduced-priced meals.

Susan is a female principal who reported being between the ages of 35 and 44. Susan also reported having less than 3 years of experience as a school administrator. The school where Susan serves as principal is located in an urban district. The school serves between 501-900 students. Seventy-six percent or more of the students receive either free or reduced-priced meals status.

Donnel is a female between the ages of 45 and 54. Donnel has less than 3 years of experience as an administrator. She serves as principal of an elementary school located in rural Arkansas. The enrollment at the elementary school is between 201 and 500 students. Between 51% and 75% of the students receive either free or reduced-priced meals.

Kelly is a male principal, who reported being between the ages of 55 and 64. Kelly also reported having between 5 and 10 years of experience as a school administrator. He serves as an elementary principal at a school with a population of between 201 and 500 students. From 51% to 75% of the students receive free or reduced-priced meals.

Interview Questions

Each of the 12 participants, who were interviewed during Phase II of the study, provided responses to the six interview questions. See Appendix D for a list of the interview questions. Each participant gave permission for his or her interview to be digitally recorded. In addition to being recorded, notes were also taken during the interviews to gain further insight about the topic. The digital recordings of the interviews were reviewed and transcribed within 3 days. After each interview was transcribed, it was emailed to the respective participants for review. After each participant read the transcription for errors and additions, a coding system was set up to group similar words and phrases into themes. This section presents the participants' responses to each of the six interview questions and the themes that emerged from the qualitative data collected during the interviews.

Question 1

How do principals describe an effective instructional leader?

The purpose of the first interview question was to collect qualitative data to answer *RQ1: How do principals describe an effective instructional leader?* The participants' indicated that their perceptions of an effective instructional leader are an individual who consistently demonstrates the ability to build relationships through active listening, reciprocal communication, trust and collaboration. The participants also indicated that an effective instructional leader is an on-going learner, who stays abreast about new educational trends and best practices that will improve student learning. Effective instructional leaders were also described by the participants as those who make instructional decisions that are data-driven. Additional words and phrases used to describe an instructional leader were "risk taker," "visible," "reflective," "operates in integrity" and "models." Below are each participant's descriptions of an effective instructional leader.

Jennifer described an effective instructional leader as "one who listens, builds trust, has open communication, and develops leaders within his/her building."

Jennifer also stated that effective instructional leaders "facilitate and encourage collaboration among the students, staff, parents and community" and "are concerned about issues of diversity and focus on the whole child."

Carl described an effective instructional leader as "someone who never stops learning." He also stated that a truly effective leader, "allows others to see your mistakes," and "must be able to grasp the enormous amount of information that a principal is expected to comprehend, share and implement."

When asked to describe an effective instructional leader, Pam responded, “An effective instructional leader is focused on curriculum and instruction, assessment, understanding data and making sure the needs of all students are being met with integrity.” Pam also described as an effective instructional leader as one who constantly seeks improvement. She further asserted that an effective instructional leader is “a risk-taker who is always willing to acknowledge that there is a better way of doing things.” Pam expressed the need for an effective instructional leader to “work both independently and collaboratively in order to design, implement and assess instructional practices that will improve student learning.” Pam expressed her belief that an effective leader “empowers teachers through shared leadership and accountability.”

Kim said that an effective leader must earn the trust of the faculty. She also noted that an effective instructional leader has to be technologically savvy, “current on a multitude of initiatives and issues related to curriculum and instructional delivery methods.”

Katie described an effective instructional leader as a person who “keeps pace with the research and trends in education and can discern what is worthy of implementation.” Katie stated that it is important for an effective instructional leader to “know what is going on in each and every classroom” and to “model teaching and learning.” She specifically noted that “In order to have this knowledge, a principal *must* make the time to get into the classroom and monitor instruction.” Katie also conveyed that an effective instructional leader, “knows how to desegregate data, and effectively utilize abundance amounts information” and “filters out what the teachers truly need and shows them how data will drive their instruction.”

When asked to describe an effective instructional leader, Swofford said, “A good instructional leader is visible and available and puts people first.”

Calvin reported that an effective instructional leader is one who “keeps the doors open.”

Rebecca described an effective instructional leader as someone who “must be willing to learn ever changing curriculum, strategies, and concepts.” She also stated that an effective instructional leader “must take the time to reflect and make adjustments that better meet the needs of all students.” Other characteristics provided by Rebecca were “serves as a model learner,” “leads by example,” “sets the tone of the building,” and “smart enough to know a little bit about everything in the building and have a good understanding” Rebecca emphasized that an effective instructional leader “demonstrates a solid knowledge base of the curriculum and instruction as well as best practices.”

Christy described an effective instructional leader as being “energetic, positive and willing to do any task that needs to be done.” Christy went on to say that an effective instructional leader “provides the materials and supplies and supports teachers.” Her additional descriptions included, “is informed about educational issues,” “communicates quality and timely information to all stakeholders,” “thinks before speaking,” and “makes decisions based on rational clarity.”

Susan described an effective instructional leader as a “life-long learner, who models the love for learning and makes every effort to ingrain the love for learning to his or her students and teachers.” She also said that an effective instructional leader “needs to model what learning looks like,” “needs to talk about the importance of learning, but more than anything, they need to communicate that has learning no beginning and no

end. We are continuous life-long learners.”

When asked to describe an effective instructional leader, Donnel said that an effective instructional leader is “visible, knowledgeable and is great at relationships.” Donnel also communicated that an effective instructional leader is “punctual,” “has excellent follow through,” “is proactive,” “thinks before speaking,” and “can think on their feet and make solid decision quickly, when needed.” Donnel added that an effective instructional leader “is a good listener and communicates that the person talking is truly being heard.”

Kelly stated that an effective instructional leader is one who is “up-to-date on educational trends” and “willing to allow teachers the autonomy to implement innovative teaching strategies and be a firm believer in shared leadership.” He emphasized, “A effective instruction leader has to focus on the children.

Question 2

Do you think it is important for present-day school administrators to be learning leaders?

The purpose of the second interview question was to collect additional qualitative data in order to answer *RQ1: How do principals describe an effective instructional leader?* For the second interview question, the participants’ provided responses that communicated their perceptions of the importance of administrators as learning leaders. A Learning Leader incorporates teaching and learning techniques that have been linked to student academic improvement. All of the participants agreed that it is important for present-day school administrators to be learning leaders. Many of the participants communicated reasons *why* they believed that administrators should be learning leaders.

For example, two participants indicated that administrators should be learning leaders due to the ever increasing changes and demands that take place both locally and globally.

Other participants stated that it is important for administrators to demonstrate the importance of learning by participating in classroom activities and professional development, so that they model the learning process for students and for teachers. Below are several participants' responses to the second interview question.

Rebecca stated that "In today's educational world, one can't be an effective without being a learning leader."

Jennifer explained that as a novice administrator, it was important that she continued to learn information pertaining to curriculum, assessments, and data. Jennifer specifically stated,

Yes, I believe it is incredibly important to be a learning leader. As a new principal with less than 3 years of experience, it's been hard trying to wrap my head around the curriculum, assessment and data analyses in addition to all the other things that it takes to run a building.

Pam stated that administrators must be learning leaders because of "the ongoing changing demands and needs of students and the world." Pam also stated that one reason for being a learning leader was important was because "There are always new initiatives that are placed on our plates."

Katie's response suggested that she too believed in the importance of being a learning leader. Katie also gave specific reasons why she thought being a learning leader was important. However, she also gave insight into the challenges associated with the undertaking. Katie specifically said,

Of course I think it is important. But I also recognize that this is a very difficult task. It is really a difficult task when a principal genuinely works at being a valid learning leader. It is a lot like trying to hit a moving target.

Like Katie, Christy also shared her perceptions of the importance of being a learning leader. Katie emphasized,

I can't imagine not being an active learning leader. A good principal models learning not only to her teachers but to her students as well. She has to exude the essence of learning that shines. She has to make sure there is no doubt that learning is important.

Susan responded, "I really believe that all administrators today who are in the educational world must be learning leaders. I find it interesting that we are in the business of learning. Why wouldn't we expect all administrators to be learners as well?"

Donnel stated,

I continue my education and even at my age continue to learn. I can't imagine not learning something new every day. I like to show the students how I love learning and like to learn with them when I go into the classrooms.

Question 3

Reflecting on your own leadership would you say you are an effective learning leader? Why or why not?

The purpose of the third interview question was to collect qualitative data in order to answer the first research question: *RQ1: How do principals describe an effective instructional leader?* The third research question provided each participant an opportunity to reflect upon his or her own effectiveness as a learning leader. All 12 participants reported that were effective learning leaders. For the third interview question, the participants provided very limited explanations as to why or why they considered themselves effective leaders.

Calvin believed that he was an effective learning leader. He specifically stated, “Yes. I think I’ve been pretty successful. I only failed two students last year.”

Based on his reported self-efficacy, one criterion for determining his reported effectiveness as a learning leader was the number of students that were retained at his school each year.

Carl also believed that he was an effective learning leader. He offered a scenario of how his ability to reflect on his leadership has caused his leadership practices to grow and improve. Carl shared,

When I think back on my career, I think about all the mistakes I made over the past two decades as a school administrator. You know, you really can’t do this job and do it well if you aren’t willing to learn. I’ve made so many mistakes and thought I was doing it right only to learn that I was so wrong. As a former football coach, I think the stigma of being wrong is a difficult pill to swallow. For the first few years after I transitioned from a coach to a principal, it was difficult for me to own my mistakes much less acknowledge them publicly to my staff. But I have learned over the years that a true leader has to be real. Has to be a human. And, more importantly, has to be brave enough to let others see your frailties. I believe you are a true leader when you allow others to see as you really are. The funny thing about that is... 15 years ago, I would have never said something like this. I was the tough football coach turned principal and lead by intimidation, and a bully mentality. Looking back, I had no idea what I was doing and was nowhere close to being an instructional leader or for that matter even knew what one was. I’ve grown a lot, learned a lot and want to continue to learn.

Question 4

What types of professional development opportunities have you engaged in to help you become an effective learning leader? What opportunities have been provided by the state? district? self-directed?

The purpose of the fourth interview question was to collect qualitative data in order to answer *RQ2: What professional learning/development opportunities are typically offered by districts to enhance leadership effectiveness of elementary building principals?* For the third interview question, the participants communicated that

professional development topics as well as meeting dates and times were most often chosen either by teachers at the schools or by the district-level administrators. Four of the participants' stated that the most valuable professional development opportunities that helped them to become more effective learning leaders had been those that were site-based. According to the participants, site-based professional development led to their effectiveness as learning leaders because the topics covered were chosen by the teachers and administrators on-site, who also facilitated the sessions as part of Professional Learning Communities. Participants also noted that site-based professional development opportunities were significant because they were based on the needs of the immediate population of students and teachers from the schools. Two of the participants indicated that in most instances, district-level administrators determined the topics for professional development, which did not always lend to their effectiveness as learning leaders. Two other participants explained that they often engaged in professional development opportunities at the regional level. One participant expressed that she preferred to participate in online graduate classes as a means of acquiring professional development. Other participants stated that professional development topics were based either on the message given by the key note speaker during the initial district-wide meeting or by the district's curriculum coordinator. The participants reported that the most useful professional development sessions were those that focused on special education issues such as dyslexia and autism as well as those that focused on intervention strategies and teacher evaluation systems. Other beneficial topics reported by the participants included those centered on research-based best practices and technology. Overall, the participants expressed that prior professional development opportunities in which they had previously

engaged did assist them with becoming more effective learner leaders. Significant responses provided for the third interview question by the participants are listed below.

Jennifer's response to the fourth research question indicated that she had pressing concerns about the professional development in which she had previously engaged. According to Jennifer, her concerns were less related to the topics offered by the district, but more on the manner in which professional development offerings had been implemented. However, Jennifer did convey that she perceived professional development as necessary for her growth as an effective learning leader. For example, Jennifer stated that in order to prepare educators for the new evaluation system, the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS), district-level administrators provided a brief overview and snapshot of the Charlotte Danielson evaluation model. Jennifer went on to explain that the information covered during the professional development session about the new system was "complicated, detailed and featured multiple layers of information." She shared that, to her dismay, without additional trainings or follow-up sessions, principals were instructed to provide in-service training for their teachers about the new evaluation model. Jennifer described the professional development as being,

... like taking a small campfire and throwing lighter fluid on it! Teachers were confused, angry and disgruntled. Principals hadn't been given the time to process and clearly understand the material and didn't know enough about it to help much less put out the fires. It was certainly not the way I wanted to start a new school year. It was horrible.

Carl stated that the district where he is employed believes that teachers and principals benefit from focused, applicable and sustained professional development. He shared that the district where he was employed had a sizable budget for professional development and as a result, district-level administrators frequently brought in well-

known keynote speakers at the beginning of the school year. He reported that the message from the keynote speaker usually became the focus or theme for the professional development offerings that school year. Carl also articulated that administrators at the central office planned well-developed topics and timelines of implementation for professional development and that all stakeholders were thoroughly informed about the offerings. He specifically stated:

Each spring the district sends out a survey to all teachers and principals asking them to assist them in determining professional development needs for the upcoming school year. Based on that information, professional development is arranged and a timeline, and dates for implementation are distributed at the start of each new school year. We have a plan and the plan is communicated. We seem to do better as a school district when we have a clear focus of where we are going to grow professionally.

In addition, Carl explained that he felt that it was his own responsibility and personal obligation to make the effort to grow professionally, which he did by keeping up with current trends and by gaining a quality understanding of changing concepts such as the implementation of technology in the classroom. He stated that his preference for participating in professional development was through seminars and conference platforms. He also expressed that working through problem-based, hands-on, action research forms of professional development led to his improvement as a leading learner.

Pam indicated a need to participate in professional development opportunities that focused on technological advances. She expressed that because of both a generational and personal gap between the content knowledge and utilization of technology between her and her students, she'd made an effort to engage in professional development at the regional level. Pam also stated that she learns best when she can learn about technology on her own and figure it out by herself. She specifically stated,

I've spent a great deal of time learning how to use the features of my computer, understanding how the SMARTboard works and learning to follow instructional steps on how to pull data reports from our i-Ready progress monitoring instrument. I have to get my hands on it in order to understand.

But while Pam reported enjoying learning independently, she also articulated that she depends on district administrators, especially the District Instructional Facilitators, to keep her abreast about current trends and best practices. Pam stated, "We trust our Instructional Facilitators and see them working tirelessly to keep up with the wealth of new research and techniques." She also expressed that it is very helpful when the Instructional Facilitators provide small group sessions for teachers. Pam shared that she always attends professional development sessions because, "This keeps us all on the same page."

Kim expressed disdain for the professional development offered by the district, where she was employed and stated that it was "less than focused and not always as pertinent." Kim stated that her biggest concern was that "It is not sustained, and often a 'sit and get' session on a topic of little interest." She reported that she does, however, make time to reach out and explore professional development opportunities through her regional cooperative and as a result, has developed a network of principals who are not in located in her district. Kim explained that developing the network had been beneficial because she learns best through collegial partnerships, mentor support and one-on-one-coaching and feels the support she has received through the network "saved her."

As a graduate of a state university, Kim informed that she has the opportunity to access timely and relevant professional development through the institution she attended. She emphasized, "The workshops are free and often held in the evening or on-line where

they are self-directed and self-paced.” Kim also noted the Arkansas Department of Education’s website as a resource for professional development. According to her, teachers and principals in the state of Arkansas, who attend state institutions of higher learning, can access a large variety of professional development information from dyslexia to parent and community relationships. She declared, “There is wealth of information and very usable, timely, and helpful.”

Katie disclosed that professional development was essential for her goal of being a continuous learning leader. She declared, “I love it when a group of us elementary principals can sit down together and figure out a difficult or new concept!” Katie went on to provide a detailed example of how professional development can be effective by explaining an instance that occurred when the state required principals to implement the Bloomboard teacher evaluation model. Katie reported,

Honestly, few of us had heard about Charlotte Danielson or her evaluation model and there was a lot of information for us to learn quickly in order for us to take it back to our teachers in a timely manner as required by the state. Our team of six principals gathered one afternoon at the back of a table at Panera Bread and hammered it all out. By the time we left several hours later, we had a plan, a Powerpoint and were ready to present this new and exciting evaluation opportunity that will help us all grow.

Katie shared that her most favorite and most beneficial professional development experience was having the opportunity to attend the Arkansas Master Principal Institute through the Arkansas Leadership Academy. The purpose of the Master Principal Program was to provide training programs and opportunities that would expand the knowledge base and leadership skills of public school principals. As a result of participating in the Arkansas Leadership Academy, Katie stated that she made a list of things she identified and needed to change her practices. She then prioritized them and

developed a timeline to meet her goals, which she later achieved.

Swofford responded that he works with the teachers at his school on a series of professional development modules that give insight into student engagement, progress monitoring, and the utilization of data to drive instruction. Swofford also shared that he serves on the State Board for Elementary Principals and participates monthly in professional development that he shares with fellow colleagues. Swofford stated that one of his most rewarding personal professional development experiences was the opportunity that he had “to network with other principals across the state, to listen to what they are doing, and how they are changing the educational initiatives to better serve children.” Although he was satisfied overall with the professional development offerings in which he had previously participated, he expressed concern about the implementation timeline for professional development within his district. Swofford specifically stated,

Unfortunately, our district front loads our professional development days prior to the start of the school year. The rationale for this is so teachers and principals will not be out of the building and students will not miss quality instructional time. It makes sense. However, what is missing is the sustainability of the professional development. There is little follow-up or reflection on the professional development.

Swofford suggested that the district where he was employed could improve the impact of professional development by offering sessions that reflected continuity, sustainability, and opportunities for all principals and teachers. In his opinion, professional development “should also be offered bi-weekly for administrators and should focus more on topics regarding communication, networking, and problem solving.”

Calvin reported that he attends district-mandated professional development and asserted, “It wasn’t worth a cold cup of coffee!” When asked about his role in Professional Learning Communities and professional development offerings at the school where he serves as principal, Calvin stated, “Oh, my instructional facilitators do that.” He stated that he had not recently participated in any regional or state professional development opportunities. When asked if he planned to attend any state-level professional conferences like the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators Conference in Little Rock or the Leadership Academy for Principals, Calvin responded with an emphatic, “Nope.”

Rebecca reported serving on a committee that develops the professional development curriculum for the state. Rebecca stated that as a result of her being a part of the committee, she has learned how to make sessions more engaging for teachers. Rebecca informed that she presents the curriculum to the principals and teachers in her school district and indicated that the process of creating effective development had been “an eye-opener” because it gave her insight into how adults learn. She stated,

When planning the delivery of professional development, I learned that it is very different from teaching children. Actually, I realized that adults are difficult to teach and process differently from the students. I have found that they get distracted easily and have difficulty focusing.

Christy pointed out that her professional development opportunities come mostly from the regional cooperative and from the other two principals at the middle and high school. She stated that she learns best in collaborative settings and that the professional development provided for principals in her district is both helpful and timely. Christy explained, “Being in a small setting provides an opportunity to get to know each other by

our first names and develops real friendships as we work to educate children in their communities.” She continued,

As a small rural community, we look like we are limited, but the truth is we are rich with opportunities because we pool our time, talents and efforts together and work as a unified team to bring quality supports for our three principals, teachers, and students.

Susan explained that she is very fortunate that the Assistant Superintendent in her district is excellent at securing quality professional development opportunities for principals. Susan shared that she works with the assistant superintendent to bring in guest speakers who provide lectures on “hot topics” including dyslexia, response to intervention (RtI), and autism to better support students and teachers. She also noted that the assistant superintendent facilitates weekly support meetings where principals receive professional development updates. In addition, round table discussions are held so that they are able to share “what is going on” in their school buildings. During the discussions, principals are able to give or receive advice and share recent celebrations. Susan communicated that the positive and sustained support was motivational and encouraging for her.

Donnel communicated that the district curriculum coordinator has been very helpful with orchestrating personal professional development at her school. Donnel stated that she “has been blessed” with the opportunity to work with excellent colleagues who are willing to share a wealth of ideas and strategies. Donnel went on to say, “I believe in the coaching and mentoring model so strongly that I completed the state training to be a principal mentor for first year principals in our area.” She also expressed that she prefers on-line, self-paced or face-to-face professional development opportunities

that are executed in a problem-based format where participants collaborate in order to develop solutions to various problems.

Kelly reported that he enjoys attending conferences and seminars and has “met some great mentors and developed lasting friendships through the years.” He believes that having opportunities to attend conferences “allows principals to see what others outside your little world are doing.” Kelly stated, “I love attending the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators Conference in Little Rock. I always come back from that conference filled with energy and enthusiasm!” Kelly also expressed that attending conferences and seminars allows him to share what he learned with his colleagues.

Question 5

Would you say those opportunities have been sufficient? Are there areas where you think you still need support? If so in what areas are these and what types of support would you say you need?

The purpose of the fifth interview question was to collect qualitative data in order to answer *RQ2: What supports do elementary building principals believe they need to become effective leaders able to take on the in-depth challenges they face in the educational world?* Eight of the 12 participants indicated that the professional development opportunities offered by the districts where they are employed had been sufficient. The participants specifically described the opportunities as “helpful” and “beneficial.” However, some participants placed more emphasis on their districts’ *efforts* than the actual professional development content. For example, one participant stated, “...our district does a good job.” Another participant stated, “...our district does a nice job,” and “it keeps me up-to-date.” Participants also expressed their personal opinions about the professional development opportunities through statements such as “I am really

pleased” and “I’m thrilled.” Four of the participants stated that their districts could improve its current professional development offerings. When asked about the types of support needed, participants indicated that they would like to see future professional development sessions focus on topics such as progress monitoring, at-risk students and designing small-group instruction. One participant expressed a desire to participate in professional development opportunities that permitted principals to visit other schools. Below are several participants’ responses to the fifth interview question.

When asked if the professional development opportunities had been sufficient, Rebecca replied,

Absolutely! It’s hard not to feel supported when so many educators are working together to support you as a principal. They want you to be the best instructional leader you can be and they work together to make that happen.

Jennifer described the professional development opportunities within her district as “helpful.” When asked, “Are there areas where you think you still need support?” Jennifer replied, “I would like to see more sustained professional development and not hop from one initiative to another.”

Similar to the responses of Rebecca and Jennifer, was the response of Christy, who stated, “I am really pleased with the help we get from our little district...”

Susan stated, “I enjoy and benefit from attending conferences because it keeps me up-to-date on trends...”

Donnel described the professional development in her district as “purposeful, and sustained.”

Carl also expressed satisfaction with his district’s professional development offerings. Carl said, “I believe our district does a good job providing professional

development that is useful to all stakeholders and ramps up my game as an effective leader.”

Several of the participants indicated need for improved professional development.

For example, Pam asserted,

I really think the district could do a better job in the area of professional development. It is not sustained, focused or timely. And to me, I need all three of those pieces together or the professional is worthless.

Pam expressed her dissatisfaction with her current district’s professional development offerings and gave an example to support her opinion. She said,

With all the state mandates, there is a huge push on testing and we are getting more and more training on data, data analysis and understanding how to read the data and what it is telling us. While this is good, it really very little time for the principals to receive additional professional development in other pressing areas such as dyslexia.

Pam went on to say,

What I really need is professional development that is delivered in small groups, where I know the other principal and they know me. We can network, talk, share and work together to gain a unified understanding of the professional development that is being presented.

Katie’s response also suggested that her district should consider improving its current professional development offerings. Katie suggested,

My district could help me by allowing building principals the opportunities to visit other schools and talking to other principals at least one a month. By allowing us to network we could see what others are doing, collaborate and learn from each other.

Katie’s response also suggested that her districts need to improve the process of how professional development is offered and applied. Katie asserted,

..... as administrators, we often are inundated with data and information. We need time to think, process and digest this critical information. Most of the time it is thrown at us in an administration meeting and we are told to make it happen.

Rarely, are we given time to take the time to comprehend and understand the concepts and ideas. Sometimes, I feel like we just fly by the seat of our pants. Administrators get a lot of information that has to be analyzed and dissected. It is very important that principals have the opportunity to desegregate the data in order to confidently share the information with teachers.

Like Katie, Kim agreed that more support was needed from her district. Kim stated, “I would like to have professional development on t progress monitoring strategies and strategies that promote achievement among at-risk students. I would also like to have opportunities to network with the other building principals.”

Like Kate, Swofford’s response also signified needed improvement. Swofford explained that principals in his district needed more opportunities for reflection. He said, “... what is missing is the sustainability of the professional development. There is little follow-up or reflection on the professional development.”

Question 6

In what ways can your district administration better support you in your role as a school principal, especially as it pertains to becoming a learning leader?

The purpose of the sixth interview question was to collect qualitative data in order to answer *RQ4: How can district administration better support school principals in their role as instructional leaders?* The participants offered a plethora of suggestions that upper-level administrators might consider using in order to better provide support to principals as it pertains to becoming learning leaders. Responses spanned from matters concerning the improvement of the environments where professional development sessions took place to improving the delivery methods used by facilitators during professional development presentations. Participants also reported that their district administrators could improve support by offering a number of professional development topics that included time management, progress monitoring, and implementing new

curricula. One participant alluded to the need for more support in the form of human resources, specifically the hiring of assistant principals to assist with administrative tasks. Below are the responses that were pertinent to the participants' perceptions of how their districts could improve their efforts to support principals as learning leaders.

Carl stressed the importance of having a network of colleagues that he could trust. Carl also stated that he wanted his district to provide learning opportunities between fellow principals, who had the courage to “tell it like it is when you asked for their advice.” Carl’s rationale for support between colleagues was that “being a principal is a lonely job and it is really imperative that you have a circle of other administrators that can advise you, and help you figure things out.” Carl went on to express gratitude for his superintendent, who he said, “...understands how much we need each other and encourages them.”

Like Carl, Rebecca also expressed that she was “very pleased” with the support she and other principals in her district received. Also like Carl, Rebecca attributed the support that she had received to her district superintendent, who she said “encourages principal.” Rebecca shared an example of one of the support initiatives that had been put into place by her superintendent. The initiative was called, “Principal Pals” and was defined by Rebecca as a “paired networking resource” whereby principals met with other principals at least once week for a minimum of one hour to talk about “how things are going, what is going well and what they need to revisit.” She also described Principal Pals as a networking source that served as “emotional support when things go wrong or when a principal just has a bad day.” Rebecca went on to say, “It really helps when I can pick up the phone after a parent just took my head off and say to my principal pal,

‘You’ll never guess what just happened to me.’” Rebecca also expressed an appreciation for reflection time and opportunities to “talk things through.” which she described as being “extremely helpful.”

Christy also stated that she was “pleased” with the support she receives from district and regional administrators and from her principal colleagues. Christy, who works in a small rural district said, “We may not have all the whistles and bells that larger districts have, but we do have the relationships that truly support effective instructional leaders.”

Susan described her district’s support as “wonderful.” With enthusiasm, Susan stated, “Oh! Our district does a wonderful job in supporting their principals!”

While Carl, Rebecca, Christy, and Susan expressed satisfaction with district administrators’ support for principals, other participants suggested the need for improvement and offered strategies for helping upper-level administrators do so. For example, Pam communicated that she would like to see her district “do a better job” in the area of professional development. Pam explained that because the state had placed a stronger emphasis on mandated testing, much of the professional development that her district previously offered centered on assessments and data analysis. However, Pam expressed a need for increased opportunities to participate in professional development, which focused on information such as dyslexia, which she said that the principals in her district “needed so badly to understand.” Pam also expressed the need to have professional development offered in “small group” settings so that she could “network” with her peers. She went on to express a desire to collaborate with her peers for the sake of giving and receiving emotional support. She stated,

What I really need is professional development that is delivered in a small group where I know the other principal and they know me. We can network, talk, share and work together to gain a unified understanding of the professional development that is being presented.

Like Pam, Kim too expressed the need for on-going professional development that supports principals as learning leaders. Kim recommended that further professional development topics focus on progress monitoring, at-risk students and student achievement.

Katie stated that she, "...would like to see the area cooperative restructured to better meet the needs of principals throughout the state." Katie's additional response indicated that she was even discontent with the environment where professional development was held. "Everything about the facility is dysfunctional!" she chided. The building is small, old, dark and not welcoming!" Katie also felt that it was important for the district to present professional development in formats that would appeal to principals' varying learning modalities. She stated, "When offering professional development, presenters should use a variety of delivery methods, just as they would expect teachers to deliver curriculum to their students!" Katie went on to express disdain for the lack of support provided for technology usage. She stated,

The technology support is limited, and the personnel facilitating professional development to area principals are out-of-touch with today's educational processes and demands! Four of the more active facilitators haven't been in a classroom in over 10 years and are gravely out-of-touch.

Donnel simply stated, "I need support." Like Kim, Donnel suggested that she would like to see more professional development related to progress monitoring for students in grade K-12. Donnel said, "I think this is a skill set that a principal really needs to grasp, implement and process so well that he/she can clearly explain the process to all

of the teachers.” In addition, Donnel communicated an urgent need for support relating to the new local math curriculum. She explained,

We just purchased a math program that is very different from the one we used for the past 9 years. We are all a little overwhelmed with all the options that it gives to us and want to just sit down and determine exactly what is really necessary to teach and what is supplemental.

She explained that having a solid foundation would make a difference in her effectiveness as an instructional learner and that increased support from district administrators would “give me the confidence I need to truly understand how to make the transition and link the two together.”

Kelly’s response indicated that he desired more support in the form of human resources, which he said would help to overcome challenges he faced with time management. Kelly expressed, “I just need more time in the day!” He went on to explain, “It seems that every year more and more things get added to our plates as principals and nothing gets removed.” Kelly also noted that due to increasing state initiatives, it was an “absolute necessity” to prioritize his day. He admitted that his current strategy was to delegate as many managerial tasks as possible so that he could “focus on being the instructional leader of the building.” Kelly expressed that he would like to see his district “add an assistant principal to each building with over 300 students.” He suggested that the newly hired assistant principals handle matters related to student discipline, evaluations for classified staff, bus duty, and facilitate special education compliance meetings. Kelly’s rationale for hiring assistant principals is that doing so would “significantly free up my day to get into the classrooms to guide and monitor student achievement and instructional delivery.

Summary of Chapter IV

Chapter IV presented an analysis of the data collected during this study. First, the data gathered from the survey instrument were analyzed and presented. Second, the data collected during the semi-structured interviews were analyzed and reported. Four themes emerged from the qualitative data for Phase II of the study. Three of those themes reoccurred from Phase I of the study. The reoccurring themes were Personal Attributes, Values Relationships, and Leadership Skill Sets. See Table 8 for a description of the reoccurring themes. One additional theme emerged during the data analysis of Phase II of the study. The theme was Meaningful Professional Development. Meaningful Professional Development refers to learning essential for practitioners wanting to enhance their pedagogical and content knowledge and skills, and in turn, enhance student outcomes (Pedergast & Main, 2015). Themes and supporting data from participants' descriptions of an effective instructional leader are displayed in Table 26.

Chapter V presents answers to the four research questions, including reference to aligned literature, implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research study was to investigate elementary principals' perceptions of the support they need in order to become more effective instructional leaders. Data were collected through a 20-item survey and semi-structured interviews. The first part of the mixed-method study was designed to collect data about the research topic from 112 elementary school principals employed in the state of Arkansas. The second part of the study was designed to collect qualitative data pertaining to 12 elementary school principals' perceptions of effective instructional leaders and about the support they need in order to become more effective instructional leaders. Data collected in Phase 1 and Phase II of the study were analyzed and reported in Chapter IV. Four emerging themes were also identified in Chapter IV.

Conclusions

The purpose of Chapter V is to present conclusions of the study. Emerging themes are reviewed and responses to the research questions are augmented with reference to aligned literature that was presented in Chapter II. The chapter ends with implications and recommendations for practice and further study. Both the survey and the interviews presented participants' thoughts about effective instructional leadership. This study adds to the knowledge base of what support elementary school principals need in order to be effective instructional leaders. Other major findings of the study suggest a need to offer professional development in ways that match how principals learn most effectively. A

hope is that findings from this study may lead to future research on how to better support principals.

Emerging Themes

Analysis of the survey data and the interview data revealed four strong themes: Personal Attributes, Values Relationships, Leadership Skill Sets, and Meaningful Professional Development. An overview of each theme follows.

Theme 1: Personal Attributes

The first theme, Personal Attributes, re-emerged through terms and phrases such as “concerned”, “understanding”, “encouraging”, “energetic”, “positive”, “risk-taker” and “thinks before speaking.”

Jennifer described an effective instructional leader as someone who is “concerned about issues of diversity and focuses on the whole child.” Carl described an effective leader as one who “understands” the employees he works with and “encourages” them. Christy described an effective instructional leader as being “energetic, positive and willing to do any task that needs to be done.” Pam described an effective leader as “a risk-taker who is always willing to acknowledge that there is a better way of doing things.” Donnel stated that an effective leader “thinks before speaking.” He also expressed that an effective instructional leader “is a good listener and communicates that the person talking is truly being heard.” Pam stated that an effective instructional works “collaboratively to design, implement and assess instructional practices that will improve student learning.”

Theme 2: Values Relationships

The second reoccurring theme, Values Relationships, emerged from words and phrases such as “trust”, “works collaboratively”, “reciprocal communication” and “admits mistakes.” Additional phrases that supported the second theme were “puts people first”, “keeps doors open” and “great at relationships.” Jennifer described an effective instructional leader as “one builds trust... within his/her building” and as one who “listens.” Carl stated that a truly effective leader “allows others to see your mistakes.” Kim expressed that an effective leader “earns the trust of the faculty.” Calvin reported that an effective instructional leader is one who “keeps the doors open.” Swofford said, “A good instructional leader is visible and available, who puts people first.”

Theme 3: Leadership Skill Sets

The third theme which reoccurred was Leadership Skill Sets. Leadership Skill Sets of an effective leader reported by the participants included words and phrases such as “empowering”, “innovative”, “technologically savvy”, “leads by example”, “sets the tone”, “knowledgeable”, “informed”, “grows professionally” and “supportive.”

Pam believed that an effective leader finds the balance between that which empowers teachers through shared leadership and accountability. Kelly stated that an effective instructional leader is one who is “up-to-date on educational trends” and “willing to allow teachers the autonomy to implement innovative teaching strategies and be a firm believer in shared leadership.” Kim said that an effective leader must earn the trust of the faculty. She also noted that an effective instructional leader has to be technologically savvy and “current on a multitude of initiatives and issues, curriculum, and instructional delivery methods.”

Rebecca said that an effective instructional leader “serves as a model learner,” “leads by example,” “sets the tone of the building” and is “smart enough to know a little bit about everything in the building and have a good understanding.” Rebecca also emphasized that an effective instructional leader “demonstrates a solid knowledge base of the curriculum and instruction as well as best practices.” Christy described an effective instructional leader as an individual who is “is informed about educational issues and communicate quality and timely information to all stakeholders.”

Theme 4: Meaningful Professional Development

The fourth theme, Meaningful Professional Development, emerged from the participants’ responses about their perceptions of the current professional development offerings designed to lead to their effectiveness as learning leaders. Their responses indicated that they had previously participated in professional development offerings that were self-initiated and offered online through state universities. They also stated that the previous professional development offerings had been facilitated by teachers and school administrators, by upper-level administrators from the district, by regional cooperatives and by state professional organizations. Each of the 12 participants acknowledged that meaningful professional development was essential to their growth and efficacy as elementary principals. Participants’ indicated that meaningful professional development was defined in terms of: (a) the content offered; (b) the manner of delivery and participation methods; and (c) the overall applicability or usefulness of the professional development. Participants explained that meaningful topics were deemed as such when they covered information that was useful and beneficial to students, teachers, and administrators. These included topics such as special education issues, intervention

strategies, teacher evaluation systems, research-based best practices and technology.

Participants stated that professional development should be based upon up-to-date research-based best practices and that it should be data-driven, sustainable, and presented in a manner that accommodates various learning modalities of the participants.

Participants also suggested that professional development should include opportunities for collaboration and sharing among colleagues for the sake of networking, emotional support, and opportunities for problem solving. Participants expressed a preference for professional development in small-group settings that would allow for feedback and reflection.

Carl stated that the district where he is employed believes that teachers and principals benefit from focused, applicable, and sustained professional development. He also communicated that it was his own responsibility and personal obligation to make the effort to grow professionally. Pam indicated that she had spent a great deal of time learning how to use the features of her computer, understanding how the SMARTboard works and on the i-Ready progress monitoring instrument. Kim stated that she had access to timely and relevant free professional development through the institution she attended. Rebecca described state-provided professional development offerings as an “eye-opener” which has caused her to learn how to make sessions more engaging for teachers. Christy communicated that professional development in small-group settings allowed for colleagues to get to know each other on a first name basis and develop real friendships as they work to improve education of the children in their community.

Table 28 displays descriptions for each of the four themes that emerged as a result of the data collected during Phase II of this study.

Table 28

Themes and Supporting Data from Participants' Descriptions of an Effective Instructional Leader

Themes	Descriptive Words and Phrases
Theme 1: Personal Attributes	--concerned, willing, understanding, encouraging, energetic, positive, risk-taker, thinks before speaking
Theme 2: Values Relationships	--builds trust, works collaboratively, engages in reciprocal communication, admits mistakes, puts people first, keeps doors open, great at relationships, builds trust, listens, allows others to see mistakes, earns trust of the faculty, keeps the doors open, puts people first
Theme 3: Leadership Skill Sets	--highly visible, empowering, innovative, technologically savvy, leads by example, sets the tone, knowledgeable, informed, grows professionally, supportive
Theme 4: Meaningful Professional Development	--applicable, usefulness, beneficial to students, teachers, and administrators, research-based, based on best practices, current, data-driven, sustainable, accommodates learning modalities, provides opportunities for collaboration, networking, support, problem-solving, conducted in small group settings, allows for feedback and reflection, offered in a variety of formats

Research Questions

The responses to the research questions are addressed individually.

Research Question 1

How do principals describe an effective instructional leader?

To answer the first research question, the participants provided responses to this question from the survey: *In your own words, describe an effective instructional leader.*

Also in order to answer the first research question, during the second phase of the study,

12 participants provided responses to three research questions that were designed to collect qualitative descriptions of an effective instructional leader. The three interview questions were:

1. How do principals describe an effective instructional leader?"
2. Do you think it is important for present-day school administrators to be learning leaders?
3. Reflecting on your own leadership would you say you are an effective learning leader? Why or why not?

Three themes emerged from Question Eight of the survey during the first part of the study and then re-emerged during the second phase of the study. The three themes were: Personal Attributes; Values Relationships; and Leadership Skill Sets. Personal Attributes refer to an individual's character traits, behaviors, and attitudes that make up one's personality. Values Relationship refers to an individual's demonstration of genuine skills used to validate the positive values and traits of others. Leadership Skill Sets refers to the characteristics that are often noted among successful leaders.

Overall, the participants described an effective instructional leader as an individual who is: approachable; caring; a collaborator; a communicator; committed; concerned; empowering; encouraging; energetic; a good listener; honest; innovative; kind-hearted; methodical; positive; and reflective. Participants also described an effective instructional leader as one who is a risk-taker; who has a sense of humor, who thinks before speaking and one who is trustworthy. The participants' responses also indicated that effective leaders value relationships and frequently demonstrate working alongside faculty in order to accomplish goals, builds trust among all stakeholders,

encourages parent and community relationships, puts others first and takes ownership of their mistakes. The skill sets of an effective instructional leader were described by the participants as having the ability to empower others; being innovative and technologically savvy; being able to lead by example; sets a positive tone for the work place; informed; supportive; knowledgeable about best practices; stays abreast about current research practices; and finds it important to be a continuous learner. Participants also described the Leadership Skills Sets of an effective leader as being able to analyze data and to make informed decisions about curricula and instruction.

The findings for the first research question are aligned with the literature offered by Green (2010), Darling-Hammond et al. (2007), Spiro (2013), Harvey and Holland (2012), Garza, Drysdale, Gurr, D. Jacobson, and Merchant (2014), Mendels (2012), Ritchie (2013), and Samuels (2012). Green (2010) wrote that principals must find a balance between building administrative leadership and developing collaborative supports that focuses on teaching and learning. The findings from the first research question are also aligned with the literature offered by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007), who described an effective school leader as one who serves as a catalyst in curriculum and instructional delivery, completing managerial responsibilities, scheduling, building operation, and balancing community and stakeholder relationship. “Learning should be at the center of a school leader’s job, with good principals shaping the course of the school from inside the classroom and outside the office” (p. 27).

Harvey and Holland (2012) defined effective principals as those who (a) shape a vision of academic success for all students, based on high standards; (b) create a climate that is hospitable to education; (c) cultivate leadership in others so that teachers and other

adults assume their part in realizing the school vision; (d) improve instruction; and (e) manage people, data, and processes to foster school improvement. Garza et al. (2014) wrote that effective principals: (a) possess exceptional affective and personal dispositions; (b) ascribe to a strong notion of care; (c) are highly ethical; and (d) are morally responsible. Mendels (2012) wrote that effective principals cultivate leadership in others so that teachers improve instruction and guide students to learn at optimum levels. Effective principals also manage people, data and processes to foster school improvement (Mendels, 2012). The literature offered by Ritchie (2013) states that an effective principal makes consistent efforts to share stories with other principals in order to reduce stress. Samuels (2012) adds that effective principals become more effective as they gain experience and share leadership responsibilities.

Research Question 2

What professional learning/development opportunities are typically offered by districts to enhance leadership effectiveness of elementary building principals?

To answer the second research question, the participants responded to Questions 13 through 18 from the survey. The participants' responses indicated that the professional development opportunities provided by their districts were both "good" and "excellent." In general, the participants indicated that learning through seminars, conferences, problem-based and hands-on projects, action research, continuing education and graduate level coursework had been "good" in meeting their learning needs. Professional development opportunities were also described as being "helpful" and "beneficial." The participants also communicated that, overall, learning through mentor support, collegial partnerships, coaching, collaborative relationships, and self-paced on-line professional

development had been “excellent” in meeting their learning needs.

Responses were provided for the following interview questions:

1. What types of professional development opportunities have you engaged in to help you become an effective learning leader?
2. What opportunities have been provided by the state, district, and self-directed?
3. Would you say those opportunities have been sufficient? Are there areas where you think you still need support?

Responses indicated that the professional development opportunities that helped principals most to become more effective leaders were provided in small group sessions and were site-based with topics chosen by the teachers and administrators on-site. The most effective professional development offerings were those found online, that were self-directed and self-paced, and that included mentor support and one-on-one-coaching was effective. The most useful professional development sessions were those that focused on special education issues, intervention strategies, teacher evaluation systems, technology, progress monitoring, best practices, and the utilization of data to drive instruction.

Findings for the second research questions are in accordance with the literature offered by Shaha, Glassett, Copas and Huddleston (2016), who asserted that educational leaders substantively benefit from professional development offered through seminars and online. Shaha et al. (2016) found that online and on-demand professional development integrated with seminars results in a more positive impact on student achievement than either approach separately. Cavanagh (2013) suggested that more principals participate in online tools for professional growth, which brings about positive

effects on teachers' professional development. Gray, Mitchell, and Tarter (2014) wrote that professional development should encourage problem solving, enable cooperation, and promote collaboration, flexibility, and innovation. Gray et al. (2014) also stated that professional development should foster trust, individual efficacy, and collective efficacy or a shared belief in its joint capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment.

The findings for the second research question are also aligned with the work put forth by Barton and Stepanek (2012), who found that collaboration during professional development: encourages collective creativity, reduces isolation, and creates a sense of a shared responsibility for students' outcomes. Barton and Stepanek (2012) also felt that for professional development to be effective, facilitators must be able to articulate their outcomes in terms of data so that teaching practices and student learning improves. In addition, the researchers asserted that adult learners should engage in problem solving, teamwork and collaboration in order to effectively meet their students' learning needs.

Dufour and DuFour (2013) wrote that effective professional development should focus on curriculum, instruction, and student development. The findings are also aligned with the literature offered by Chitpin (2014), who suggested that school principals should participate in professional development that includes: (a) a network of peer support to help them make decisions and resolve common problems; (b) an innovative model of reflective professional development; (c) a database of sound empirical studies, evidenced-based research and practical literature that would lead to an informed decision-making process; and (d) a jointly produced web site to facilitate the above activities and to provide convenient access to information.

Research Question 3

What supports do elementary building principals believe they need to become effective leaders able to take on the in-depth challenges they face in the educational world?

To answer the third research question, the participants were asked the following during the interviews: *“Are there areas where you think you still need support?”*, *“If so in what areas are these and what types of support would you say you need?”* and *“In what ways can your district administration better support you in your role as a school principal, especially as it pertains to becoming a learning leader?”* Overall, the participants communicated that in order to become more effective learning leaders who are able to take on in-depth challenges, they desired more improved, sustainable and relevant professional development. Participants also expressed the need for professional development that accommodates their various learning modalities offered in array of formats and that foster networking, collaboration, and affective support. The participants specifically expressed a desire for improved professional development opportunities that permit them to visit other schools at least once a month to observe how their peers implement best practices as well as district, regional and state-wide initiatives. Their responses revealed a desire for professional development that is more applicable to real-life situations and designed to improve their understanding of new concepts and ideas. They also indicated the need for sessions that focus on more meaningful topics, such as progress monitoring, intervention strategies, improving achievement among at-risk students, time management, teacher evaluation systems and new curricula, along with the incorporation of time to reflect on the information presented. In addition to improved professional development offerings, the participants indicated the need for more support

from human resources. They specifically desired the hiring of additional assistant principals who could assist with managerial tasks related to discipline, evaluations for classified staff, bus duty, and special education compliance issues.

The findings for the third research question are aligned with the literature offered by Bambick-Santoyo (2012), who wrote that, in general, professional development offered to principals is often a one-shot training that does not afford them the opportunity to collaborate over an extended period of time or give them an occasion to implement and reflect on learning. Crow and Whiteman (2016) agree that principal preparation programs do not provide principals with adequate training on the use of data, research, and technology; or the hiring, evaluating, and termination of personnel. The literature by Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2015) also supports the findings and states that principals are typically trained to meet the managerial responsibilities of their jobs, but they are seldom provided enough training on how to lead professional development as the instructional leaders within their schools. Teachers must be given time to interact with the content of the professional development and learn through ongoing active engagement in practice (Bambick-Santoyo, 2012). Jonassen and Land (2012) add that principals who embrace their own professional learning and development are able to build a school's capacity by helping teachers develop their knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

Research Question 4

How can district administration better support school principals in their role as instructional leaders?

To answer the fourth research question, the participants were asked the following:

“Are there areas where you think you still need support?” “If so in what areas are these

and what types of support would you say you need?” and “In what ways can your district administration better support you in your role as a school principal, especially as it pertains to becoming a learning leader?” For the fourth research question, participants expressed a desire for increased opportunities for collaboration between colleagues, more relevant professional development, more frequent feedback from district-level administrators and fellow principals based on walk-through observations, which they believed were helpful catalysts for strengthening teachers’ pedagogy and student learning. The participants also recommended that district administrators arrange more frequent opportunities for principals to visit other schools and to meet with principals in their districts to gain a unified understanding of new information. They suggested that district administrators provide professional development in more comfortable locations and in small group settings that incorporate time to evaluate the impact of different strategies on students’ academic performance. They desired professional development facilitated by high profile keynote speakers, who are deemed as experts in their fields and professional development which focuses on administrators’ skills sets, progress monitoring, and migrant students. They also suggested that district-level administrators communicate with regional cooperatives to find alternate ways to take into account principals’ professional development needs and their preferences for delivery. Finally, the participants suggested that district administrators hire additional support personnel so that they have more time available to embrace their roles as instructional leaders and to internalize the impact of their efforts on student achievement.

Fullan (2014) wrote that improving principals’ pedagogy in instructional practices, and providing them with support for implementation is an integral component

of professional development and continued learning. DuFour and DuFour (2013) wrote that in order for professional development to be effective it must be: (a) ongoing, sustained, rather than fragmented; (b) collective, rather than individualistic; (c) job-embedded, with teachers/principals learning as they engage in their daily work; and (d) results-oriented, with activities directly linked to higher levels of student learning. The findings from this study are aligned with the literature offered by both Fullan (2014) and Dufour and DuFour (2013) as well as with the literature offered by Donaldson and Donaldson (2012).

Donaldson and Donaldson (2012) warned that principals need to protect opportunities to learn and grow and that their effectiveness depends on the allotment of time for study, the provision of resources, and trusting relationships. The researchers also assert that formative evaluation can provide a personal growth plan for teachers (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012). Salvesen (2016) advocates a balance between professional development opportunities that offer collaboration with colleagues in order to share ideas as well as programs that can be flexibly delivered to meet the time constraints that principals experience. Sartain, Stoelinga, and Brown (2011) agree that time is one of the foremost barriers for principals' participation in professional development and that self-paced, electronic professional development may be more suited to the time restraints of principals. Salvesen (2016) also suggested non-traditional formats for professional development that were electronic-based and/or involved the use of the Internet. Guskey (2014) found that various forms of professional development were successful in assisting principals and teachers with the implementation of new instructional strategies.

Implications for Practice

The knowledge derived from this study has implications for improvement. The findings have three implications for future use or study. These implications are outlined in accordance to the different stakeholders of this study: principals, school superintendents, and state professional development leaders.

For Principals

From this study, principals can better understand the importance of leadership attributes, skill sets and the value of relationships. By implementing and nurturing these attributes, skills sets and develop collaborative relationships, principals can work to become more effective instructional leaders.

For Superintendents

Through this study, superintendents can better understand professional development needs and implement the supports that principals indicated would assist them more effectively receive the professional development they need in order to be effective instructional leaders. The study unpacks the delivery methods of professional development that best support learning.

For State Professional Development Leaders

This study sheds lights on several implications for professional development leaders. Principals relate that they learn best in collaborative, mentoring and collegial settings that offer opportunities to network and develop understanding of the professional development being presented. Stakeholders providing professional development opportunities could benefit from this information so that they can incorporate these learning methods that better support principals as effective insertional leaders.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, several recommendations have emerged; however, as with any study, it is important to be careful that the recommendations are based strictly on the data and point toward follow-up or future research. Recommendations are offered both for practice and for future research.

For Practice

Professional development that is collaborative, mentor supported with a one-on-one-coaching component is recommended to better support principals as they seek personal growth. In addition, the most effective professional development is structured in a manner that accommodates principals' various learning modalities, is offered in array of formats, and that fosters networking, collaboration, and affective support. This includes providing the opportunity to visit other schools, network with colleagues, and attend regional and state initiatives that offer real-life situations and are designed to improve their understanding of new concepts and ideas. Specifically, recommendations for practice are to provide professional development topics that address current professional development interests and needs. These include special education issues, intervention strategies, teacher evaluation systems, technology, progress monitoring, best practices, and the utilization of data to drive instruction.

It is recommended that more support from human resources, specifically in the way of hiring assistant principals to take on many of the managerial tasks that consume valuable instructional leadership time, would allow more time for principals to embrace their roles as instructional leaders their buildings. Finally, a recommendation is to address the need to provide sustained opportunities for more frequent feedback from district-level

administrators and fellow principals.

For Future Research

Further studies that incorporate more principals throughout the United States would provide a boarder scope of understanding of the principals' perceptions of effective instructional leadership. It is recommended that the study reach out to incorporate other levels of instructional leaders to include middle school and high school principals.

A single qualitative study would be beneficial to delve deeper into the perceptions of each principal. Such an in-depth study would provide additional layers of thinking and levels of perceptions surrounding the topic of study.

Final Thoughts

Throughout the country, many school districts build the leadership capacity of principals by providing various types of professional development. Districts provide professional development at all levels so that principals can stay abreast of current pedagogy, and preserve a common language on leadership skills, instructional strategies, and expertise and provide support to teachers with their instruction and ultimately increase student achievement. The research indicates the principal's role is critical to the success of instruction and the implementation of research-based instruction strategies. Principals positively impact instruction by consistently supporting teachers with effective lesson design and feedback. Quality professional development for principals is important to the success of effective instruction. Professional development for principals supports building leadership skills in instruction, and creates leadership capacity at the sites and district levels. A higher level of professional development in instructional leadership is

needed now more than ever, as principals are charged with successfully leading their teachers toward quality direct instruction and effective teaching strategies with a dedicated focus on improving instruction.

The research indicates a need for continuous support for principals with quality professional development. In a collaborative environment that professional development often creates, teachers and principals learning from one another, supports effective direct. This research validates the significance of professional development and the impact on principals' effectiveness as instructional leaders. This research study also confirmed the importance of collaboration for instructional leaders, as well as the importance of continuous learning. Equally, the significance of quality professional development for principals and its purpose of improving instruction were very evident throughout the research. In order to build upon elementary school principals' instructional leadership skills, and to create new levels of support and expertise for principals, additional studies in principals' instructional leadership professional development must be conducted.

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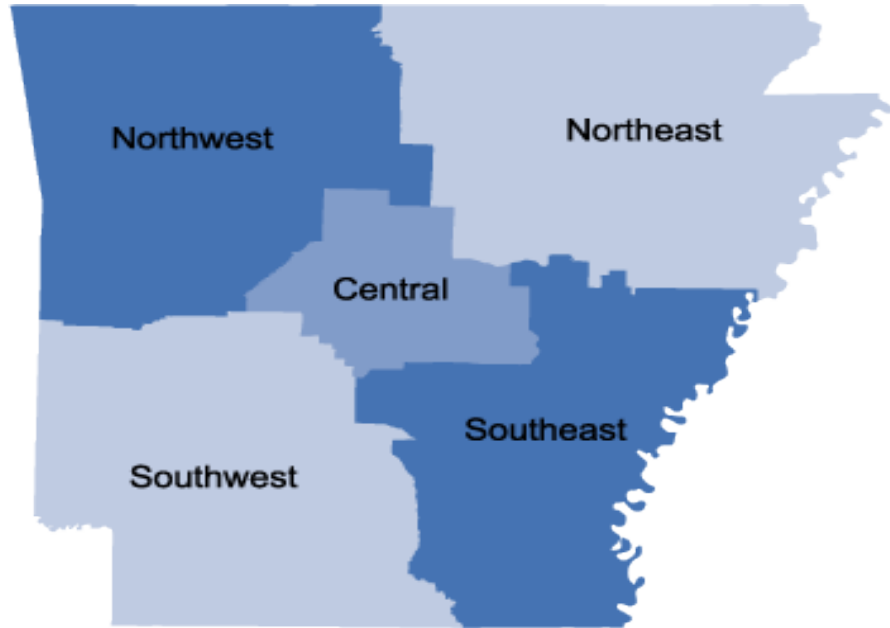
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APPENDIX A
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REGIONAL
IDENTIFICATION MAP



APPENDIX B
PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTION LETTER

January 7, 2016

Dear (name of individual)

My name is Lisa Lee Geren and I am an elementary school principal in Northwest Arkansas writing my doctoral dissertation in Educational Administration Foundations at Illinois State University. I am conducting a mixed methods project in order to gain a better understanding of principals' perceptions of what supports they need to become effective instructional leaders. The Arkansas Association of Education Administrators (AAEA) is assisting me with the sampling and may publish the abstract with the results of the study. This research will be conducted during parts of March, April and May 2016. I will finish my dissertation and report the results of this research in the fall of 2016.

I would be honored for you to participate in this research. Your participation would include completing the online survey. Selected follow up candidates will be interviewed possibly or two times for approximately 30-40 minutes. I'll ask you questions about your personal perspectives about your administrative professional development, networking, and other supports you value as a school administrator. I would like to tape recorder these interviews, and may take notes at the computer as we conduct the interview. Prior to the interview, you will receive a consent form. This information will be used before and during the interview process. A self-addressed, stamped envelope will be sent for you to return the required consent form.

Should you agree to participate in the follow-up interview, you will receive a typed written transcript of your interview where you will have the opportunity to add, remove or clarify information that was shared in the interview process.

I will keep whatever information you provide confidential. Additionally, you will not be identified by your real name (I'll use a pseudonym) in the final report I write.

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdrawn at any time during the process with no penalty of any sort.

If you have any questions about this research or your rights as a participant, please contact me, my professor, or Illinois State University Office of Academic Research Services. The contact information is as follows:

Lisa Lee Geren: [REDACTED] Cell: [REDACTED]
 Dr. Linda Lyman, Educational Administration Foundations office email [REDACTED]
 ISU Office of Academic Research Services: 309-438-8451

Please, click the link below to the online survey if you understand what we are asking and if you are willing to participate. Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Lisa Lee Geren
 Doctoral Candidate

I understand and am willing to participate by completing this online survey"
 (add link here)

APPENDIX C
PHASE ONE DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Are you currently an Arkansas Public School principal?

Yes

No

Please indicate the grade levels that are in your school. Select all that apply.

- K
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

What is your age?

- Under 30
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70 or over

What is your gender?

- Male
 - Female
 - Other
- Choose not to answer

How many years have you served as the principal in the school?

- 6 months to less than 3 years
- 3 years to less than 5 years
- 5 years to less than 10 years
- 10 years or more

About how many students currently attend your school?

- Less than 590
 - 500-900
 - 1000 or more
- Don't know

What percentage of students in your school receive free or reduced lunch?

- 1-10%
- 11-20%
- 21-30%
- 31-40%
- 41-50%
- 51-60%
- more than 60 percent

How many teachers do you supervise?

- 1-20
- 21-40
- 41-60
- more than 60

How would you categorize your school district?

- Suburban
- Urban
- Rural

How many total years have you served as a principal?

- 6 months to less than 3 years
- 3 years to less than 5 years
- 5 years to less than 10 years
- 10 years or more

How many years have you been principal in your current building?

- 6 months to less than 3 years
- 3 years to less than 5 years
- 5 years to less than 10 years
- 10 years or more

APPENDIX D
PHASE TWO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How will you describe a learning leader?
2. Do you think it is important for present day school administrators to be a learning leader? Why or why not?
3. Reflecting on your own leadership would you say you are an effective learning leader? Why or why not?
4. What types of professional development opportunities have you engaged in to help you become an effective learning leader? What opportunities have been provided by the state? district? self-directed?
5. Would you say those opportunities have been sufficient? Are there areas where you think you still need support? If so in what areas are these and what types of support would you say you need?
6. In what ways can your district administration better support you in your role as a school principal and especially as it pertains to becoming a learning leader?